

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 2026** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Awale Olad (Chair), Nina De Ayala Parker, Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani, Liam Martin-Lane and Stephen Stark

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden).

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

There were no apologies for absence.

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

Councillors de Ayala Parker, Kirk and Lenga declared in relation to item 7 (Dockless Bike Hire Scheme- Progress Update 2025/26) that they either used Lime or Human Forest bikes or both regularly to commute.

Councillor Madlani declared that in relation to the same item although he was not a customer, he had recently visited a Human Forest Workshop to look at how it operated.

Councillor Hardwick declared that in relation to the same item she was not a customer either but had spent a lot of time reporting issues particularly relating to bikes obstructing the pavement.

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 members that he had received and accepted one deputation, from Julia Jevell in relation to item 7 (Dockless Bike Hire Scheme – Progress Update 2025/26) on the impact of dockless bikes in the area indicating that it would be taken at the start of that item.

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

There were none.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2025 be signed as an accurate record.

7. DOCKLESS BIKE HIRE SCHEME - PROGRESS UPDATE 2025/26

Consideration was also given to the deputation statement referred to in Item 4 above.

Julia Jevell, owner of an independent shop on Tower Street, Covent Garden spoke about problems caused by the Lime dockless bike bay outside her shop on Tower Street. She questioned the environmental benefits of the scheme, noting low car-journey replacement rates. Stating that operators did not respond to complaints and asked, whether a fire risk assessment had been done, why the bay could not be removed or relocated and for the bay to be suspended and replaced with a tree.

Members asked the depute about:

- The exact location of the bay
- Whether antisocial behaviour was reported to police
- Whether customers or staff used dockless bikes
- Engagement with bike operators

The following response was given by the depute to members questions:

- Antisocial behaviour was reported, but police resources were limited
- The bay worsened existing problems
- Neither staff nor customers relied on the bikes
- Bike operators had not responded to her emails

Sam Margolis, Head of Transport Strategy and Projects, Brenda Busingye, Transport and Travel Planning Team Manager, and Sarah Slade Principal Transport Planner provided the following information:

The Tower Street bay was recognised as a problem site. Actions already taken by the Council included:

- The bay had been placed on a high-priority enforcement list.
- Increased patrols and removals.
- 52 bikes removed and 2 penalty notices issued since September.
- Trial of Bluetooth technology to improve parking.

They stated that demand was very high in this area due to theatres, tourism and nearby borough boundaries.

- The Council's powers were limited due to lack of national regulation.
- The Council's approach was to strike a balance between supporting dockless bike hire which was relied upon by many that worked and travelled in the borough and minimising the impact of the scheme on other stakeholders through the legislative tools that were available.
- A meeting had been held with the business owner and Councillors in 2025
- A plan was being worked on to relocate the bay to a safer location nearby (Tower Street/Monmouth Street).
- A Traffic Management Order consultation was planned for this quarter.
- Fire and emergency services were consulted on all bay locations, the fire brigade had not raised any concerns about this site.
- Human Forest and Lime visited the site 3–4 times per day.
- Equalities Impact Assessments were carried out, including women's safety.
- Dockless bike operators shared data with police and users were not anonymous.
- The scheme generated income for the Council, which funded enforcement and the delivery of more infrastructure.

The following information was provided in response to Committee members questions:

- The Council was looking at both extension of the bay and relocation.
- At the site meeting between officers and stakeholders it was agreed that a design for the relocation of the bays would be shared with the ward members and then consulted on. The depute would be consulted on the proposal and have an opportunity to express their views in line with the Council's consultation process, however work was still ongoing.
- The contracts with the bike hire operators included revenue from them which came to the Council to help manage and provide new infrastructure.
- The Council had come a long way in learning about where bays worked best and the various problems as well as the increased demand. The Council continued to roll out the bay network to provide the capacity to cope with the increased demand.
- It was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable locations for additional bays in the West End, Soho and Tower Street areas.
- In terms of the timeline for relocation of the bay on completion of the consultation and implementation subject to approval it would likely be around spring 2026 at the earliest.
- In terms of users of the bikes, the Council had overall data with regards to numbers of users, the operator had information on the types of users.

The Chair informed the depute that the Council was looking to relocate the bay in the area and had provided a timeline to carry this out, officers had also provided response to the deputation.

The Chair thanked the depute for attending the meeting and the deputation.

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

Members referred to the report and raised questions and concerns to officers and Human Forest and Lime operators about:

- Bikes being hacked or used by under-18s
- Bikes repeatedly dumped in the same locations
- Use of bikes in crime or as getaway vehicles
- Low fines not deterring bad parking
- Noise from late-night bike servicing
- Impact on bus users, disabled people and those with pushchairs

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- Poor customer service and reporting systems
- High levels of complaints from residents

In response Jack McKenna, Lime and Alex Berwin, Human Forest provided the following information:

With regards to not responding to the depute's emails, apologised if emails did not reach the correct person at Lime.

Lime was not responsible for deciding bay locations and stated Lime had:

- Data-sharing agreements with police.
 - Updated bikes to prevent "hacking".
 - Increased staff and improved response times.
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- Accepted that Tower Street was difficult and needed improvement.
 - Acknowledged Lime could not guarantee no complaints from residents but committed to working with councillors daily.
 - Noted very high demand in the West End and limited bay space.

Human Forest:

- Reported they do not have problems with hacked bikes.
 - Said abandoned bikes usually happen when users were "in a rush".
 - They fined users between £10–£20 for bad parking.
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- Under-18 use was low and users must confirm age and payment details.
 - Bikes left outside bays triggered enforcement and fines.
 - Night-time servicing can be restricted in sensitive areas.
 - Fleet sizes were capped; more bays do not mean more bikes.
 - Reporting systems exist, including QR codes and local contact routes.

Members expressed strong concerns about ongoing problems. There was frustration about the impact on residents and councillors' casework.

The Operators were asked to improve:

- Reporting tools
- Night-time servicing
- Awareness messages (e.g. bus stop safety)

Members welcomed enforcement action and the plan to relocate the Tower Street bay.

The Committee reinforced that Camden needed better partnership working, safer, compliant parking and improved communication with residents and councillors

The Chair thanked the operators and officers for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

8. ADVERTISING BOARDS (A-BOARDS)

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

In response to questions, Tracey Hogan (Streetworks Authorisation and Compliance Manager) made the following points:

- A trial was planned to improve street safety by reducing pavement clutter from A-boards.
- There was strong support from blind and visually impaired residents.
- Officers worked with the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) on clear guidance and new pavement markings.
- The aim was to encourage behaviour change rather than rely on enforcement.
- The work followed earlier deputations, including one from a blind resident.
- New decals and guidance for businesses would be used.
- The trial had been welcomed by many businesses.
- Physical markers (such as studs) were not supported due to trip risks.

Members commented that they:

- Strongly supported the trial.
- Welcomed work with disability groups and RNIB.

Officers were thanked for the report and attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

9. CAMDEN'S GET ACTIVE PROGRAMME (GAP)

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Recreation and Public Safety and Director of Health and Wellbeing.

In attendance to respond to members questions were Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety, Piers Simey, Deputy Director of Public Health, Ajay Gajree, Healthy Living Contract Manager, Ayana Griffith, Public Health Strategist and Martin Thompson, Get Active Specialist.

Officers provided an update on the Get Active Programme. Noting that the programme supported people with long-term health conditions to become more active. Referrals came mainly from GPs. Support was intensive for 12 weeks, with follow-up, up to six months. Activities included walking, gym use, classes and local community options.

Members asked about:

- Long-term behaviour change
- Links to community centres
- Support after the programme ended
- Benefits to mental health and employment
- Access for people without diagnosed conditions
- Gender imbalance in referrals
- Future funding

In response officers provided the following information:

- Most behaviour change was sustained after six months.
- Participants were encouraged to join local activities.
- Men's participation was lower, reflecting wider trends.
- Targeted work was being done for men.
- Strong improvements were seen in:
 - Physical activity
 - Mental wellbeing
 - Confidence and daily mobility
- Many users continued activity after the programme.
- Funding was currently secure, but expansion depended on NHS support.
- The programme was evidence-based and valued by clinicians.

Members welcomed and praised the programme.

Officers were thanked for the report and attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. INSIGHT, LEARNING AND IMPACT REPORT QUARTER 2/ MID YEAR - INVESTMENT PLACE AND OPPORTUNITY DIRECTORATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors

Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability, and Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety, gave the following key responses to questions:

With regards to public safety and the Night-Time Strategy, the aim was to make Camden's night-time safer and more family-friendly. Examples included:

- Camden night markets
- Cultural events like "Camden High Street Fashion Show"
- Kilburn Lights installations.

Public Safety Concerns included:

- Continuing pressure on policing levels.
- Camden mitigating impact from some changes, e.g. school safety support.
- Ongoing far-right activity near local faith centres; Council worked closely with police and community groups.
- Remained a high priority due to national tensions and reduced police presence.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

11. 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 noting that:

Several major items were planned for February and March and agreed that the TfL bus ventilation item can be submitted as a written update instead of a full agenda item.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

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CHAIR

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MINUTES END