

# ITEM 8

## Minutes of the Camden Local Strategic Partnership Thursday 9 October, 10:30am, Camden Town Hall

### Present

- Cllr Keith Moffitt (Chair of LSP), London Borough of Camden, Leader
- Cllr Andrew Marshall, London Borough of Camden, Deputy Leader
- Ann Baxter, London Borough of Camden, Director of Children's Services
- Chris Shaw, Camden Town Unlimited, Chair
- Kofi Twumasi-Anokye, Job Centre Plus (in place of Mick Hickey)
- Stephen Jordan, London & Continental Stations and Property, Managing Director
- Moira Gibb, London Borough of Camden, Chief Executive
- Chief Supt Dominic Clout, Metropolitan Police, Borough Commander
- Simone Hensby, Chair, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Voluntary Action Camden
- Shelagh O'Connor, Camden Community Empowerment Network and New Horizons Youth Centre
- Sarah Elie, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Somerstown Community Centre
- Pat Stack, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Disability in Camden
- Michael Quy, London Fire Brigade, Borough Commander
- Richard Bell, Learning and Skills Council, Partnership Director London Central
- Karen Wilson, Camden Housing Association and Co-op Forum and Origin Housing Group, Chief Executive

### Also in attendance

- Jackie Barry-Purssell, Audit Commission, CAA Lead
- Mike O'Donnell, London Borough of Camden, Director of Finance
- Alison Dickens, London Borough of Camden, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Partnerships
- Gail Tolley, London Borough of Camden, Assistant Director, Learning and School Effectiveness
- Louise Matlock, Government Office for London, Locality Manager – North
- Finn O'Brien, London Borough of Camden, Head of Performance
- Mary Burguieres, London Borough of Camden, Head of Policy
- Mike Webb, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer
- Linda Fergusson, Camden Community Empowerment Network, Coordinator
- Aidan Brooks, London Borough of Camden, Principal Lawyer
- Bob West, London Borough of Camden, Interim Assistant Director, Planning
- David Joyce, London Borough of Camden, Planning Policy and Information Manager

## **1 Introductions and apologies for absence**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed three new members to the LSP; Ann Baxter, Shelagh O'Connor and Sarah Elie. Shelagh and Sarah were elected to the LSP by the CCEN Executive Board replacing Barry Peskin and Charlie Legg. He also welcomed Jackie Barry-Purssell, the Audit Commission's CAA Lead for Camden, and informed the LSP that Michael Scorer would no longer be attending as he has taken up a new position as the council's Interim Director of Housing and Adult Social Care.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Rob Larkman, David Latchman, Anthony Kessel, Kevin Munslow and Mick Hickey.

## **2 Economic downturn**

- 2.1 The Chair apologised for the last minute change to the agenda but hoped that LSP members would understand given the gravity of the issue.
- 2.2 Mike O'Donnell tabled a paper which had also been circulated to the joint Executive and Camden Management Team meeting the previous evening. Although it just covered the ways in which the Council could be affected by the economic downturn, it was a useful prompt for a wider partnership discussion.
- 2.3 The Council's major capital projects such as decent homes, homes for older people and PFI projects are likely to be affected by the difficulties in capital markets. Camden did not have any money invested in Icelandic banks although it does invest elsewhere and is finding it difficult to find suitable places to do so.
- 2.4 The Council could also experience an increase in demand for its services, for example social care, more children eligible for free school meals and children previously educated privately moving to the state sector. Increased inflation and pension costs will also have an effect on the Council's finances. This is all at a time when central government finances are under significant strain owing to the plans to recapitalise the banking sector.
- 2.5 The Council will also have to respond a number of factors in the wider economy such as:
  - reduced charitable giving
  - increased personal debt
  - more business failures
  - less construction by RSLs and private developers
  - less revenue from parking, planning applications etc
  - decreased land valuesMany of these could impact on LAA targets although some such as decreased land values may have benefits.

- 2.6 Stephen Jordan commented that some areas of Camden may be vulnerable due to their dependency on single large employers. The Local Development Framework could be used to avoid this situation happening in future. Hopefully the King's Cross Central development should not be badly affected as the partners involved are generally robust and it should be countercyclical. There is momentum behind the development which should continue although perhaps not at the same pace as before.
- 2.7 Chris Shaw stressed how important it is that King's Cross Central continues. He distinguished between development projects that have started and those that haven't. The latter are now unlikely to start because capital is just unavailable. There will therefore be an impact on business space and affordable housing. The media sector is experiencing particular difficulties which will have an impact on Camden Town although the expansion of MTV will partially offset it. Smaller businesses are obviously vulnerable although some may actually be created through the break up of larger businesses. The Council needs to be pragmatic about issues such as planning and affordable housing.
- 2.8 Cllr Marshall was pleased that the prognosis for King's Cross Central was good and added that the King's Cross Construction Training Centre is expanding, largely thanks to private sector funding. However he expressed concern about future section 106 funding for affordable housing from Crossrail. Chris Shaw said that in this economic climate the Crossrail business rate precept may make businesses less willing to pay for BIDs. This will be discussed at an upcoming meeting between London BIDs and the GLA.
- 2.9 Karen Wilson said that the impact on affordable housing schemes would be felt in 3-5 years as developers are now not embarking on new projects. She said the current affordable housing model in which sales subsidise social housing is no longer working. RSLs need larger grants from the Housing Corporation to keep supply going otherwise they won't be able to capitalise on falling land prices. RSL revenue is also falling as bad debts and voids increase, reducing the scope for value added activities, in the same way that businesses are cutting back on charitable giving. In this context, LAA targets need to be reviewed and mitigating strategies put in place.
- 2.10 The Chair thanked LSP members for their comments and suggested that they discuss the issue at greater length at a future seminar.

### **3 Comprehensive Area Assessment**

- 3.1 Jackie Barry-Purssell gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The slides are available from [www.camden.gov.uk/lspmeetings](http://www.camden.gov.uk/lspmeetings).

3.2 The Chair thanked Jackie for her presentation. Ann Baxter asked whether Children's Services would get a separate rating within the CAA framework. Jackie replied that Ofsted had been involved in the CAA trials although the Audit Commission and its regulatory partners are still considering how best to assess whether vulnerable people (including children) are getting the services they need. Clearly the approach needs to be proportionate, so one option is a risk-based approach for Children's Services.

#### **4 Camden's Community Strategy: Camden Together 2007-2012**

4.1 Mike Webb gave the LSP an overview of the latest Camden Together progress report, on "Increasing access to skills, education, training and jobs". He highlighted some achievements since the Community Strategy was launched, and then briefly described how partners are working to better co-ordinate their work both strategically and operationally. However there are opportunities to work more closely with higher education, private sector employers and the voluntary sector to deliver the Camden Together commitments. He finished by setting out the major risks to delivery; the uncertain funding situation from 2009/10 onwards and the economic downturn.

4.2 Gail Tolley said that the expansion of 14-19 vocational provision contributed to Camden's best ever GCSE results this year. She thanked employers, including some LSP members, for their support for the new vocational diplomas, three more of which will be offered from next September with a further five in the pipeline. She said that Camden was extremely lucky to have three of the four London Specialist Designated Institutions in the borough. However she warned that the LSC's focus on funding Level 2 qualifications often does little to help Camden's workless residents, many of whom need access to more basic skills training. In particular, she stressed the importance of ESOL.

4.3 Kofi Twumasi-Anokye said that Job Centre Plus had noticed a slight increase in new claims in the Central London district but these were offset by people coming off benefits. Job Centre Plus is considering how it should react to the economic downturn. Welfare reform, in particular lone parents moving from Income Support to Jobseeker's Allowance, will have a greater impact in the short term than the economic downturn. Many Camden residents are well-qualified and experienced so should have less need for Job Centre Plus services should they lose their jobs.

4.4 In response to the point about ESOL, Richard Bell said that LSC funding is to providers rather directly to learners. He was concerned about drop in take-up by Camden residents and believed this might be due to potential learners not realising that ESOL classes are free to workless people. He added that Camden Council had now signed up to

the government's Skills Pledge and this should contribute to achieving the community strategy commitments.

- 4.5 Cllr Marshall asked about progress on the ESOL strategy. He said that there is more to do because he still attended meetings in the community where interpreters were present and not just for the older generation. He questioned whether schools should be offering GCSEs in community languages as opposed to more vocational languages although he acknowledged the need for a balance. He also said that anecdotal evidence suggested that one group who were not well-served are local young people graduating from universities who are not achieving their employment potential because class and race still play a major part in finding graduate level jobs.
- 4.6 Simone Hensby noted that the voluntary and community sector is a significant employer in the borough and rising costs were putting pressure on the sector. She supported Gail's point about the emphasis on Level 2 provision not being appropriate for local workless people. She also mentioned the voluntary and community sector's current work on developing its workforce. A particular issue is the fact that some staff who don't have workplace qualifications don't qualify for Train to Gain because they are already Level 2 and above in other qualifications. She was pleased to see the sector's contribution weaved into the report but felt there could have been more analysis of strengths and weaknesses.
- 4.7 Gail Tolley said that the ESOL strategy had been drafted but the sign-off route through partnerships and the council needed to be determined. She felt there needed to be more flexibility around Level 2 funding so it could be used for pre-Level 2 provision. Access to ESOL would be improved if it was available in more community-based settings. The LSC and the Children, Schools and Families Directorate have regular discussions on these and other issues. The biggest development will be the demise of the LSC in October 2010 as part of the "Machinery of Government" changes. Gail suggested that there should be a report to the LSP when there are more concrete plans. Richard Bell added that the LSC would be working very closely with councils in the run-up to October 2010 to allow them to better understand the process.
- 4.8 Alison Dickens said that funding issues could not be avoided. She is taking a twin-track approach, developing the longer term Economic Development Strategy alongside more urgent action on LDA funding. She felt there was more work to be done to ensure local people benefit from King's Cross and St Pancras. We also need to maintain the innovative work by Camden Working and its partnerships. There is also a need to better engage with business, particularly around the employment hubs and clusters that characterise Camden's economy. The Economic Development Strategy would come to the LSP for its endorsement.

- 4.9 Stephen Jordan felt that the King's Cross Construction Centre did not have a high enough profile, considering it may well become the country's first construction skills academy, long before a similar project at the Olympics site. He agreed to discuss this further with Cllr Marshall.

## **5 Camden's Local Area Agreement**

- 5.1 Finn O'Brien presented this report on progress on the LAA delivery arrangements. 49 delivery plans have now been completed including one since the report was circulated, with six outstanding. 13 indicators are awaiting targets often because the datasets weren't ready but Finn was confident that they would be agreed as part of the LAA refresh over the next few months. The two targets based on the Place Survey would present a challenge because there will be only two weeks between the publication of the results and the deadline for agreeing targets with the Government Office for London (GOL).
- 5.2 There are currently seven targets which do not have a lead partnership, now that volunteering has been allocated to the Social Cohesion Forum. Extended PPG has commissioned a report on a possible Wellbeing Partnership which would provide a home for four of these targets. The LSP will receive an update on this at its next meeting. Finn asked whether the LSP wanted to be the lead partnership for the seven targets itself or whether Extended PPG should take this role.
- 5.3 The LAA refresh would consist of a review of delivery arrangements by GOL, agreeing outstanding baselines and targets and negotiating any changes to targets in light of the economic situation. The Decent Homes target will now be included in the LAA as part of the refresh.
- 5.4 Louise Matlock said that the DWP would be taking a hard line on changes to targets and would insist on robust evidence, which could be difficult given the data lag. CLG may be more sympathetic about housing targets.
- 5.5 The Chair observed that the targets that didn't have a lead partnership were some of the most important ones for the council. He thought it would be good for the LSP to keep a close eye on them, especially the CO2 emissions target. Finn said it would involve looking at more detailed information such as the delivery plans. Dominic Clout thought this would be a challenge to fit into the agenda. He thought exception reporting might be more appropriate especially as the LSP had an oversight role for all targets. The Chair suggested that Extended PPG take the lead partnership role but the LSP would receive exception reports and a little more detail on the seven than for the other LAA targets. He asked Finn for an update, perhaps before the next meeting.

- 5.6 Chris Shaw and Karen Wilson wondered if there was a role for the RSL forum on the housing targets in the absence of a formal housing partnership. Finn replied that the forum had contributed to the LAA development process. The Chair noted these comments.
- 5.7 In response to a query from Simone Hensby, Mary Burguieres said the final consultant's report on the Wellbeing Partnership should be completed by the end of the month.

## **6 Camden's Local Development Framework**

- 6.1 Bob West presented this report, stressing that the LDF is a collective document and encouraging LSP members to respond to the consultation that starts today. The Council also needs partners' input at a technical level to form a sound evidence base, in particular any plans or projections for the period 2015-2025.
- 6.2 The Chair asked what impact the credit crunch would have on the LDF. David Joyce replied that it covered a 15 year period from 2010 and the headlines would need to stay the same. The impact of the economic downturn would be more short-term but there would need to be flexibility in the implementation of things like affordable housing and TfL projects. Camden is fortunate to have a diverse economic base and there would continue to be demand for development in areas such as student housing. Chris Shaw supported these points, saying this countercyclical demand would still need to be met.
- 6.3 Bob said the development of social and economic infrastructure would be needed whatever the economic climate and there might be the opportunity for a bigger role for the public sector in Camden Town.
- 6.4 Echoing his earlier point, Stephen Jordan commented that the LDF needed to future-proof locations in the borough to ensure they had a broad base to withstand economic downturns and to avoid kneejerk reactions.
- 6.5 Cllr Marshall said that communicating the LDF to a non-planning audience was a challenge as it is difficult to engage with. Simone Hensby agreed; CCEN needed to revisit the LDF but wasn't quite sure how to approach it. David Joyce said his team were running facilitated workshops for schoolchildren and producing an article for Your Camden in efforts to engage the public. He offered to come to speak to CCEN.
- 6.6 Mary Burguieres reminded the LSP that it would be returning the LDF through the five-year prism of the Community Strategy at its next meeting.
- 6.7 The LSP endorsed the Core Strategy Preferred Approach and agreed to cooperate in the information gathering process.

## **7 Thematic partnership updates**

- 7.1 Dominic Clout reported that the Community Safety Partnership's plans to take over responsibility for Preventing Violent Extremism work in the borough from the Social Cohesion Forum would be discussed at the Public Services Board and the LSP would be updated at the December meeting.

## **8 Reports and updates on LSP seminars and working groups**

### *Climate Change Alliance*

- 8.1 Oliver Myers informed the LSP that the Climate Change Alliance was making good progress. The first Steering Group meeting was held on 22 September and attended by many LSP member organisations. The launch will take place on 6 November at the Building Centre; 150 of the largest organisations in the borough have been invited. After the launch, baselines will be agreed with participating organisations followed by a full launch combined with the Better Climate for Camden Awards in March.
- 8.2 The Chair thought that climate change could still be addressed in leaner economic times by emphasising ways in which money can be saved e.g. home insulation. Chris Shaw thought that there should be a sequence of events following the launch to maintain the alliance's profile, such as his idea for a car-free day in Camden Town.

### *LSP Safer Neighbourhoods Working Group*

- 8.3 As Chair of this Working Group, Cllr Marshall reported that it had had a meeting which agreed the need for Safer Neighbourhood Panels and Area Forums to work better together. Dominic Clout said co-ordination was the key, particularly joint planning of agendas. Cllr Marshall added that the Working Group hadn't included the NHS in this work so there might be a need to revisit it in the future.

### *Camden Town LSP seminar*

- 8.4 A note on 11-13 Camden High Street, promised at the seminar, was tabled.
- 8.5 The Chair said that he and Camden Town Unlimited met Munira Mirza, the GLA's Arts and Tourism Director to discuss Camden Town that week, and that he and Cllr Marshall would be discussing it when they meet Sir Simon Milton next week.

## **9 Minutes of the previous meeting**

- 9.1 Paragraph 10.2 should read “body worn videos” rather than “head cameras”.

## **10 Matters arising and future business**

10.1 Following on from the Licensing Policy Statement and Alcohol Harm Reduction paper produced as a matter arising from the LSP meeting on 4 July, Chris Shaw said that Camden Town Unlimited would circulate a paper on licensing in Camden Town as he believed it was important to distinguish between off and on licence sales. The latter were generally well-managed so a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate.

10.2 Simone Hensby passed on a comment from Barry Peskin that he felt the paper focused too much on crime and not enough on health.

## **11 Any other business**

11.1 There was none.

The meeting closed at 12:30pm.

### **Summary of decisions and actions arising from the meeting**

- The LSP will hold a seminar on the economic downturn.
- The LSP will receive an update on the “Machinery of Government” changes to skills funding when plans have been put in place.
- The LSP will be asked to endorse the Economic Development Strategy when it has been drafted.
- Stephen Jordan and Cllr Marshall will discuss what more could be done to promote the King’s Cross Construction Centre.
- Extended PPG will inform the LSP at its December meeting of its recommendations regarding a possible Well-being Partnership.
- Extended PPG will take responsibility for the 7 LAA targets that do not currently have a lead partnership.
- The LSP will receive more updates on these 7 targets than on the others, including between meetings if appropriate.
- David Joyce will brief the CCEN Executive Board on the LDF.
- The LSP endorsed the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Approach and agreed to cooperate in the information gathering process.
- The LSP will receive an update on the governance of Preventing Violent Extremism work at its December meeting.
- Camden Town Unlimited will circulate a paper on licensing in Camden Town before the December meeting.