

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 15TH JULY, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Linda Chung (Chair), Rebecca Filer, Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane, Andrew Parkinson and Jonathan Simpson

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Jenny Mulholland and James Slater

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. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received for Cllrs Jenny Mulholland and James Slater.

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

No declarations were made.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED –

THAT the Terms of Reference be noted.

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.

5. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

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

There was no such business.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meetings of 22 January 2024 and 27 February 2024 be agreed.

8. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL COMPLAINT HANDLING AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT AND COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT - LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN 2023-2024

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor. The report was introduced by the Service Manager – Information Governance and the Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement.

In their discussion of the report, the Committee made the following comments:

Members asked about the process of the self-assessment and the form that it takes. The Service Manager explained that the Housing Ombudsman stated areas where Camden needed to be compliant. The Council then needed to provide evidence of compliance and reasons for non-compliance.

The Committee were interested in lessons that the organisation had learned from the process. The Service Manager said that the process had allowed the team to look at

where blocks were happening in the system and identification of training and improvement needs.

The Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement said that previously, complaints within the Neighbourhoods and Property Services teams, that would usually have several elements to it, would be handled across teams by multiple people. This would be evident in responses given to residents. Learning from the complaints and assessment had led to assigning complaints to an individual officer increasing the cohesiveness of responses given to residents.

Using our existing independent customer satisfaction provider, they are making outbound calls to follow up with every resident after their Stage 1 complaint. This was to seek feedback of residents' experiences of the process, whether the response was timely and professional. The new process for following up with residents allowed for more organisational learning and was an indicator of Camden taking ownership and responsibility for the complaints process.

A Member commented that if an issue had reached the stage of a complaint, there had been a failing earlier in the system. They asked what assurance could be given that trends in complaints were being investigated and learnt from, to tackle issues before they reach a complaint stage. The Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement said that there was now a 'lessons learned' lead who would look at complaints, trends and improvements. They were keen to hear from residents as part of the process. The Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement spoke about the new Customer Oversight Panel, a resident led panel that had been created to hold officers to account.

A Committee Member raised the rate of maladministration of complaints being significantly higher than the national average. The Service Manager – Information Governance commented that as the numbers were very small, any change would come out higher as a percentage. He would look into the request from the Member as to whether publishing cases of maladministration when they occurred, rather than waiting for the annual report, could be an option.

Action by: the Service Manager – Information Governance

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

9. 2024/25 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living. The report was introduced by the Head of Finance, Corporate Services.

Members reflected on the previous government and funding given for the additional services and functions being expected from local authorities. The Cabinet Member

commented that there were a lot of benefits from government devolving services, however, when this was not properly funded it added to the financial pressures on local authorities. The Cabinet Member said that the local government sector would be conveying the experiences of authorities through the Local Government Association (LGA) and London Councils. In time, suggestions could be made about how to improve systems, but this shouldn't be expected to come with lots of funding.

A member of the Committee asked about the increase fixed penalty notice fines and why some fines were increased to the maximum allowable amount, whereas others were not. The Head of Finance said that these amounts would be under review and that the amount needed to be enough to act as a deterrent whilst not creating undue financial hardship for people. In response to a follow up question, the Head of Finance agreed to provide the Committee with information of the support available for those who received fixed penalty notices and could not afford to pay them.

Action by: the Head of Finance, Corporate Services

The Committee discussed local authority funding from central government and welcomed plans for multi-year funding settlements. They agreed that it would be helpful for central government to receive feedback of how challenging single-year funding settlements had been.

The Committee thanked the Finance Team for their continued hard work and success in managing Camden's finances.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. INSIGHT, LEARNING AND IMPACT REPORT – QUARTER 4/END OF YEAR 2023-24

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

In their discussion of the report, the Committee spoke about the recent election. In response to questions that arose the Head of Corporate Strategy agreed to provide members with the actions taken to engage voters for the general election and the information given on how to vote. They also agreed to provide information to Members on the timescale of the canvass.

Action by: The Head of Corporate Strategy and Cabinet Office.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 AND ACTION TRACKER

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Corporate Services, the report was introduced by the Corporate Strategy Portfolio Lead.

The Committee, who were joined by the Directors of Corporate Strategy and Finance and the Chief Experience and Information Officer, discussed the work programme for the new municipal year and suggested reports they would like to have at future meetings.

Through their discussion the Committee identified the following areas of interest that they wanted programmed into the work of the Committee:

- Equalities
- Maximising income
- The Missions approach
- Apprenticeships
- HR Annual report
- Implications on Camden Council arising from the King's Speech
- An update on the data, communications and the Camden website

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END