

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2025** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

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

Councillors Awale Olad (Chair), Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani and Liam Martin-Lane

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

Councillors Nina De Ayala Parker and Stephen Stark

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden) Janet Grauberg (remote attendance)

**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 Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Stark who was substituted by Councillor Steve Adams.

#### **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**

There were none.

#### **3. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

The Chair announced that the meeting was broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and could be viewed on the website for six months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available on DVD upon request. Those who were seated in the room or participated via Teams were

deemed to have consented to their contributions being recorded and broadcast and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

**4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

The Chair informed the members that there were no deputations, although the Camden Cycling Campaign had sent in a written submission in support of the Camden Transport Strategy which had been circulated to the Committee via email.

**5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT**

There was none.

**6. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025 be signed as an accurate record.

**7. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2026-2030 (SC/2025/50)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden

In response to questions, the Head of Climate, Air Quality and Energy Harold Garner, Natalie Curd, Climate Programme Manager, Richard Bradbury (Director of Environment and Sustainability) and the Councillor Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden made the following points:

- With regards to producing a graph or figure showing what the borough was doing on its own rather than the effect of national action, a large part of borough-wide emission reductions came from national electricity grid decarbonisation. However, Camden had made progress on reducing emissions and some of the actions it had taken included retrofitting Council buildings such as libraries in Swiss Cottage, Highgate and West Hampstead and installing renewable energy. Separating the borough's contribution from

the national grid was possible but technically complex and officers indicated that they would work on this.

- 98% of the actions from the 2020-25 plan had been completed, the few that had not been completed were cancelled because they could not be done due to the pandemic. For example, in-person retrofit seminars were not possible due to COVID 19.
- The 2026-2030 Plan focussed on energy efficiency, green spaces, transport and community engagement.
- With regards to the funding gap, due to the reduction in government funding, Camden was exploring a number of fund routes including, community energy partnerships to unlock community investment over a long-term contract, retrofit at scale – mixing grants with institutional investment repaid through energy savings and regional place-based investment models that could combine different revenue sources, including electric vehicle charging and renewable energy income.
- Other sources of funding could include possible long term pension fund investment.
- Despite these various funding routes, the total national funding available was far below £900m and delivery would be challenging.
- With regards to engaging with businesses to reduce their emissions which were now a majority of borough emissions, Camden ran a Climate aligned Business Network and used UK shared Prosperity Fund to support energy efficiency and performance.
- The Climate Alliance had been used to showcase best practices amongst businesses such as highlighting how the British Library had recently received public sector scheme funding to install major renewable upgrades on their building
- There were plans for a Camden summit in the new year which would engage with businesses and focus on business climate action.
- With regards to coordinating housing decarbonisation across Council departments, the Council's housing team was already investing through Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Programmes and the solar retrofit at scale scheme for 2,800 homes.
- The Leader of the Council had reframed the work across the Council as energy security which had helped to focus coordination efforts and improve matters.
- In relation to consultation and engagement with enough diverse residents, the original Climate Citizens Assembly used demographic selection, which provided a wide range of views including dissenting ones. The Assembly was demographically representative of everyone living in Camden, a recommendation of the Citizens Assembly was that a Citizen's Panel should be created which at the time met quarterly. This was also demographically representative of people living in Camden and helped guide the development of the Climate Action Plan.
- For the new strategy, the Council recontacted original assembly members, engaged with disability groups and groups with concerns about transport changes.

- Workshops were independently facilitated by UCL and though numbers in the online survey were modest a wide breadth of views were represented in the Climate Action Plan. Officers agreed to circulate details of where and when the next Citizens Assembly would take place.

**ACTION BY: Head of Climate, Air Quality and Energy**

- In relation to greening of the public realm and the impact of this on fly-tipping, the Environment Services Team had focussed on fly tipping hot spot areas to put in planters and engaged with the local community to understand what measures could be put in to deter fly tipping in the most vulnerable areas.
- Whenever there was a request from the public to redesign the public realm, there was always an internal consultation process with the Transport and Highways Team as well as other Environment Services teams to consider various issues that fed into the design process and that could arise as there was always a conflict between the appetite for new public spaces and greenery and the concerns about those spaces ending up being fly tipping dumping grounds.

The Chair remarked that the report was a good report, thanking officers for their work and wishing them well with the Action Plan for the next 4 years.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**8. CAMDEN TRANSPORT STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE (2025)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Sustainability.

Transport for London (TfL) Officers were also in attendance to respond to the members questions on their partnership work with Camden officers

Helen Cansick (TfL Head of Investment Planning, Safe and Healthy Streets) Abbas Raza (TfL Local Communities and Partnerships Officer) Sam Margolis (Head of Transport Strategy and Projects) Brenda Busingye (Transport and Travel Planning Manager) Karl Brierley, (Safe and Healthy Streets Team Manager) and Richard Bradbury, (Director of Environment and Sustainability) made the following comments in response members questions:

In response to Committee members questions, TfL Officers advised that:

- The budget for safe and healthy streets across London was £156m down from £220m pre-pandemic.
- Camden received significant funding, including £2.5m for cycling schemes and £9m for liveable neighbourhoods.

- Major TfL-led projects in Camden included the Kings Cross gyratory redesign and Camden High Street improvements.
- Smaller schemes planned for crossings at Churchway and Gordon Street on Euston Road.

Committee members raised concerns about Euston Road, with regards to safety, (hostile and dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.) and poor air quality. They stressed that it was particularly unsafe for disabled people, parents with buggies and asked for a clear timetable to improve the situation.

In response TfL officers stated that:

- Major redesign was tied to HS2, which was still uncertain; this limited what TfL could change now.
- Short-term safety schemes were planned: improved crossings at Churchway and Gordon Street (subject to funding) were planned for 2026.
- TfL's immediate priority was safe crossing and bus reliability.
- Interim improvements such as seating and greening may be possible.
- TfL confirmed progress would not wait for HS2 where small schemes were feasible.
- Camden officers advised that they were working with TfL on public realm improvements near University College London Hospital (UCLH) and Warren Street.

A Committee member informed the Committee that for about 15 years a request had been made to put a Yellow box junction at the Gower Street / British Museum road junction

In response TfL requested to know the precise location and said they would investigate the feasibility once the details were provided.

Committee members raised safety concerns about the neglected land near HS2 outside University College Hospital and outside UCS highlighting that it was poorly designed and had been linked to crime.

TfL advised that they were already in discussions with Camden's rough sleeping team and local stakeholders and improvements would be explored jointly with these partners.

With regards to the dangerous Finchley Road crossings and crossing at West End Lane / Frognal underpass and coach stops, this area had now been added to TfL's programme and would be prioritised, but modelling and design meant delivery was unlikely before 2027.

With regards to the Finchley Road underpass conversion, TfL had discussed with Camden the potential to convert into a rain garden (similar to Marylebone). TfL would continue discussions with Camden and explore third-party funding.

In relation to Coach stops blocking pavements near West Hampstead, residents had reported congestion and accessibility issues. TfL and Camden would review options, including swapping coach and bus stops.

With regards to the Swiss Cottage gyratory which Committee members described as one of the most dangerous areas in Camden and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists, TfL informed members that it was not currently in the pipeline due to funding constraints advising that legal challenges and the pandemic had halted the old CS11 cycle scheme, but agreed to explore feasibility and quick-win measures with Camden officers.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden and Camden Officers informed the Committee that the Council was willing to co-fund feasibility work to restart planning and that a wider place vision for Swiss Cottage might be needed covering the library, leisure centre, school and public space.

With regards to the next steps relating to the Kings Cross gyratory and the long delays, TfL advised that final designs would go to the next project meeting with Camden officers

Traffic modelling would take several months; consultation was expected later next year 2026. Some remedial works would take place sooner at Pancras Road / Midland Road following resident feedback.

With regards to Kings Cross side streets (Acton St, Swinton St): Members asked that speed reduction measures and better crossings be considered. TfL said that they would review and consider design changes.

In relation to cycle safety, Committee members queried rising cyclist casualties and the impact of e-bikes and whether they should be treated differently when designing lanes. TfL said monitoring continued, design standards aimed to reduce risk.

TfL also advised that Department for Transport (DfT) categories were used and "pedal cycles" included e-bikes; they would not split reporting.

Monitoring of new segregated lanes showed injuries generally falling on those routes.

Officers offered to follow up with precise data after the meeting.

With regards to Colourful crossings, TfL confirmed they would not fund rainbow crossings due to accessibility concerns.

A Committee members asked about the loss of Zipcar from Camden, Officers advised that the Council was exploring options with other operators. The Council considered car clubs vital for reducing private car ownership.

The Chair thanked TfL and Camden Officers for attending and asked that TfL return to the Committee in March 2026 to discuss bus services and long-term plans.

**RESOLVED –**

That the report be noted.

**9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

Consideration was given to the annual report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden.

Members praised progress on libraries retrofit, grit bins, and flood schemes.

In response to questions, Councillor Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden, Richard Bradbury (Director of Environment and Sustainability) and Oliver Jones (Director of Recreation and Public Safety) made the following points:

A Committee member asked for more support from the Council in expanding food growing in school grounds, the Cabinet member advised that this was being explored as Officers were mapping food-growing spots borough-wide.

It was noted however that soil safety and space limitations in dense urban schools had to be managed. Camden already ran some programmes (e.g. "Grow Your Own Onions"). The Cabinet member agreed to check current provision and explore funding.

With regards to West End Lane, waste bags and enforcement, a West Hampstead Ward Councillor raised concerns about recurring problems with bin bags on the pavement on West End Lane and enforcement of business waste contracts, the Cabinet Member advised that Camden had increased collections installed "grit bins" and enforcement had improved the situation.

Time-banded waste collections had been widened to Fortress Gardens and surrounding streets.

One-third of Camden businesses did not have a waste contract; enforcement and engagement were being stepped up.

Camden had applied for a Keep Britain Tidy award for this work.

In relation to recycling performance – stagnation and data issues, a Committee Member queried why recycling percentages fell while residual waste also fell. Officers agreed to produce clearer data as figures were difficult to reconcile from the existing tables.

**ACTION BY: Director of Environment and Sustainability**

Officers advised that Camden's recycling rate was held back by, limited garden waste (few big gardens), communal bins on estates, national metrics based on weight not carbon. It was noted that new simpler recycling laws requiring food waste collection for all homes may help.

Councillors suggested auditing bin locations and improving coverage in areas like Cramer Street.

Responding to a request from a Committee member for local community skip in West Hampstead/Fortune Green, the Cabinet Member welcomed the idea and said it would be factored it into future planning.

**ACTION BY: Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden**

With regards to Flooding – local schemes and adverse weather plans A Committee member praised the Goldhurst Terrace SuDS scheme and asked about expansion. In response it was noted that the strong resident flood action groups in South Hampstead and Gospel Oak had helped Camden target work.

Camden was also part of the Mayor's Flood Ready London programme to trial new interventions.

The new Adverse Weather Plan ran over the summer and coordinated teams across housing, social care and street services to respond quickly when severe weather was forecast.

The Cabinet member confirmed that the Council would continue to invest in local schemes and collaboration with London-wide initiatives.

With regards to combating misinformation on climate change, Officers said Camden saw climate change as factual, not a "debate". Camden promoted accurate information through schools and public engagement. Education work included teaching young people how to spot misinformation. Communications reinforced evidence-based information.

With regards to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) – improving energy efficiency and how the Council could help improve energy standards in PRS homes, it was noted that Camden would gain new powers following the Renters Reform Act.

The Council had previously ran a pilot issuing improvement notices to low-rated EPC homes. The Cabinet Member advised that more resources would be brought in to expand this work. Camden would use new powers under the Renters Reform Act and build on previous pilot projects.

With regards to Park locking – trial using Community Safety Officers and whether this was a full trial and how it was going, officers advised that it was. The Council had shifted locking duties to Community Safety Officers in response to violence against contractors.

Members were informed that the model was working well and was cheaper than previous arrangements. It would continue but would be reviewed seasonally.

With regards to on-street recycling bins, members raised concerns that: removal of public recycling bins may push recyclables into general street bins. Officers advised that large public recycling bins often attracted fly tipping. The Council aimed to ensure good recycling provision at homes and estates instead. Officers advised that more data would be gathered (including supermarket soft-plastic collections).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden and Officers were thanked for their work, time taken to attend the meeting and their responses.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**10. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 AND ACTION TRACKER**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Investment Place and Opportunity.

Members discussed the work programme:

- January meeting: Road safety and e-bike data.
  - February: Heavy agenda including Thames Water and CCTV strategy.
  - March: TfL update on buses and possible biodiversity briefing.
  - CCTV Strategy moved to March as the report was not ready.
  - Buses update from TfL to be scheduled (Director of Buses to attend).
  - January will include updates on e-bike collision data requested previously.
  - Members discussed combining February and March meetings due to heavy agendas.
- Members suggested a special TfL session in the next municipal year for wider engagement.

**Resolved:**

That the Work Programme be noted.

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

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm.

**CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**