

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **JOINT CHAIRS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 18TH MARCH, 2019** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, 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

**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.

The scrutiny chairs also felt that in order to give clarity to officers in-between meetings, Councillor Kelly should be identified as the lead scrutiny chair who they should contact in relation to the operation of the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny meetings, and future scrutiny policy development generally. This though would be an informal role, as the Constitution did not currently recognise the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee as having a permanent chair.

**TO NOTE: Director of Corporate Strategy**

### **RESOLVED –**

THAT Councillor Kelly be elected Chair for the meeting.

### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Parkinson.

**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. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October be approved and signed as a correct record.

**8. DISABILITY OVERSIGHT PANEL AND REFERRAL OF ISSUES TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Disability Oversight Panel.

Councillor Roger Robinson, Chair of the Disability Oversight Panel, and Oliver Jones, Principal Policy and Projects Officer, took the meeting through the report highlighting the issues they wished the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny to consider when they were setting their respective work programmes for their scrutiny committees.

Councillor Roger Robinson, Councillor Lorraine Revah, Vice-Chair of the Disability Oversight Panel (DOP), then gave the following key responses to Members questions:

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- That they wished to see a cultural change within the organisation in relation to the way Camden Council shaped its own policies for people with disabilities. Scrutiny committees could play a valuable role in helping the Council achieve this.
- The DOP had held two meetings where service users had played an active role in identifying the direction of travel for the Council in relation to the themes of accessibility and employment.
- Some issues that arose from the meetings with service users included the difficulty people with disabilities had at bus stops, with street clutter, and inaccessible businesses and public buildings; the Council repeatedly telephoning people who were deaf and hard of hearing; accessibility of apprenticeships for young people with disabilities; accessible housing; barriers for people with disabilities accessing employment opportunities; and inaccessible leisure centres and venues, partnered with financial constraints and mobility and transport issues.
- Disability Awareness Training was being taken forward for Councillors and the DOP would like to see similar training being provided for all appropriate Council staff.
- They would like to see scrutiny committee reports identify how proposals impacted on people with disabilities, along with how future needs would be met along the lines of the Equality Impact Assessments that were included in all Cabinet reports.

The Chair then thanked Councillors Robinson and Revah for presenting the report to the meeting.

The meeting then debated on the way forward and the Members' felt that the issues identified in the DOP's report, should be taken away by the chairs of each scrutiny committee to consider in relation to the development of their scrutiny committees work programme. The Chairs noted that a number of Members of the DOP sat on scrutiny committees and they would be able to help shape the work programme discussion. Also the Chairs in consultation with officers, should also look to devise a key set of questions in relation to disability that should be addressed in scrutiny committee only reports that would not be onerous on the authority.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the approach set out above be endorsed.

**9. FUTURE OF SCRUTINY - UPDATED PROPOSALS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Corporate Strategy

Councillor Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Democratic Review Working Group, advised the meeting that the proposals sought to promote the contribution of scrutiny in achieving the Council's 2025 ambitions and encourage the

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authority to recognise the value added by scrutiny. Then Sanjay Mackintosh, Director of Corporate Strategy, took the meeting through the report highlighting that the paper sought to provide improvements to the Council's scrutiny function and incorporated some key principles for the new scrutiny model.

The scrutiny chairs thanked the Leader and officers for the paper and suggested that the proposals for scrutiny should go forward on the following basis;

- They should take forward the original proposals submitted by the scrutiny committee chairs to the Democratic Review Working Group, along with including more information regarding the work that had been undertaken by the existing scrutiny committees;
- Ensure that scrutiny committees were provided with the necessary information and support they required to fully undertake their scrutiny roles;
- Cabinet members and scrutiny chairs should meet to discuss the Cabinet's future plans, and seek to identify the role scrutiny committees could play in taking forward policy development to help the Council meet its 2025 ambitions;
- The role the political group process played in the executive/scrutiny process;
- Along with helping to develop policy, scrutiny committees played an important role in monitoring the operation of Council policies. Further work should be undertaken with the Cabinet to identify a set of common performance standards which scrutiny committees could then monitor;
- The Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee should be the place where the Leader of the Council's annual statement was considered so that they were held to account, but that a public involvement role be developed to enable the public to have a role in that process;
- The chairs of scrutiny committees should also be held to account regarding the work of their scrutiny committees and the public should also have a role in this process;
- Public involvement and engagement was an important part of the scrutiny process, but scrutiny committees and Councillors in general had a set of statutory responsibilities and duties that they had to abide by. So a balance needed to be struck in relation to the role the public should play in helping to shape the work programmes of scrutiny committees;
- The proposed models in the papers again proposed that 4 cabinet members reported to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee. This should be looked at again with perhaps the Cabinet Member for Investing in Communities reporting to the Housing Scrutiny Committee which could be given a wider remit to accommodate this;
- Scrutiny committees were best placed to consider Cabinet Member annual reports, but further consideration needed to be given regarding how that meeting was managed (e.g. time allocated, role of non-committee members, no other substantive business on that agenda); and
- The annual report of the scrutiny committee chairs should be given greater prominence at Council, with more time being allocated to the chairs to present their report, be earlier on the agenda, along with whether it should remain to

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be considered at the annual budget setting Council session when that meeting already had a very full agenda of decision-making business. Further information should be provided on the way other local authorities undertook this role.

The Members felt that a new paper should be submitted to a meeting of the Democratic Review Work Group in April 2019 picking up the issues identified above, to which all the scrutiny chairs would be invited.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the approach set out above be endorsed.

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

There were none.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm.

**CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi**

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**MINUTES END**