

ITEM 7

Minutes of the Camden Local Strategic Partnership Thursday 25 February 2010, 10:30am, Camden Town Hall

Present

- Cllr Keith Moffitt (Chair of LSP), London Borough of Camden, Leader
- Professor David Latchman, Birkbeck College, Master (present for items 1 to 4)
- Stephen Jordan, London & Continental Stations and Property, Managing Director
- Mick Hickey, Job Centre Plus, External Relations Manager – Central London District
- Sarah Elie, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Somerstown Community Association
- Anju Bhatt, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Camden BME Alliance, Chief Executive
- Moira Gibb, London Borough of Camden, Chief Executive
- Dr Quentin Sandifer, NHS Camden and London Borough of Camden, Director of Public Health
- Chris Shaw, Camden Town Unlimited, Chair
- Glen Gorman, Station Commander, London Fire Brigade (in place of Mark Hazelton)

Also in attendance

- Juliet Chua, London Borough of Camden, Assistant Chief Executive
- Kirstin McLarty, Ipsos MORI, Research Manager, Local Government Research Unit
- Mark Benbow, London Borough of Camden, Assistant Director – Community Safety
- Jackie Barry-Purssell, Audit Commission, CAA Lead for Camden
- Joyce Saunders, Audit Commission
- Omar Ralph, Government Office for London, Locality Manager – North London
- Finneguela O'Brien, London Borough of Camden, head of Strategy and Performance
- Mary Burguieres, London Borough of Camden, Head of Policy
- Mike Webb, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer
- Rachel Kelly, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer
- Donna Turnbull, Camden Community Empowerment Network, Strategy and Policy Officer
- Louise Regan, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer

1 Introductions and apologies for absences

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Andrew Marshall, Ann Baxter, Kevin Munslow, Simone Hensby, Shelagh O'Connor, Mark Hazelton, Mark Atkinson, Karen Wilson and Dominic Clout. Glen Gorman and Anju Bhatt substituted for Mark Hazelton and Simone Hensby respectively.
- 1.2 In noting her absence, the Chair congratulated Shelagh O'Connor on the opening of the New Horizons Youth Centre's new building. He welcomed Juliet Chua and Mark Benbow to the meeting. Juliet has joined Camden Council on secondment from the Treasury as Assistant Chief Executive in a job share with Sarah Mullen. Mark is the Council's new Assistant Director for Community Safety and formerly Metropolitan Police Borough Commander for Waltham Forest.

2 Camden's Local Area Agreement 2008-11

- 2.1 The Chair began by saying that the Council's Executive had agreed the refreshed LAA including some last minute changes the previous evening. Finn O'Brien presented the circulated report and a tabled addendum setting out those changes. She reminded the LSP that every year the government requires LSPs to refresh their LAA.
- 2.2 Two of the original seven indicators being refreshed in the circulated – NI 141 and NI 186 – have now been left unchanged. The remaining indicators are being refreshed because of the impact of the recession, baselines are now available from the Place Survey or there were no targets set going into 2009/10. The change to the net additional homes target (NI 154) is outstanding due to government changes to the definition of the baseline. The Assistant Chief Executive will make this change using her delegated authority with the agreement of the Leader of the Council.
- 2.3 Omar Ralph apologised for the last minute changes and added that the delay in agreeing the NI 154 target is due to the need to align government targets with those of the Mayor of London.
- 2.4 In response to a query, the Chair confirmed that the basket of social cohesion indicators was still part of the LAA. The Social Cohesion Forum has expressed dissatisfaction with the national indicators because they did not relate to specific groups. However the Chair reported that at a recent Institute of Community Cohesion conference hosted by the council, Ted Cattle, the Institute's Chair, said that this was a strength at a national level as they are relevant to all localities including those that may, for example, be ethnically homogeneous. Finn confirmed that the Social Cohesion Forum would be responsible for monitoring the basket of indicators.
- 2.5 The LSP agreed the Local Area Agreement, including the tabled changes.

3 Recession dashboard

- 3.1 Juliet Chua presented this report. She highlighted three indicators in the dashboard starting with a new indicator, the number of theft and handling stolen goods offences. It is rising despite a fall in overall acquisitive crime but there is no established link to the recession and other factors are likely to be involved.

- 3.2 Juliet also drew the LSP's attention to the marginal increase in the JSA claimant count and the fall in the 16-24 claimant count for the third month in a row. Youth unemployment has been a focus of the Recovery Fund but the fall is as likely due to young people staying in education as to improved labour market conditions.
- 3.3 She went on to propose that regular monitoring of the dashboard be delegated to the Economic Development Partnership (EDP). The rationale for this change was that most of the key indicators fall into its remit, it would allow monitoring to continue during the purdah period and permit the LSP to focus on wider public finance issues and Total Place. The EDP would report major developments on an exception basis.
- 3.4 Chris Shaw was not entirely happy with the proposal as the borough is still in recession and it is useful to see all the data, not just what the EDP reports back. He would be reluctant to lose it although perhaps it need not come to every LSP meeting.
- 3.5 The Chair acknowledged that it was a useful spur to discussion and said that the EDP could monitor the dashboard during the next few months and the reconvened LSP could make a decision on its long term future after the elections. Juliet also recognised its value and suggested that perhaps it could become a quarterly report from the EDP.
- 3.6 David Latchman agreed that it should be retained and suggested that it could be circulated but not necessarily discussed at meetings.
- 3.7 Mark Benbow warned against making a link between the recession and crime rates. Burglary has been going down recently but trends are often short-lived. In the case of shoplifting the rise could be a good sign since it indicates better detection rates. The Chair agreed, saying such increases in arrests in Camden Town had been an issue in the past.
- 3.8 Mick Hickey said that although the latest JSA figures were good news, the volume of new claims has been increasing since Christmas and this would probably filter through to the figures next month.
- 3.9 Stephen Jordan said that after the election the LSP would need to look at the delivery of services and continuing economic problems. As the situation in Europe shows, the recovery is faltering and issues related to the recession will surface again.
- 3.10 Anju Bhatt said it would be useful for the voluntary sector to continue receiving updates on the recession and the CEN suggested a link to the dashboard on Camden's website.
- 3.11 The Chair said that it was clear that the LSP wanted to keep the dashboard as it was such a good aid to discussion. He recognised the need to pick up on key recession themes. In the interim the EDP would monitor it and the council would look into putting a link to it on its website.
- 3.12 Chris Shaw updated the LSP on Camden Town Unlimited's business space project which provides free office space and WiFi to graduates from UCL and

elsewhere. The aim is to allow the knowledge base created by local HE institutions to remain in the borough.

- 3.13 Chris also brought the LSP's attention to the proposals to close the Northern Line, which have left Camden Town businesses aghast. Even if the work is completed on time, the whole Northern Line will be mostly closed for a year including 33 consecutive weekends. The results will be devastating for Camden Town, Hampstead and other areas in the borough. At a recent meeting in New York, BIDs there said there would be uproar if the New York Transit was shut in a similar way during a recession. He said that the LSP needs to be vociferous in its opposition. He stressed that the proposals were from Tube Lines rather than TfL or the Mayor and added that they would have a wider impact on areas such as anti-social behaviour. CTU are already lobbying for a more considered approach and encouraged the LSP to follow suit.
- 3.14 The Chair replied that he shared his concern having seen the impact of Jubilee Line closures in other parts of the borough. He said that he had recently written to Richard Parry, Managing Director of London Underground to voice his opposition to the plans.
- 3.15 Stephen Jordan suggested mobilising London First and encouraging them to have a dialogue with London Underground and Tube Lines. London First are firm advocates of the need to upgrade the underground and are influential. However they need to be aware of the disruption these proposals will cause.
- 3.16 David Latchman suggested writing to London First soon as its Board, of which he is a member, were meeting the following week. He also recommended writing to the CBI London Council which is keen to tackle some specific London issues. He added that Birkbeck relied on its students being able to arrive on time and get home quickly in the evenings and at weekends.
- 3.17 The Chair reflected on the impact of replacement buses combined with the numerous road works currently taking place in the borough. He thanked Chris Shaw for raising the issue and agreed to write to London First and the CBI London Council on the LSP's behalf.

4 Meeting future challenges: what matters most to our residents?

- 4.1 Kirstin McLarty of Ipsos MORI gave a presentation on residents' perceptions of Camden drawn from the Place Survey and other data, setting it in the national context and the future challenges for public services¹.
- 4.2 The Chair began the discussion by saying it was depressing that council services are seen as important by residents but they are not aware that local authorities are responsible for them. He wondered how self-contained cities compare with London boroughs. Kirstin replied that research outside London found that there are similar issues – people still move around, crossing local authority boundaries for work etc – but they are more pronounced in London. The Chair added that, given that staff speaking highly of a local authority is

¹ The presentation slides can be downloaded from www.camden.gov.uk/lspmeetings. Ipsos MORI have also published two national analyses of Place Survey data available at <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oltemId=1330> and <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oltemId=1270>.

such an important factor in its reputation, Camden was at a disadvantage because so few of its staff live in the borough. Kirstin recognised the challenge and said that the council has little influence over some factors - for example, people in the North East just tend to be more satisfied with public services than in other regions.

- 4.3 Quentin Sandifer said the presentation provided a lot of rich information from a health perspective. It was striking that nationally the public see health as a middle ranking priority, in need of protection and not in need of improvement. Locally, public opinion is divided on whether health services are meeting needs. NHS Camden is making progress on health inequalities but the impact is hidden from view and is unrecognised by a vocal minority. The problem is that health data at a population level is meaningless for most people. It is difficult to communicate the need for change to a model designed in the 1960s which has been outpaced by technology and outcomes. The results of NHS Camden's most recent survey in October 2009 was generally positive about levels of care and GP services. Other public services probably share the frustration that the public only tend to recognise the value of services when there is a threat of change.
- 4.4 The Chair said that if survey questions ask about recent experiences of public services than overall opinions, responses tended to be more positive. Moira Gibb agreed with Quentin's point – the public tend to think about public services in iconic terms, even in Staffordshire they wouldn't want to see the hospital closed. Public services make people feel secure in an area, even if they don't use them and attitudes tend to lag behind behaviour.
- 4.5 Mark Benbow said that although the perceptions of anti-social behaviour were disappointing, they have kicked off a lot of work in the borough. Sometimes public perceptions are influenced by individual and/or London-wide incidents, even by TV programmes like The Bill. Safer Neighbourhoods Teams have been brought in to close the reassurance gap through things like street briefings although there is a dilemma in what their message should be. The Met Police's proxy indicators are showing an increase in confidence. However it takes a very long time to shift people's perceptions of places like Camden Town.
- 4.6 Stephen Jordan reflected on the difficulty of measuring perceptions of public services. He contrasted it with more straightforward research on products and services in the private sector. Perceptions are based on comparisons and it is hard to get a benchmark – people can't judge the experience of living in one city against another. This type of research needs a health warning although it is useful. It leads on to the role of the local authority which people do not often see as a whole, although it is blamed if they are not happy. There are also a lot of neutrals and "don't knows" in the data. Stephen was sceptical about measuring change over time since perceptions don't tend to change from month to month, do not have a strong basis in actual events and lag behind reality.
- 4.7 Moira Gibb said that the response of a national politician to this type of data would be to ringfence funding for what the public say are priorities such as the NHS and schools. However Tony Travers has said recently that this ringfencing would mean other services could face cuts of up to 50% and people do value clean streets and other lower profile services. She agreed with Stephen Jordan

and warned it may be dangerous to assume the public would be happy with the consequences of such actions.

- 4.8 Sarah Elie also agreed, thinking that the relative lack of importance placed on community facilities by the survey data might be used to divert funding from them.
- 4.9 Anju Bhatt asked about data for BME groups, disabled people etc, to which Kirstin replied that the baselines were too small at a borough level. Camden would need to carry out an additional survey as it has done in the past with the Social Capital Survey. The only data available in the Place Survey is at the level of BME groups as a whole compared with White people. She acknowledged that response rates from specific BME groups were often lower than MORI would like. Anju reinforced Moira Gibb's earlier point about people's attachment to local facilities, highlighting the importance of local shops in preventing social isolation among older people.
- 4.10 Juliet Chua commented that it was striking that the decline in the perception of Britain has coincided with an expansion of government. Camden has been well resourced up to now but we are now facing a world where money is much tighter and we need to have a dialogue with the public about efficiency. The Chair added that efficiency in health leads to popular outcomes such as quicker elective surgery but also means a need for fewer hospitals, which is unpopular.
- 4.11 Glen Gorman commented on the gap between reality and perception which can be influenced by things like burnt-out cars. The reality tends to only be experienced by individuals. Kirstin added that satisfaction with services is always higher among actual users.
- 4.12 Stephen Jordan was concerned about the perverse incentives which can be generated by efforts to meet targets. It is easy for public service providers to say that the public are wrong in their perceptions of services but our sense of what is the "right" perception is influenced by, for example, what we record as crimes. Moira Gibb added that factors governing "reality" can be outside the control of public services. For example, the police are seeing a large rise in mobile phone thefts because reporting a lost phone as stolen allows the person to claim on their insurance.
- 4.13 Jackie Barry-Purcell thought that this type of data also reflects what people think about the role of public services – for some, housing and jobs may not be in their remit. Finn O'Brien noted that Camden's Annual Residents' Survey allows us to distinguish between people who are heavily reliant on council services and those who use them less. Mark Benbow commented that Waltham Forest's LSP had a seminar bringing all the survey data together and Camden might wish to do the same.

5 Thematic updates

- 5.1 In Ann Baxter's absence, the Chair asked if an update from the Children's Trust Partnership Board could be circulated by e-mail.
- 5.2 Quentin Sandifer reported that the Health and Well-being Board discussed two items at their recent meeting. The first was progress on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment from data collection and analysis to sharing the information with constituents and getting their opinions. The second item was a discussion

led by the Council's Assistant Director for Planning on the Local Development Framework to help ensure public health considerations are reflected in that document.

- 5.3 Mick Hickey said that following on from the presentation at the previous LSP meeting on Local Employment Partnerships and youth unemployment, the Economic Development Partnership (EDP) had agreed to formulate a delivery plan to co-ordinate employment engagement. At the most recent EDP meeting, there were also presentations from DWP Welfare to Work contractors and a decision to hold a meeting to facilitate closer working between the contractors and the local voluntary and community sector. Sarah Elie asked who represented the voluntary sector on the EDP as the Community Empowerment Network was keen to be more closely involved with the partnership. Mick and Sarah agreed to discuss further outside the meeting.

6 Minutes of previous meeting

- 6.1 The minutes of the meeting on 10 December 2009 were agreed.

7 Matters arising and future business

- 7.1 Mary Burguieres said that the evening seminar scheduled for 18 March would be on Total Place. The aim is for partners to better understand the Total Place agenda, to look at some interesting research done at a London level and to consider how Total Place can help the LSP prepare for a period of much tighter public finances. The Chair said that one possible speaker is Dick Sorabji of London Councils. He had invited the members of the Council's Executive to attend and perhaps an invitation could be extended to other partners. Omar Ralph stressed how important Total Place is to central government and offered the Government Office for London's help in organising the seminar.
- 7.2 The Chair noted that it was Omar Ralph's last meeting and thanked him for his contribution. Omar said that the Government Office for London would be represented by Don Thomas in future although Janet Capstick would provide continuity.
- 7.3 Mary said that the thematic partnerships would continue to meet and deal with partnership business during purdah. She proposed that any essential LSP business be conducted by e-mail until June. The Chair said he was keen to pursue lobbying on transport infrastructure. Finn O'Brien said that in terms of the CAA, she would be meeting Jackie Barry-Purssell the following week and would keep the LSP up to date as necessary. Jackie added that the Audit Commission would be looking at some areas but are keen to remain proportionate.

8 Any Other Business

- 8.1 There was none.

9 Dates of forthcoming meetings

- 9.1 The seminar on Total Place will be held on 18 March between 6pm and 8pm. Given the increased numbers, it is likely that it will be held at another venue.

Summary of actions

- LSP secretariat to consider how recession dashboard will be reported to the LSP after the elections and possibility of putting it on the council's website.
- The Chair to write to London First and the CBI's London Council on the LSP's behalf to secure their support in lobbying against the Northern Line closures.
- Ann Baxter to provide an update from the Children's Trust Partnership Board to be circulated by e-mail.

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