

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

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

Councillors Linda Chung (Chair), Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane, Jenny Mulholland, Andrew Parkinson, Jonathan Simpson and James Slater

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

Councillors Rebecca Filer

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor 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 from Councillor Rebecca Filer, apologies lateness were received from Councillor Jenny Mulholland.

### **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. 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.

#### **Order of items on the agenda**

The Chair announced a change to the running order of item on the agenda. She proposed to take Item 9: Improving Citizen Experience and Item 10: Camden Council: Data Strategy 2023-2025 as the first discussion items. This was to maximise attendance from officers. The change of order was agreed by the Committee.

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

There were no deputations.

#### **5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no such business.

#### **6. 2024/25 REVENUE ESTIMATES AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING**

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

The Committee were interested in the second home council tax premium in Camden and noted that this was a progressive measure. Members asked for a breakdown of where in the borough second homes were and whether there were any patterns. The Head of Finance agreed to provide a breakdown of second home council tax band properties including a breakdown by ward.

**Action by: the Head of Finance.**

Members asked about how Camden decided boroughs that it should use in comparison exercises. The Head of Finance said that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) used certain authorities when comparing against others, he agreed to share the authorities that CIPFA used to compare against Camden.

**Action by: the Head of Finance.**

A Member of the Committee asked about the council tax being identified as a risk area. The Head of Finance said this was based on how much of an overall budget came from council tax. CIPFA viewed council tax as a stable form of funding and Camden was seen to be at risk because it formed a lower percentage of its budget. The risk was being managed long term through the medium term strategy.

In response to questions from the Committee about what the Head of Finance would find helpful in the future, he said that having longer funding settlements as this would help create more certainty with budgets.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT The report be noted.

**7. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (CIP) – CIP ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Development. The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investments, the Director of Development and the Head of CIP Programme Office.

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

- Members asked about the impact the economic climate had had on the delivery of projects. The Cabinet Member said that Camden had not pulled back on any committed projects, though more work was carried out a project design stage to make sure the project could be delivered.
- When asked by Members about Camley Street, the Director of Development explained that they were currently in a bidding process.
- There was not a definitive timetable for delivering the housing goals but any delivery would include the estate regeneration programme.
- A member of the Committee commented that, in previous iterations of the report, figures for expenditure and receipts had been included, which they had found helpful. The Cabinet Member said that these could be included in the report next year.
- In response to a member question, the Director of Development agreed to provide more financial data around future programmes, including figures for expenditure and receipts.

**Action by: the Director of Development**

- The Committee commented that it was useful to have resident feedback included in the report, the Cabinet Member agreed to circulate the full report on resident feedback.

**Action by: the Director of Development**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**8. COST OF LIVING WINTER INTERVENTIONS AND DEBT ALLEVIATIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Equalities and Community Strength and the Director of Finance who both introduced the report.

In response to a question from the Committee the Director of Equalities and Community Strength said that signposting for support around the cost of living was being targeted at those not already accessing support.

Members were interested in work with the digital and customer experience teams to make the cost of living support advice pages and communications clear. The Director of Equalities and Community Strength said that they wanted to work with the digital teams to achieve this, for example looking at communications for those whose first language is not English. The Director of Finance assured members that there was crossover with digital work and customer experience. The Focus was on being compassionate and consistent with joining things up.

#### **RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

### **9. IMPROVING CITIZEN EXPERIENCE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Experience and Information Officer who, along with the Head of Customer and Registration Services, introduced the report.

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

- Members were impressed with how quickly changes were being made to the citizen experience, they noted that benefits were being seen.
- The Committee asked whether work was being done to make it easier for officers to access data sets that showed what topics were coming through contact Camden and to better understand the citizen experience. The Head of Customer and Registration Services said that core data sets were shared with officers. The Chief Experience and Information Officer commented that the data strategy needed to underpin the citizen experience and that residents should only have to raise an issue once to get a resolution.
- A Member spoke about housing repairs and some of the themes that had emerged through casework of residents experiences when raising issues. They said that sometimes issues were not being resolved until multiple contacts and that residents should not have to complain to get a resolution. The Head of Customer and Registration Services explained that Housing Repairs was undergoing changes separate to this strategy. Eventually, technology would sit across all departments, allowing for customer journeys to be mapped and for a better view of the repairs process to be built.

- The Committee were interested in those that had been engaged with to test the website. The Chief Experience and Information Officer said that accessibility needed to be incorporated into any website redesign. They explained that there had been focus groups around key demographics that Camden had wanted to interact with, for example those with a lower reading age. The Chief Experience and Information Officer agreed to provide more details on the testing of the website pages.

**Action by: the Chief Experience and Information Officer**

- Members commented on the importance of sharing good practice across the organisation, The Chief Experience and Information Officer assured members that citizen experience principles would form a foundation by which all interactions would be built out from.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**10. CAMDEN COUNCIL: DATA STRATEGY 2023-2025**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Experience and Information Officer, the report was introduced by the Chief data Officer.

The Committee began the discussion of the report with noting the work of former councillor Leo Cassarani around Camden's Data Charter.

Members were interested in how the use of technology could help identify the causes of issues that residents experienced and not only the identification of the issues themselves. The Chief Data Officer the data needed to be accessible and tools should be available to assist with this. The Chief Experience and Information Officer said that the intention was to become more proactive with data, running check and balances when there was a problem and addressing it before it went to a resident.

The Committee commented that it would be important to avoid data sets degrading and, consequently, information becoming irrelevant. The Chief Data Officer said that, within the strategy, data ownership sat at a service level. The implementation of standards and processes within services should continue to work for many years. Work was also being carried out to ensure that suppliers and partners were sticking to Camden's data policies and standards.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Chief Data Officer said that options were being looked into to allow Camden to have safe, controlled data sharing with partners.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**11. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 AND ACTION TRACKER**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the work programme be noted.

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

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.

**CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Ben Lynn**

**Telephone No: 020 7974 5653**

**E-Mail: ben.lynn@camden.gov.uk**

**MINUTES END**