

# RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM  
COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, JUDD STREET, LONDON WC1H 9JE

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## MEMBERS

Councillor Linda Chung (Chair) (LD)

Councillors Rebecca Filer (L), Edmund Frondigoun (L), Liam Martin-Lane (L), Jenny Mulholland (L), Andrew Parkinson (C), Jonathan Simpson (L) and James Slater (L)

## SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillors Ajok Athian (L), Nina De Ayala Parker (L), Julian Fulbrook (L), Lorna Greenwood (L), Matthew Kirk (LD), Izzy Lenga (L), Nazma Rahman (L) and Gio Spinella (C)

L = Labour, C = Conservative, LD = Liberal Democrat, G = Green

Issued on: Monday, 6 November 2023

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## MEETINGS IN CAMDEN

Everyone is welcome to come to the public meetings in Camden and agendas for these meetings are available in advance on the Council's website at [www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk). If you are interested in a particular item being considered at a meeting and you wish to speak (called making a deputation), please write to the Committee Officer listed on the front of the agenda. The deadline for deputation requests for this meeting is **5pm on Friday, 10 November 2023**.

The Council is allowed to discuss some items in private, although this does not happen often – any such items will be discussed at the end of the meeting and you will be asked to leave at this point.

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**RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
14 NOVEMBER 2023**

**THERE ARE NO PRIVATE REPORTS**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT PART OF THIS MEETING MAY NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BECAUSE IT MAY INVOLVE THE CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION WITHIN THE MEANING OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, OR CONFIDENTIAL WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 100(A)(2) OF THE ACT.**

**AGENDA**

**Wards**

- 1. APOLOGIES**
  
- 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**
  
- 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Broadcast of the meeting**

The Chair to announce the following: 'In addition to the rights by law that the public and press have to record this meeting, I would like to remind everyone that this meeting is being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and can be viewed on our website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts are archived and can be made available upon request.'

If you have asked to address the meeting, you are deemed to be consenting to having your contributions recorded and broadcast, including video when switched on, and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.'

**Any other announcements**

- 4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

Requests to speak at the Committee on a matter within its terms of reference must be made in writing to the clerk named on the front of this agenda by 5pm two working days before the meeting.

- 5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**
- 6. MINUTES**
- To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 12 September 2023. (Pages 7 - 12)
- 7. RISK DEEP-DIVE – ENERGY PROCUREMENT All Wards**
- Report of the Executive Director Supporting Communities. (Pages 13 - 22)
- This report provides Members with an overview of the “energy costs” principal risk to enhance the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee’s understanding of how this risk is being managed. The purpose of the risk deep-dive is to enable the Committee to fulfil its duties regarding monitoring the Council’s effective operation of risk management as set out in its Terms of Reference.
- At their request, the report is also being shared with the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee on 14 November.
- 8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND MID-YEAR STRATEGY All Wards**
- Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living. (Pages 23 - 36)
- This report presents the treasury activity during 2022/23 and the first half of 2023/24, compliance with guidance and treasury indicators and an update on the economic background shaping the treasury strategy.
- 9. AN UPDATE ON WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE CAMDEN.GOV.UK All Wards**
- Report of the Chief Experience and Information Officer and the Executive Director Corporate Services. (Pages 37 - 44)
- This report outlines the current performance and work to date and ongoing to improve the camden.gov.uk website.
- 10. HR ANNUAL REPORT 2023 All Wards**
- Report of the Director of People and Inclusion. (Pages 45 - 80)

This report has been compiled in response to the Committee's request for an update on the Council's workforce. It offers an annual review of the Council's workforce composition and outlines the activities carried out during 2022/23. The report encompasses critical aspects such as workforce diversity and inclusivity, talent acquisition, pay, compensation and recognition, future of work and flexibility, employee well-being, and assistance provided to staff in navigating the challenges posed by the rising cost of living.

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

**All Wards**

Report of the Executive Director Corporate Service.

(Pages 81 -  
92)

This paper provides an outline of the 2023/24 work programme and provides an update on actions requested at previous meetings of the Committee in the Action Tracker.

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

**AGENDA ENDS**

The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 19 December 2023 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD.

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## THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2023** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Chung (Chair), Rebecca Filer, Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane, Jonathan Simpson and James Slater

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Jenny Mulholland and Andrew Parkinson

### 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 Jenny Mulholland and for lateness from Councillor Edmund Frondigoun.

#### 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.

### **Running order of the meeting**

The Chair announced that there would be a change in the running order of items on the agenda, this was to allow attendance from officers. The running order would be taken in the following order:

8. An update on the council's channel strategy (communications) - connecting with Camden's communities
9. Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-assessment - London Borough of Camden 2022-2023 update
7. Review of the Council's Income.
- 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. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meetings held on 10 July 2023 be agreed.

### **7. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S INCOME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance. The report was introduced by the Head of Finance, Corporate Services.

In their discussion of the report, the Committee made the following comments: Members were interested in social value being gained from assets. They asked whether Camden had a policy of using unfilled assets to generate social value. The Head of Finance agreed to take this away to the Property Team for a response.

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

In response to a question about the debt servicing cost of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Head of Finance agreed to come back with the confirmed figure.

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

The Committee asked about affordable housing funding from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and what impact a decrease of funding would have. The Head of Finance said that decreased funding would impact Camden's ability to build more rather than impact existing sites. Schemes were not agreed until there was a clear business case and funding guarantees.



Responding to a question from the Committee about business rates, the Head of Finance explained that Camden only retained a percentage of the business rates raised. Camden could retain some of the revenue from tax base growth but would also need to absorb any losses to the tax base.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**8. AN UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CHANNEL STRATEGY  
(COMMUNICATIONS) - CONNECTING WITH CAMDEN'S COMMUNITIES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communications. After an introduction from the Director, the Head of Strategic Communications and Head of Media and External Relations, the Committee discussed the report.

Members commented that they were pleased that Camden could demonstrate using a wide variety of forms of communication. They asked whether an assessment of efficacy had been carried out with Camden's digital advertising on social media.

The Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communications, responded that the Camden website was undergoing significant change. The website was being improved and the space and role for communications was being developed.

Officers spoke about the use of targeted adverts on social media, that they were effective and had a low cost. This allowed for a targeted approach to communications.

In response to a member question about why Love Camden was not mentioned in the report and how it could be integrated into communications more, the Director said that it not being included in the report was an oversight and that the Communications team worked closely with Love Camden. She further commented that Love Camden worked well as a standalone channel but that it added a lot of value when used in right way.

The Committee discussed the Camden Magazine and how it was a good way to reach communities. The Director said that the magazine, that was published three times per year, was used as a vehicle to disseminate essential information. Focus groups were held to understand the quality and effectiveness of the magazine for engaging residents. From these groups, residents said that they enjoyed reading the magazine and using it as a reference point.

Officers said that Housing was the largest portfolio area for the Communications team and that they constantly reviewed the range of communications that were sent to residents. In response to a member question the Director said that writing the content was done in collaboration with Housing colleagues and was signed off by senior offices in the Housing team. She acknowledged that Camden sometimes got

the communications right and sometimes it did not. The Communications team had close working relationships with all officers and were always willing to provide support and advice for effective communications.

The Committee discussed the importance of the resident journey on the new website and reducing the number of pages needed visit before accessing the desired information.

Members asked officers about working with the Word on the Kerb podcast. The Director said that through Camden's work with Word on the Kerb they were able to reach communities that they would not have been able to engage. Due to the success of this work, Camden were teaming up with Word on the Kerb to create communications around the cost of living crisis.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living extended an invitation to the Committee to view the updated Council Tax pages, via the beta site, before they went live. A link to this was agreed to be circulated to the Committee.

**Action by: the Policy Designer**

Members asked how councillors could help with communications. The Director said that there was a fortnightly member update that highlighted areas that Camden would like councillors to share more widely. Networks into communities and speaking community languages would also be valued as part of making communications accessible to all communities.

## **RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

### **9. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT - LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN 2022-2023 UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor. The report was introduced by the Service Manager, Business Support and the Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement.

Members commented that there had been an improvement since the Committee last took an item on complaints and that residents felt more communicated with. In response to a question about the increase in Stage 2 complaints, the Head of Business Support said that further detail would be provided in the Annual Complaints Report. To provide some context to the figures, the Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement said that Camden had carried out 35% more repairs than in the previous year.

Members asked about the forms that complaints could take and whether there was a uniformity of approach. The Service Manager said that complaints were put into the case management system, this allowed more effective management of complaints, with an audit trail and less risk of duplication.

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September, 2023*

The Committee asked about Housing Associations and whether Camden had powers to help them improve their own complaints processes. Officers said that Housing Associations had the same level of service to meet from the ombudsman's advice. The Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement commented that if Members were aware of issues, they make the Private Section Housing Service aware so it could be followed up.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

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

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the work programme be noted.

**11. 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**

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<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Risk Deep-Dive – energy procurement	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Executive Director Supporting Communities	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Audit and Corporate Governance Committee Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE:</b> 8 November 2023 14 November 2023
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report provides Members with an overview of the “energy costs” principal risk to enhance the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee’s understanding of how this risk is being managed. The purpose of the risk deep-dive is to enable the Committee to fulfil its duties regarding monitoring the Council’s effective operation of risk management as set out in its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>At their request, the report is also being shared with the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee on 14 November.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> No documents that require listing were used in the production of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Harold Garner Head of Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG 020 7974 2701 harold.garner@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee notes and comments on how this risk is being managed.</p> <p>That the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the report.</p>	

Signed:



Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 25 October 2023

## 1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (the Committee) is required to monitor the Council's effective development and operation of risk management. In addition to this, the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) position statement on Audit Committees in Local Authorities specifies core responsibilities for audit committees, one of which is to "consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements and the control environment."
- 1.2 The purpose of the risk deep dive is for the Committee to obtain a deeper understanding of the chosen risk area and develop insight into the risk controls and action plan.
- 1.3 The report will also be shared with the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee on 14 November.

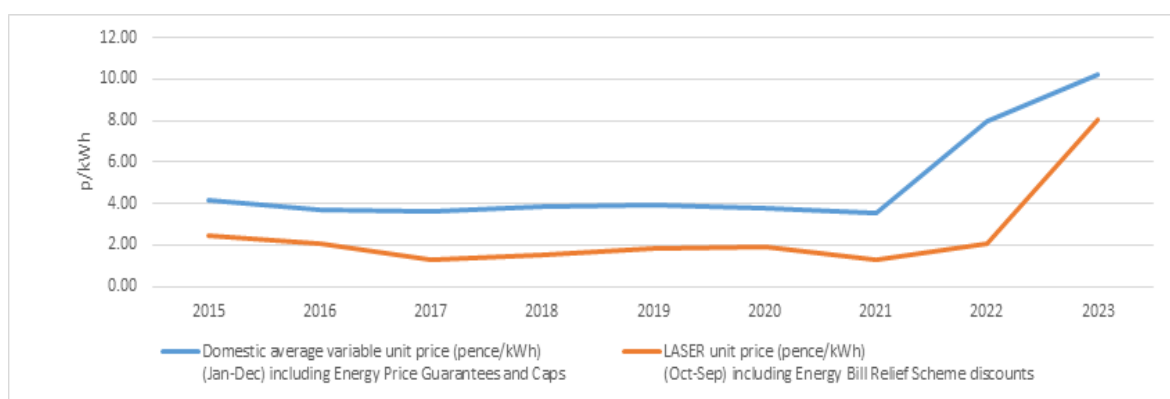
## 2 Current Risk Context

- 2.1 Further to Cabinet approval of Camden's energy procurement strategy in November 2022, the Council buys gas and electricity for schools, housing sites on contract and the corporate estate through a Central Purchasing Body called LASER, a company wholly owned by Kent County Council. The procurement framework with LASER is in place until September 2028 and the contract value of the various supplies exceeds £40 million per annum.
- 2.2 While energy markets are normally characterised by market volatility and inflationary pressure, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to extreme energy cost inflation and market volatility over 2022.
- 2.3 Energy markets have stabilised significantly since the start of 2023 but remain volatile with prices well above pre-February 2022 levels. At the time of writing, the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has led to increased market volatility and a c.30% rise in wholesale gas costs.
- 2.4 This report explains how Camden's energy procurement strategy manages energy market volatility and energy costs to ensure best value across Camden's energy supply contracts.

## 3 Risk mitigation and monitoring

- 3.1 As noted in Section 2, there are two key risk variables in the context of energy: energy market **volatility** and energy price **inflation**. Energy market volatility refers to price variability across a defined time period, with the resulting risk that the start of a new contracting period may coincide with a point during the defined time period when the price has reached a peak. Energy price inflation simply refers to increases in wholesale energy costs over time.

- 3.2 Camden seeks to manage inflationary pressure by aggregating the Council's required energy volumes with LASER's other customers (approximately 235 public sector organisations, with a combined energy spend of over £800 million) to secure lower cost energy from the wholesale energy markets.
- 3.3 The Council's energy procurement strategy has performed consistently well for Camden and its residents even in the context of the global energy crisis of 2022, with prices, on average, 52% below domestic market rates since 2015. Figure 1 below describes this benefit.
- 3.4 Figure 1 – LASER gas supply price compared to retail gas price from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero



- 3.5 Energy market volatility is managed by forward purchasing energy from the wholesale markets in the 12–36-month period in the run up to the supply period (energy is supplied across Camden for annual supply periods which run from October to September). In practical terms, this means that the price for the contract supply period is a product of the various energy purchases in the run up to the supply start date, rather than the energy price on the day.
- 3.6 In the context of the global energy market volatility of 2022, which saw peak gas prices rise by over 1200% against 2020/21 prices, this hedging strategy allowed the Council to control the costs for schools, housing sites and the corporate estate, by delivering achieved prices for the October 2021 to September 2022 and October 2022 to September 2023 supply period in the range of between 70% and 80% below the market highs. Please see Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix 1 which show the energy market volatility from January 2021 to September 2023 in Figure 1 and the achieved LASER prices over the period in Figure 2.
- 3.7 The value of LASER's forward purchasing strategy is underlined by the fact that Islington's Executive took the decision on 1 September 2022 to break their bespoke 2020-2024 supply agreement with SSE and move to LASER from 1 April 2023. As shown in Table 1 below, Islington's alternative procurement strategy had led to much higher increases in the cost of gas and electricity when compared to Camden over the period.

Table 1 – Islington and Camden energy cost comparison

	% increase in costs 21/22 to 22/23	
	Islington	Camden/LASER
All energy (HRA only)	345%	191%
Electricity (all service areas)	260%	74%
Gas (all service areas)	541%	255%

- 3.8 Improving the energy efficiency of Council buildings is the only certain way to protect against energy inflation and volatility. The Council has a strong building retrofit programme which has led to a 37% reduction in energy consumption across the Council's estate (excluding housing) since 2010. Recently completed projects include the £3.7m retrofit of Swiss Cottage Library, Camden Town Hall, and new solar energy for Talacre Leisure Centre. Further school retrofit projects are either underway or due to start in 2024 at Acland Burghley, Eleanor Palmer, Kingsgate, Hampstead and Brookfield schools. Approximately £5.4m of Government funding has been secured since 2021 to support the delivery of these projects.
- 3.9 The Council is also improving the energy efficiency of Council housing. Projects targeting our least energy efficient homes in locations such as Belsize Grove and Somers Town are underway and supported by approximately £5m of recently secured Government grants.
- 3.10 Energy contract monitoring is carried out by two Senior Energy Management Officers using TEAM Sigma energy monitoring software. This involves validation checks on expected consumption, contract pricing and VAT status across 50,000 invoices annually. Any resulting queries are raised with LASER or the relevant energy supplier and managed by Camden through to resolution.
- 3.11 To support robust budget forecasting, LASER provide quarterly energy price forecasts for the upcoming pricing period, which are checked and reviewed by the energy management team and circulated to budget holders on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

#### **4 Outlook for the next 12 months**

- 4.1 Forecasts for the October 2023-September 2024 period have been supplied quarterly to budget holders across the Council throughout the year and suggest that energy prices for the supply period will neither worsen nor improve significantly compared to 2022-23 due to a range of global factors beyond the Council's control.
- 4.2 Final energy prices for the October 2023 – September 2024 supply period will be issued after validation in late November 2023.

#### **5 Legal Comments of Borough Solicitor**



5.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments to add.

## **6 Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

6.1 The Council's expenditure on gas and electricity more than doubled between 21/22 and 22/23 from £14.6m to £29.9m across the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. However, the achieved prices remain below retail prices and the commentary in Section 4 highlights how alternative procurement strategies could have resulted in greater financial impact.

6.2 So, while the Council did experience large increases in energy prices, the achieved prices during 22/23 are nevertheless a vindication of the Council's procurement strategy. As noted above, the strategy mitigates volatility risk through forward purchasing and inflation risk through LASER's economies of scale.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Rising energy costs build the business case for energy efficiency improvements to Camden's buildings, which in turn help to reduce carbon dioxide emissions that drive climate change. Carbon dioxide emissions across Camden's corporate and schools' estate are now 59% below 2010 levels, and section 3 of this report describes further energy efficiency retrofit projects across the schools, corporate and housing estate, funded by recently secured Government grant, that will continue to help cut greenhouse gas emissions in Camden.

7.2 Camden's corporate estate currently benefits from 100% renewable electricity supplies. The electricity is backed through Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin certification.

### **Appendices**

1. Energy Market Volatility and Achieved Camden prices through LASER
2. Principal Risk information and action plan ('risk on a page').

**REPORT ENDS**

## Appendix 1 – Energy Market Volatility and Achieved Camden prices through LASER

Figure 1 – Energy Market Volatility from January 2021 to September 2023

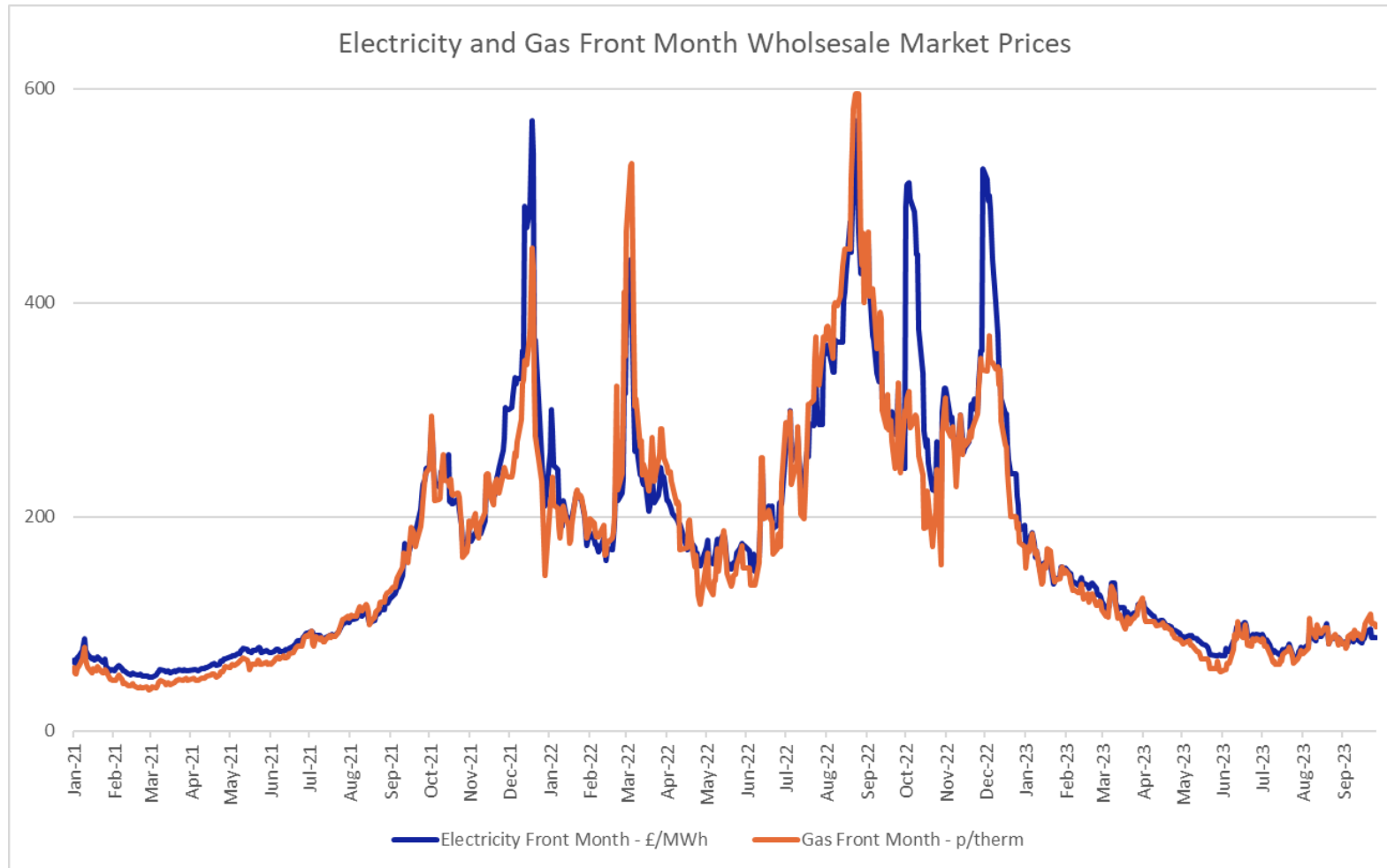
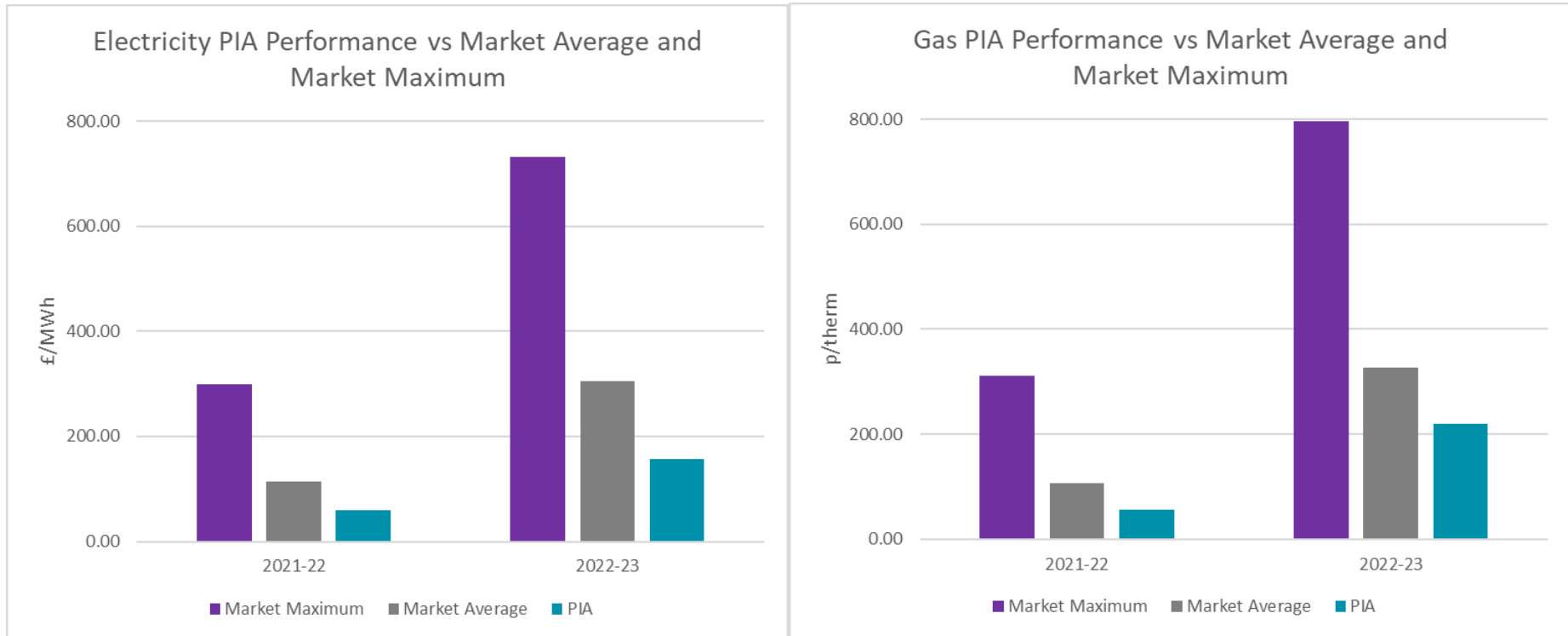


Figure 2 – LASER performance from October 2021 to September 2023 for electricity and gas

- Peak market price – left bar
- Average market price – middle bar
- LASER achieved price – right bar



## Appendix 2: Principal Risk information and action plan (risk on a page)

Risk Information Risk Title – Energy Costs	Risk Scores	Existing Controls			
<p><b>Risk</b> Long term volatility and inflation of energy market cause unaffordable budget pressures for the Council, Schools and Council housing tenants</p> <p><b>Cause</b> Unpredictable global energy market, inadequate monitoring of energy prices and Council expenditure, unfavourable terms and conditions from energy providers, services do not adapt budgets/activities/energy consumption to meet pressure in energy expenditure. Failure to recover true energy costs from housing tenants through heating charges.</p> <p><b>Consequence</b> Significant overspend on Council budgets or contributions required towards the housing heating pool, key projects and programmes scaled down, paused or cancelled.</p> <p><b>Risk Update:</b> The Council reappointed LASER as the Council's energy purchasing organisation further to Cabinet approval in November 2022. The procurement strategy sees LASER aggregate the Council's required energy spend with over 230 other public sector organisations and manage energy market volatility by forward purchasing energy from the wholesale markets in the run up to the supply period. LASER purchased energy for the next supply period (October 2023-September 2024) throughout 2022/23 to mitigate market volatility and prices for the new supply period will be validated and published in November 2023. Forecasts for the October 2023-September 2024 period have been supplied quarterly to budget holders across the Council throughout the year and suggest that energy prices for the October 2023-September 2024 supply period will neither worsen nor improve significantly compared to 2022-23 due to a range of global factors beyond the Council's control. Long term protection from rising energy costs will only be secured by improving the energy efficiency of Council buildings, schools and housing. Approximately £10m of external funding has been secured over the last 2 years to deliver a range of energy efficiency improvements across our estate including the recently completed Swiss Cottage Library and Acland Burghley school retrofits. The risk score has reduced as global energy markets have been relatively stable over the last 6 months.</p>	<p><b>Current Score:</b> L: 3 I: 3</p> <p><b>Target Score:</b> L: 3 I: 2</p> <p><b>Gap to target:</b> L: 0 I: 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued use of a Central Purchasing Body (CPB) to manage risk through forward buying. Using a CPB allows Camden to achieve the best price for the Council and residents by aggregating the Council's required energy consumption with the CPB's other customers (235 public sector organisations, with a combined energy spend of over £800 million). Energy market volatility is managed by forward purchasing energy from the wholesale markets in the run up to the supply period.</li> <li>2. Energy management function in Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy team to validate billing against contract prices, expected consumptions and meter reads.</li> <li>3. Provide quarterly energy price forecasts in the 12 months prior to any new supply period to ensure that all budget holders have sufficient information to budget effectively.</li> <li>4. Monitor performance of CPB through an independent energy consultant.</li> <li>5. Develop and deliver the retrofit programme for the council's corporate and housing estate to improve energy efficiency</li> <li>6. Carbon Management Plan for corporate estate in place.</li> <li>7. Accommodation strategy with energy use in mind. Reduce energy footprint through the best use of assets and optimising the use of the Council's property portfolio.</li> </ol>			
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Deliver purchasing strategy for Oct 2024 – Sept 2028</p> <p>Continue to deliver the retrofit programme for Council homes, schools and corporate buildings targeting all Government funding streams.</p>	<p><b>Expected impact</b></p> <p>Reduce score</p> <p>Reduce score</p>	<p><b>Resources required</b></p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Staff</p>	<p><b>Owner</b></p> <p>G. Marston</p> <p>G. Marston</p>	<p><b>Due Date</b></p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Status</b></p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>



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# Agenda Item 8

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Treasury Management Annual Report and Mid-Year Strategy	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 14 November 2023
<b>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>  We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. The proposals ensure a strong treasury management strategy is in place to help achieve the ambitious vision of our communities. We Make Camden includes a commitment to “strong financial management”. A robust and effective treasury management strategy is crucial to enabling this ambition.	
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  This report presents the treasury activity during 2022/23 and the first half of 2023/24, compliance with guidance and treasury indicators and an update on the economic background shaping the treasury strategy.  <b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> There are no documents which are required to be listed.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Nigel Mascarenhas Head of Treasury & Financial Services Corporate Services Dennis Geffen Annexe Camley Street. N1C 4DG. Tel: 020 7974 1904 Email: <a href="mailto:Nigel.Mascarenhas@camden.gov.uk">Nigel.Mascarenhas@camden.gov.uk</a>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  <b>The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee</b> is asked to consider the report and make any recommendations to Cabinet.	

Signed: Daniel Omisore

Date: 03 November 2023

## **1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

1.1. This report presents an update on the previous year's treasury management activities together with a mid-year update on progress against the current year's strategy. The annual report demonstrates the effect of the decisions taken in accordance with the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy as well as how treasury activity has complied with that policy. The mid-year report considers the continuing suitability of this year's strategy at the mid-year stage.

1.2. The report provides detailed assessment of our treasury management activity, but in summary, it is worth noting that:

- There is no increase in the risk profile and appetite and the Council continues to operate prudent debt and investment strategies.
- All Councils are operating in challenging and volatile economic circumstances with Central banks globally struggling to control inflation and financial markets expecting economies to enter recessionary periods. This is a very different scenario compared to past years and requires a prudent approach.
- The Council has not engaged in the arguably riskier commercial activities that have led to a tightening of the treasury framework for all Councils. While we continue to look at ways in which to maximise our investment returns, this has not been at the expense of the security of our investments.
- Treasury Management has impeded the overall financial stability of some Councils. For instance, some Councils have lent to other entities who have not been able to finance interest and repayment obligations and commercial lending where income streams have either dried up or the asset valuations have significantly diminished. It is important that Council's capital programme remains prudent, affordable and sustainable and revenue pressures can be managed within revenue budgets by effective treasury management.
- There are no immediate plans for new borrowing at this time. The internal borrowing policy continues to be sensible (saving £1.7m per annum) and appropriate given the outlook for interest rates on debt and investment. The policy ensures the Council minimises interest paid on debt and uses investment resources efficiently.
- During 2022/23 and the first half of 2023/24, the Council has operated within its treasury and prudential indicators set which demonstrates good governance and control.
- On 24 February 2022 the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) borrowed £250m and this cash is co-invested alongside Council investment balances and has therefore increased investments under management. Then on 19 January 2023 the NLWA borrowed a further £200m. The Executive Director Corporate Services has delegated authority to increase limits as and when future NLWA borrowing occurs in order to manage higher investment balances. While this may affect the scale of those investments, the underlying strategy remains unaffected. Note this report only reports on NLWA investments as invested alongside Council investments. All NLWA borrowing is not reported here but will be reported to the NLWA as part of their governance.

## **2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS**

2.1. The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23. It is also required to review the 2023/24 annual strategy mid-year. This report meets the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy



(CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

### 3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 3.1. The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of treasury management. Risks can include, amongst others, the failure of a bank to repay a loan. The Council needs to determine for itself how it pursues value for money whilst simultaneously striving to effectively manage and control such risks.
- 3.2. The Council has strategic options available in the management of its debt and investment portfolios:
- The Council must decide when it is appropriate to take on new **debt** and at what rates in order to fund its existing and planned capital expenditure. The Council can also choose to 'internally borrow' by avoiding new debt and instead using reserves and working balances to fund borrowing.
  - The Council sets an **investment** strategy that prioritises security and its cash flow needs whilst maximising investment income.

## ANNUAL REPORT

### Borrowing

- 3.3. The borrowing strategy agreed for last year was premised on three factors:
- the Council's continuing underlying need to borrow
  - the availability of reserves and working capital to cover under-borrowing (the capital financing requirement less existing borrowing), and
  - the difference in rates available for investments versus those charged for new debt (the 'cost of carry'). Borrowing rates were expected to rise gradually during the year.
- 3.4. The Council is internally borrowing which means it is temporarily using its own resources (reserves and working capital) to fund past and planned capital expenditure rather than entering into new borrowing. Although external debt stood at £323m at the end of 2022/23, the overall need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement or CFR) was £662m and therefore the Council was under-borrowed by £339m. Note NLWA debt is not included in these figures and reported separately to their Authority.

**TABLE 1: YEAR END DEBT POSITION**

	31-Mar-22			31-Mar-23		
	Value	Average interest rate (%)	Avg life (yrs)	Value	Average interest rate (%)	Avg life (yrs)
Fixed rate (PWLB) borrowing	£205m	5.62	19.70	£198m	5.54	19.55
Variable rate (market) borrowing	£124m	4.63	29.96	£124m	4.63	28.96
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>£329m</b>	<b>5.12</b>	<b>24.83</b>	<b>£322m</b>	<b>5.08</b>	<b>24.25</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)</b>	<b>£549m</b>			<b>£662m</b>		
<b>Under-borrowing</b>	<b>£-219m</b>			<b>£-340m</b>		

- 3.5. Table 1 shows that overall debt has decreased to £322m with loans maturing with a value of £7m in 2022/23. The overall average interest rate payable on the borrowing portfolio has decreased to 5.08% at the end of March 2023 and the average life of the portfolio was 24 years at that date.
- 3.6. Market debt remains unchanged at £124m during the year. The market debt comprises 6 LOBO (lender's option borrower's option) loans. LOBOs remain part of a valid, diversified borrowing strategy. Camden's market loans were acquired at lower interest rates than available from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and, as per Table 1, the average rate for LOBO loans is currently lower than the average rate for the Council's PWLB borrowing. It is important to note that our LOBO loans are straight forward rather than the more complex loans ('inverse linkers') that other Councils have been involved with which have been investigated by the Communities Select Committee and have been prominent in the press.
- 3.7. LOBO loans can be 'called' by the lending banks on a half yearly basis which means the lender can change (increase) the rates applied and the borrower (the Council) has the 'option' to accept the new rate or repay the loan.
- 3.8. Although it is not estimated that these loans will be called over their lifetime, the Council keeps the loans under review and will negotiate a rescheduling when and if market conditions allow. Scenario testing carried out by the Council's treasury consultants, Link Asset Services, indicates that the cumulative call probability of a call by LOBO lenders will increase from circa 30-45% using current market expectations of interest rates to 35-55% when an additional 0.5% was added to future interest rate expectations over the life of the loans.
- 3.9. In accordance with the internal borrowing approach adopted, the Council did not take on any new debt during the year. The Council could have decided to borrow at rates (currently offered at 5.48% for 50-year loans) to meet some of its outstanding borrowing requirement. However, as the Council has no immediate need for external borrowing, this would have resulted in a 'cost of carry' of £1.7m (i.e. the difference between new borrowing rates and investment rates on re-invested cash not immediately required) which would be a real revenue cost to the Council.
- 3.10. The Council is required to work within a prudential framework which sets indicators for deciding the level of affordable borrowing and managing debt. The Council has complied with the requirements of the Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice throughout the year and remained within borrowing limits set (see indicators set out in Appendix 1). The debt portfolio remains affordable and appropriately structured with no immediate requirement to restructure the portfolio. Officers monitor the under-borrowing position with our treasury consultants regularly to ensure that the internal borrowing strategy remains appropriate.

### **Investments**

- 3.11. The Council's investment strategy is governed by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) guidance, and is approved annually by Council in March of each year. Using credit ratings provided by the three main rating agencies together with additional market information, this strategy sets out which counterparties (mainly banks but also other local authorities) the Council can invest with, cash limits for each counterparty, and the maximum

investment term for each counterparty. Given the scale of investments under management the Council is more risk aware in setting its criteria for investment than other boroughs. The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy.

- 3.12. Bank of England base rates were 0.75% on 1 April 2022 and during 2022/23 there were 8 increases with rates finishing the year at 4.25%. Since then, the Bank has raised rates at each successive meeting ending up at 5.25% in August and leaving them on hold at its September meeting. The Council continued to adopt a prudent approach to investment with security as the prime consideration. Whilst the Treasury function aims to optimise investment opportunities, it is primarily concerned with stewardship of public money.
- 3.13. Throughout the 2022/23 year the Council maintained average investment balances of £662m and the average rate of interest earned was 2.11%. This compared to average Sterling Overnight Index Average (known as SONIA) for 3 months of 2.72%, average 6-month SONIA of 3.10% and average 12-month SONIA of 3.52%.
- 3.14. The investment strategy limited investments with suitable counterparties to one year including NatWest due to it being part-nationalised with Government support. The investment strategy also allows investment with local authorities up to one year.

#### **Regulatory guidance**

- 3.15. On 20 December 2021 CIPFA published revised codes which build on previous editions (these include changes in capital strategy, prudential indicators and investment reporting). The Council continues to follow the principles within these codes that the Authority will not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. CIPFA and the Government are currently amending guidance to prevent a small number of authorities abusing the Treasury management framework. This Council is very supportive of the financial freedoms in the Prudential Code which the current framework allows and would want to protect our right to determine affordable capital schemes rather than a return to centrally set borrowing approvals.
- 3.16. The Prudential Code maintains the principle-based approach to decision-making (ensuring capital financing decisions are prudent, affordable and sustainable). The 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy reported in March 2023 included a summary of the capital expenditure plans and forecast capital financing requirements and considers long-term borrowing needs.
- 3.17. The Treasury Management Code includes non-treasury investment activities, which reflects the increasingly prominent commercialisation agenda in public sector organisations.
- 3.18. DLUHC investment guidance for local authorities (2018) made a number of changes primarily to address the non-treasury investments used by some Councils. Local authorities are required to follow the guidance and the Council incorporated these changes into the Treasury Management Strategy.

#### **MID-YEAR STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 3.19. During the first half of 2023/24 the Council has continued with the Treasury policies pursued recently. It continues to avoid expensive borrowing by

internally borrowing and has a prudent investment policy. The Council has complied with the CIPFA codes and its prudential and treasury indicators during the first half of 2023/24.

- 3.20. The 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy noted that long-term borrowing rates were likely to rise. Following the Bank of England's decision to increase interest rates to 5.25% on 3 August 2023, the Council's treasury advisors Link had forecast Bank rate would next increase to 5.50% in September 2023, but the Bank paused rate rises. Changes to Bank Rate have a strong influence on the returns available to the Council on its short-term investments in the UK money markets.
- 3.21. The UK's quarterly economic growth was confirmed at 0.1% in the first quarter of 2023, remaining unchanged from the previous three-month period. Growth has recently stalled. Inflation fell to a 15-month low of 6.7% in September 2023. The Consumer Price Index fell to 7.9% in June 2023, better than the 8.2% expected by economists. The largest single contributor was falling motor fuel prices although food prices rose in June, but by less than in the same period last year.
- 3.22. The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee voted to increase the Base rate to 5.25% during the first half of 2023/24 leaving them on hold at its September MPC meeting. Link expect gilt yields and PWLB rates to gradually rise.

### **Borrowing**

- 3.23. Borrowing is based on past and planned capital expenditure and needs to be affordable within revenue budgets in order to make sure services can operate without jeopardising day to day operations. The capital programme's impact on borrowing has increased since the Treasury Management Strategy was approved in February 2023. Planned capital expenditure in 2023/24 has decreased by £13m and financing has reduced by £22m. In July Cabinet approved the revised capital programme and financing plans which took into account delays and re-profiling spend to better reflect progress on site and the updated delivery plans.

**TABLE 2: ESTIMATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING FOR 2023/24**

	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate	Variance
Capital expenditure	261	248	-13
Less: financing	181	159	-22
Impact on borrowing requirement	80	89	9

- 3.24. The annual change to the borrowing requirement has increased by £9m for 2023/24, and so is higher at the year-end compared to the March estimate. Overall, the estimated Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for 2023/24 has decreased to £733m from £739m in March 2023 when the Treasury Management Strategy was agreed (Table 3).

**TABLE 3: MEDIUM TERM BORROWING REQUIREMENT\***

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

<b>CFR (excl PFI)*</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>714</b>
GF CFR	123	54	73	101	94
HRA CFR	610	679	642	663	619
<b>Gross borrowing</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>281</b>
GF	41	38	38	36	36
HRA	273	255	255	245	245
<b>Under-borrowing</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>433</b>
GF	82	17	35	65	58
HRA	337	424	387	419	375

*\*N.B. All figures as at 31 March and exclude PFI and finance leases*

- 3.25. Table 3 shows that the amount of capital expenditure (both past and current) that requires financing (the CFR). The CFR peaks in 26/27 at £764m. The Council currently has existing borrowing of £322m (with £8.3m maturing in 23/24) and this reduces as debt matures over the five-year period to £281m. In 2023/24 the Council will be under-borrowed by £419m and this under-borrowing will increase to a peak of £484m in 2026/27 (if no new borrowing is entered into).
- 3.26. The Council operates two distinct debt pools. This helps focus attention on the individual and differing needs of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF). Decisions to borrow are considered with regard to these two pools' requirements.
- 3.27. The Council could take advantage of borrowing rates by acquiring new debt now to cover some of its borrowing requirement. This would serve to de-risk the debt portfolio by locking in fixed interest rates now. However, this would result in an immediate cost of carry estimated at £1.7m and so Internal borrowing remains the best course of action. This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate with borrowing rates slightly higher than investment rates. It is therefore anticipated that further borrowing will not be undertaken during this financial year.
- 3.28. It is unclear in the current financial environment what the trajectory for inflation and interest rates will be and so the policy on internal borrowing may need to change. However, Camden's forecast cash balance remains positive despite the capital expenditure planned and the movement on reserves and balances. Therefore, to incur the cost of carry estimated at £1.7m cannot be justified whilst positive cash balances continue (up to 2029/30) and internal borrowing is the best course of action. Officers monitor the under-borrowing position with our treasury consultants regularly to ensure that the internal borrowing strategy remains appropriate. This includes monitoring forecast rates and any changes in future plans to ensure the most suitable policy is used to fund our existing debt liabilities, planned prudential borrowing and other cash flows.
- 3.29. The Government has consulted on future PWLB lending terms after it raised rates by a further 1% on loans citing increased use of PWLB borrowing to support commercial projects in the public sector. Whilst there are exemptions for housing and regeneration this Council has argued against further controls outlined in the consultation. The Treasury updated the terms and conditions applied to PWLB lending, including more details on PWLB loans permitted and prohibited.

- 3.30. Debt rescheduling opportunities have been limited in the current economic climate and consequent structure of interest rates and following the increase in the margin added to gilts yields, which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010 and more recently in 2020. No debt rescheduling was undertaken during the first part of the year. Currently it would cost £1.5m to reschedule the £198m PWLB debt (in addition to repaying the principal debt amount) and so this is not economically advantageous.
- 3.31. The Council monitors its market loans which have semi-annual options for lenders to reset interest rates and the option to either accept or repay these loans. Many Councils have found it difficult to refinance these loans when this happens. This Council regularly reviews both the likelihood, market practice and options for refinancing. It is not expected that our loans will be called and we keep this under review.
- 3.32. The Council is required to set both an operational boundary and an authorised limit for external debt (Appendix 1). No difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these prudential indicators.

### **Investment Strategy**

- 3.33. The Council's investment priorities are:
- (a) security of capital (primarily) and
  - (b) liquidity of its investments (secondly).
- 3.34. After these overriding priorities, the Council will aim to optimise return on its investments (thirdly) commensurate with high levels of security and good liquidity. The risk appetite of this Council is low in order to give priority to security of its investments which is paramount.
- 3.35. The UK money market investment environment has changed with an upward trajectory for investment rates and signs of increased liquidity. The pace of changes to Bank Rate remains a key determinant of investment returns. Following the Bank of England's decision at its meeting on 3 August 2022, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to increase the base rate to 5.25%. A number of institutions have raised their interest rates due to the MPC raising base rates in order to combat high inflation. Overall, this has led to a significant increase in the average rate of return on the Council's investment portfolio, as previous fixed rate investments held had matured consequently with the proceeds reinvested at new, higher rates after the prioritisation of security and liquidity, such as with Fixed Deposit Investments. Overall, officers have seen a sharp increase in the returns available from the Sterling money markets compared to the previous financial year and expect returns to increase.
- 3.36. The Council invests in three **Money Market Funds** (MMFs) (Aberdeen, JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs) which are all in the Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) class. Money Market Fund Regulations restrict LVNAV funds from returning negative rates. If negative rates are a possibility, fund managers will either need to convert to accumulating share classes (ultimately 'decumulating' in value) and/or adjust their fees to avoid the need to change to this type of fund. An accumulating share class vehicle reinvests the income received back into the fund, as opposed to distributing the returns back to the investor.
- 3.37. In terms of security, the price of **Credit Default Swaps** (CDS essentially a means of insuring against a borrower's failure to repay debt) has decreased

during the first half of the year indicating reduced concern about banks' security. Link provide information on banks' CDS pricing and all banks on our list remain within tolerance.

- 3.38. The Council held £745m of investments as at 14 August 2023 (£662m at 31 March 2023) and the average rate of return on this date was 4.37% (2.11% at 31 March 2023). £229m of this investment balance was invested on behalf of the NLWA. The rate of return has increased (along with investment returns generally) as fixed rate term deposits have reached maturity and the proceeds have been reinvested at a higher rate of return after the prioritisation of liquidity and security of investments. It is likely that investment returns will increase as Base rates have been increasing. The Council's treasury consultants forecast the base rate will increase to 5.50% in Autumn and stay at that level in December 2023 and March 2024.
- 3.39. **NatWest bank** is eligible for inclusion on the Council's counterparty list by virtue of the Government's majority ownership. Given the Government's significant holding in the part-nationalised bank it is still not considered to be pure banking risk and is eligible for investments of up to one year on the Council's counterparty list. Due to significant Government ownership NatWest is considered to have quasi-sovereign risk, not pure banking risk, and has a limit of £135m.
- 3.40. The approved counterparty limits and prudential and treasury indicators were not breached in the year to 14 August 2023 and there were no liquidity concerns.
- 3.41. The **NLWA** is building an £850m energy recovery facility (ERF) to replace its existing facility. On 16 December 2021 the NLWA borrowed £280m from the PWLB to fund this project. This was invested in Euro MMFs as their contractual commitment for the plant is in Euros. Four Euro MMFs were used to invest a total of €330m (£280m in sterling), the total has decreased to approx. €226m due to euro contractual payments. Euro Money market funds were specifically used to ensure no currency fluctuations with their euro payment exposure.
- 3.42. The NLWA borrowed an additional £250m in February 2022 and a further £200m in January 2023 to cover their procurement for the new ERF. This was to cover sterling capital expenditure. This cash has been invested alongside the council's investment balances, bringing the total to £501m (£250m in addition to the original £51m and a further £200m) invested on behalf of the NLWA included within the investment portfolio reported here. Subsequently, investment limits were increased in a report to the Executive Director Corporate Services on 11 May 2022 (these increased limits are shown in brackets within Table 4). This was within delegated responsibility agreed by Council in the [Treasury Management Annual Report and midyear strategy report](https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s99776/Treasury%20Management%20Annual%20Report%202020-21%20and%20Mid-Year%20Strategy%202021-22%2010112021%20Cabinet.pdf)<sup>1</sup> (November 2021).

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<sup>1</sup><https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s99776/Treasury%20Management%20Annual%20Report%202020-21%20and%20Mid-Year%20Strategy%202021-22%2010112021%20Cabinet.pdf>

**TABLE 4 CREDIT RATING CRITERIA**

Fitch		Moody's		S&P		Cash limit	Maximum Duration
Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term		
AA-	F1+	Aa3	P-1	AA-	A-1+	£45m (£80m)	1 year
AA	F1+	Aa2	P-1	AA	A-1+	£60m (£100m)	1 year
AA+	F1+	Aa1	P-1	AA+	A-1+	£80m (£140m)	1 year
AAA	F1+	Aaa	P-1	AAA	A-1+	£95m (£160m)	1 year

- 3.43. Officers will consider widening the number of MMFs used and consider adding additional funds to diversify risk.
- 3.44. The Treasury Management Strategy permits the use of **Multilateral development bank** bonds with a limit of £40m per counterparty. In order to manage the potential euro NLWA commitment some of the money required in year two and later could be invested in bonds and commercial paper issued by the European Investment Bank which is a Supranational Bank owned and supported by European Union nations. The European Investment Bank (EIB) are the biggest multilateral financial institution in the world with a AAA credit rating. The use of these EIB bonds and commercial paper would help diversify risk away from the Euro MMFs and provide a safe and stable investment option for medium term euro balances.
- 3.45. The Council is using a local climate bond in the form of a Community Municipal Investment (CMI). Launched on 29 June 2022 at a value of £1m and a rate of 1.75%. This is an innovative financing route which gives the Council another way to realise its ambitious 2030 zero carbon target and is a first step towards introducing new financing measures towards reducing carbon emissions.

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1. The key risk connected to the investment strategy is that the Council suffers financial loss due to a borrower failing to make a repayment. The approved lending list ensures that funds are only placed with creditworthy banks.
- 4.2. Liquidity risk (the risk that the Council doesn't have funds available to make day-to-day payments) is another important concern. This risk is managed by the treasury team by ensuring investments mature at the right time to enable the Council to finance its day-to-day activities.

#### **5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1. There is no consultation required.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has incorporated comments into this report.

#### **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services have been incorporated into this report.

#### **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**



- 8.1. The Community Municipal Investment is a means of funding ongoing local net zero projects via green finance. These projects include electrical vehicle charging points, healthy school streets, solar on council estate roofs and greening of Camden's transport fleet.

**9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1. Changes set out in this report and approved by full Council will be adopted immediately.

**10. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Prudential and Treasury Indicators

**REPORT ENDS**

## **APPENDIX 1 – PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS**

The prudential indicators for both the previous financial years and the first part of the current financial year are presented below.

**TABLE 1: PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Original Estimate</b>	<b>Revised Estimate</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Capital expenditure</b>					
General Fund	81	65	89	44	52
HRA	92	238	239	217	207
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>					
General Fund	94	165	117	121	123
HRA	455	573	545	618	610
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>733</b>
<b>Gross debt</b>					
General Fund	43	42	42	41	41
HRA	287	281	281	273	273
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>Gross borrowing requirement</b>					
General Fund	52	124	75	80	82
HRA	168	292	264	345	337
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>419</b>
<b>HRA Debt Limit</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream</b>					
General Fund	-0.14%	-0.66%	-0.66%	-2.22%	-0.29%
HRA	7.21%	7.35%	8.36%	12.01%	11.02%

**TABLE 2: TREASURY INDICATORS**

	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Authorised limit for external debt</b>					
borrowing	649	793	762	839	833
other long term liabilities	147	145	145	143	143
<b>Total</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>976</b>
<b>Operational boundary for external debt</b>					
borrowing	549	693	662	739	733
other long term liabilities	47	45	45	43	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>776</b>
<b>Actual external debt</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>Principal sums invested for over 364 days</b>					
Limit on investments for more than 1 year*	0	-74	49	-2	-2
<b>Upper limits on fixed rate exposure</b>					
Borrowing	549	693	662	739	733
Investments	-231	148	-98	4	4
<b>Net fixed rate exposure</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>737</b>
<b>Upper limits on variable rate exposure</b>					
Borrowing	274	347	331	369	369
Investments	-100	-100	-100	-100	-100
<b>Net variable rate exposure</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>269</b>

**TABLE 3: MATURITY STRUCTURE OF BORROWING**

	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
Under 12 months	0%	20%	3%	2%	2%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	20%	6%	6%	6%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	25%	4%	4%	4%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	0%	50%	25%	25%	25%
20 years and within 30 years	0%	50%	15%	17%	17%
30 years and within 40 years	0%	50%	46%	45%	45%
40 years and within 50 years	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%

Market loans are all 'Lenders Option Borrowers Option' (LOBO) loans. LOBOs in this profile are all included with their ultimate maturity dates. However, the structure of these loans means they could be 'called' every 6 months and therefore could be viewed as all maturing within a year.

<p><b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b></p>	<p><b>WARDS:</b> All</p>
<p><b>REPORT TITLE</b> An update on work being undertaken to improve camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p><b>REPORT OF</b> Chief Experience and Information Officer Executive Director Corporate Services</p>	
<p><b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b>  The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p><b>DATE</b>  14 November 2023</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report outlines the current performance and work to date and ongoing to improve the camden.gov.uk website.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p> <p>Louise Brown, Head of Digital Products and Services on behalf of Tariq Khan, Chief Experience and Information Officer 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7974 6020 Email: louise.brown@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Committee notes the contents of the report.</p>	

Signed: Agreed by Jon Rowney, Executive Director of Corporate Services

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

## **Purpose of Report**

The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the council's work on the Camden.gov.uk website and the work being undertaken to improve design and performance.

### **1. Background and research into camden.gov.uk performance**

#### **1.1. Context**

The camden.gov.uk website is the digital “front door” through which residents, visitors and businesses access information about the council and services available to them. Every month around 70,000 people (some could be the same person on a phone and separately on a laptop) use camden.gov.uk for a total of 150,000 sessions (separate occasions accessing the website).

Since the last website redesign in 2018 – when it scored well in terms of customer satisfaction – the current website's user experience has gradually deteriorated through a mixture of changing technology, devolved content governance, and growing expectations from citizens to access information and services online.

We also see significant numbers of people calling our contact centre after trying and failing to access information via the website. In September 2023, for example, 19% calls to the contact centre (approximately 5,000/28,000 calls) were made after the customer had tried to use the website, 10% tried to get their action done online and 7% were unable to find the information they needed.

Alongside, this we must uphold standards of accessibility required by law (Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018) and always seek to improve the ongoing management of the functionality, performance and environmental impact of our digital estate, of which camden.gov.uk is the main asset that we manage.

#### **1.2. Team Changes**

The team responsible for the website design and management was reorganised in 2021. Roles now include less generalist “web officer” roles, instead containing more standard expert roles and skills such as content and product design, web analytics, product management, user research, delivery management and front-end development.

#### **1.3. Insight from Citizens**

To better understand what citizens found most frustrating, we initially introduced a simple, 3-question survey on the site.

Top 3 complaints were:

- Things not working as expected
- Difficult/impossible to find things
- Things to do (process) not clear enough

Satisfaction score was 2.1 out of 5

- something not working - 25%
- poor findability or missing information - 24%
- unclear process – 18%

We also surveyed 150+ users to understand the top tasks that they were attempting on accessing the site in order to best understand our citizens' priorities and how to organise information effectively.

We audited the content of 1.5k pages to understand where we might be able to cut content and commissioned external web analytics agency One Further and the RNIB to better understand and implement how we evaluate and monitor our site for performance and accessibility.

#### **1.4. Ongoing qualitative research**

Since the team was established we have spoken with over 50 residents and business owners at different times, sharing designs as we developed them and getting feedback on information architecture (navigation and labelling) and other specific areas of the site. Our aim is always to ensure diversity in all senses from our panels, with social tenants, businesses, disabled residents, carers (those accessing on behalf of others) and those for whom English is not their first language represented. We are regularly recruiting residents for testing both via the website and more specifically with help from our Contact Camden teams to ensure we maintain representation from the whole of our Camden Community.

## **2. Design improvements underway**

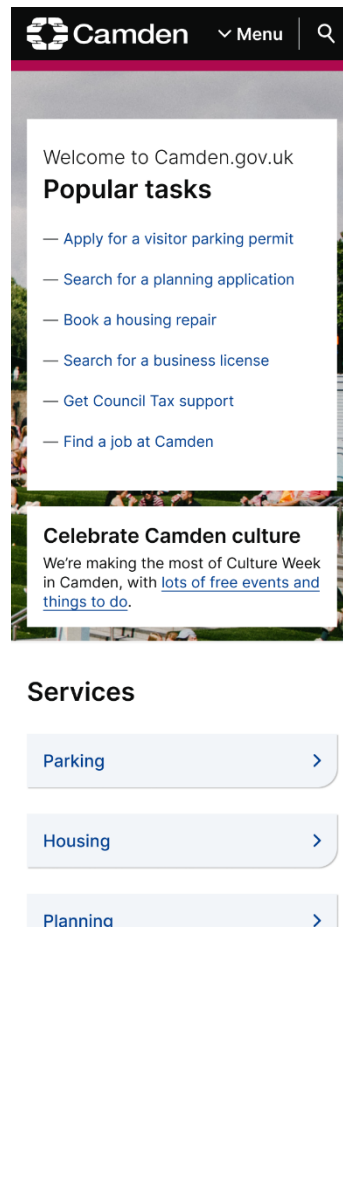
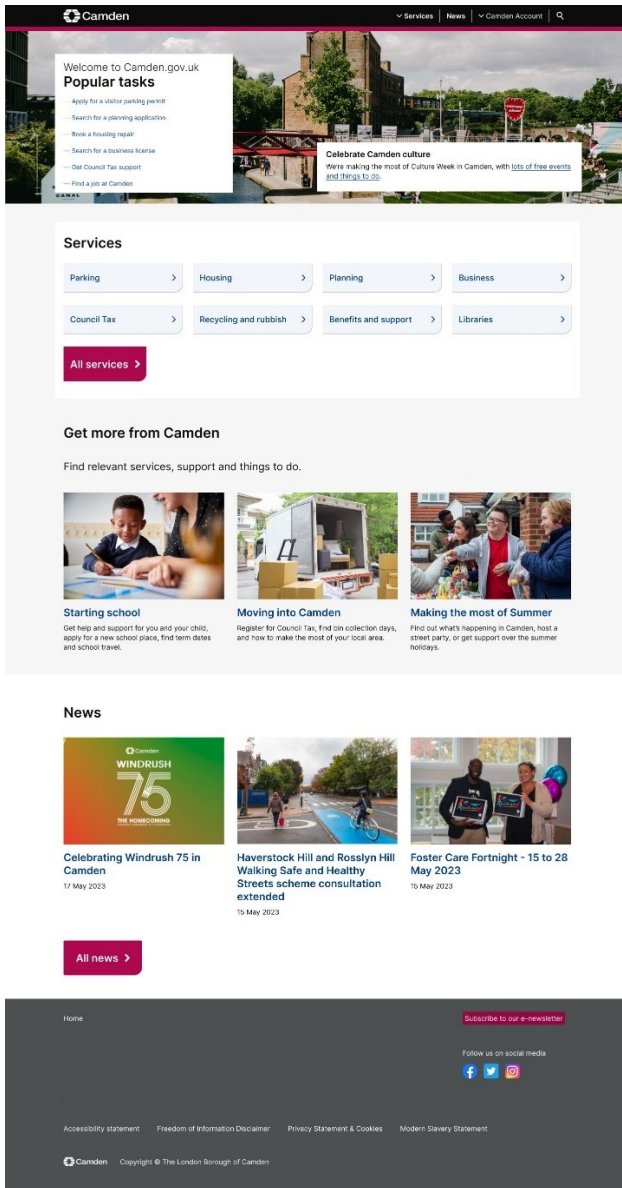
### **2.1. Design system established**

From the insight gained, our design and front-end development team have developed patterns and code that can be reused across multiple systems to create a consistent visual and interactive designs and standard, tested code. The design system templates have been tested with many residents and businesses and heavily utilise patterns that will be familiar with citizens from the likes of gov.uk and NHS websites thus making them more usable and less expensive for Camden to develop.

Using a design system with tested code such as this also means less ongoing effort to ensure accessibility of our pages and ensuring that the pages are not resource intensive (costing more for Camden to store, using more energy and data to download).

This will be the start of a more unified experience across our digital estate. The image below shows how the homepage will look on mobile and desktop.

New designs are always designed and developed tested on desktop and mobile with mobile usage now accounting for over 50% of user sessions.





## 2.2. Content redesign and governance

Alongside the visual design, the content design team have been rewriting, restructuring and improving content across the site with an initial focus on our highest priority journey (mostly measured by the amount of users accessing online). The published improvements are designed to help citizens better find, understand and access information in areas such as Universal credit, Council tax support and permit applications amongst many others.

An example of the impact of this work can be seen with the reorganisation of content on the Benefits page resulting in 85% more engagement from users of the pages (more people clicking links through to information rather than leaving the page) and a significantly reduced reading age, in some sections from 14 to 7 years old.

Changes to the cost of living pages saw a similar uplift, with the number of users engaging with the webpage increasing from 50 to 87%, and a reading age of 17/18 reduced to 9 years of age.

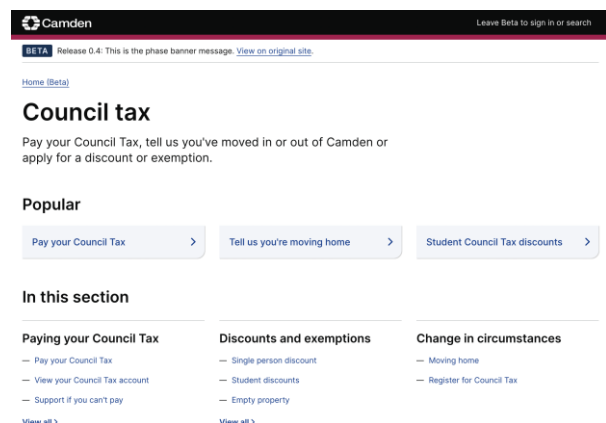
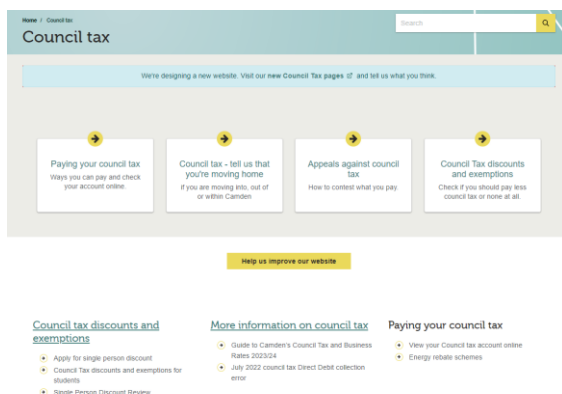
An important change to maintain the quality of content being added to the site is content governance. Site changes are now largely made by the content design team themselves. This frees up service team members no longer needing to update their own pages and enables higher quality, consistent content to be produced. Teams who require urgent updates or have expertise such as the news and communication teams will retain access.

## 2.3. Trialling new designs at scale

We created a beta version of the Council Tax section of the website using our new design system and new development environments that could be accessed by the public alongside the existing pages. We ran multiple tests, studied analytics and ran surveys with very good results:

- Readability and accessibility were much improved
- Task completion was faster
- Satisfaction scores increased (homepage from 43 to 62% satisfied, and specific pages such as “how to pay” from 35 to 99%)

Side by side comparison of old vs. new designs for council tax pages.



### **3. Launching the redesigned site**

#### **3.1. Rebuilding the site**

We are now in the process of redesigning around one thousand pages of content across [camden.gov.uk](http://camden.gov.uk) based on these designs which we hope to go live this calendar year (2023). This requires extensive testing and an upgrade of the technology that will support the new design and will result in approximately 48 hours of limited functionality on the site (we are hoping to be able to schedule for late November, currently held up by platform provider issues).

As part of the redesign, our technical lead has also introduced many new ways of automating testing to ensure ongoing good performance, availability and accessibility.

### **4. Outcomes**

Our aim is to better serve our citizens with faster, more efficient information and services alongside enabling data evaluation and regular insight to better understand needs, problems and behaviours.

#### **Primary**

- More residents wanting to use the site for more reasons etc.
- More returning users
- More tasks completed first time – faster, easier transactions
- Higher user satisfaction
- More time spent positively engaging with the council
- Fewer bugs – fewer support issues
- Faster deployment of updates and improvements

#### **Longer term**

- Actionable insight from user behaviour across our digital estate
- Reduced customer service time
- Reduced technical cost
- Reduced environmental impact

#### **4.1. Assets**

This work has given us building blocks for Camden's future success across our digital touchpoints - a design system with standards and style guides that can be implemented across our digital estate by internal and external teams and frameworks within which to measure the effectiveness of our design work going forward.

#### **4.2. Evaluation**

With more accurate data and the ability to garner regular feedback and research insights we can continue to monitor engagement to ensure that changes we are making are having a positive impact.

Top line figures such as “returning users” will be monitored alongside individual areas, such as the examples given in the design sections above.

## **5. Equalities Impact and Disability considerations**

Digital inclusion is a core reason why we must make these change to the website.

The accessibility audit commissioned with the RNIB found over 71 issues that need correcting affecting multiple pages and areas of the site. Work is ongoing to correct those with a large number fixed by the redesign (others are with partners to correct and are ongoing).

Our work to improve digital accessibility means that our redesigned webpages will be easier to use with assistive technologies such as screen readers and at high magnification levels. By simplifying the language on the site we make each service more accessible to more of our communities including those for whom English is not be their first language.

## **6. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

This paper provides an update on the work to improve [camden.gov.uk](http://camden.gov.uk). There are no financial decisions or risks to note within this paper.

## **7. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**


No comments made by the legal team.

## **8. Environmental Implications**

The newly redesigned page templates are using less energy to store and be retrieved than their counterparts than current designs but there are limited tools to accurately measure the exact environmental impact so far. Our new design patterns also reduce the use and file size of images which will also be something of benefit to the carbon footprint of the website. This is an important issue for all of our technology that we will continue to monitor.

**REPORT ENDS**



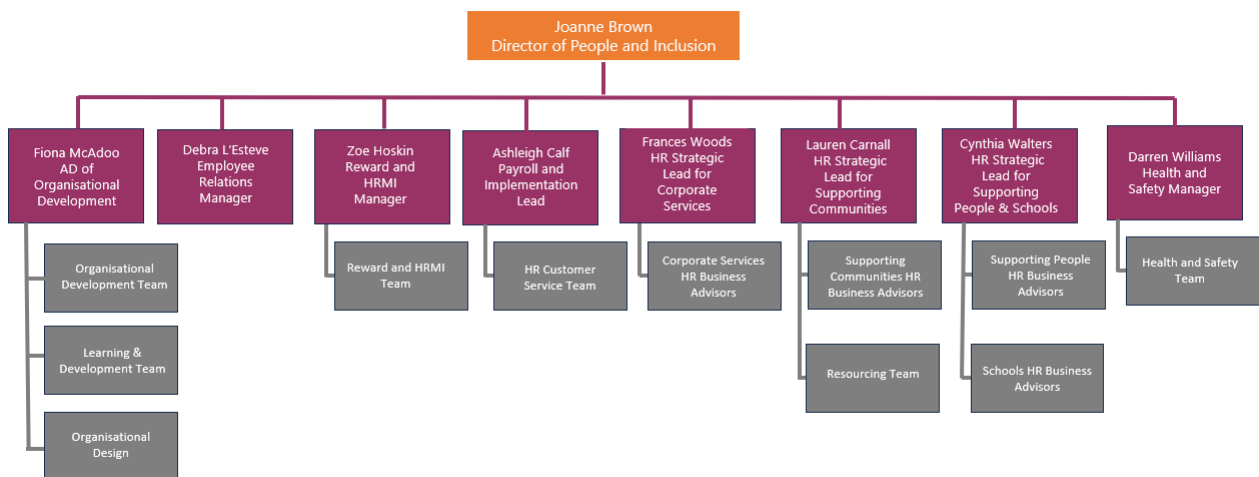
<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARD:</b> All wards
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> HR Annual Report 2023	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> The Director of People and Inclusion	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 14th November 2023
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report has been compiled in response to the Committee's request for an update on the Council's workforce. It offers an annual review of the Council's workforce composition and outlines the activities carried out during 2022/23. The report encompasses critical aspects such as workforce diversity and inclusivity, talent acquisition, pay, compensation and recognition, future of work and flexibility, employee well-being, and assistance provided to staff in navigating the challenges posed by the rising cost of living.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Patricia Hillman HR Project Lead Corporate Services 5 Pancras Square London N1C 5AG</p> <p>Patricia Hillman: <a href="mailto:Patricia.Hillman@camden.gov.uk">Patricia.Hillman@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.</p>	
<p><b>Signed</b> </p> <p><b>Director of People and Inclusion.</b></p> <p><b>Date :</b> 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023</p>	

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report has been compiled in response to the Committee's request for an update on the Council's workforce-related developments. It serves as an annual review, offering an in-depth examination of the Council's workforce composition and a summary of activities undertaken during the 2022/23 period. The report addresses critical areas such as workforce diversity, resource allocation, future talent acquisition, compensation and recognition, organisational growth, health and safety measures, and provides an update on our people management AMGUD casework.

Under the guidance of Joanna Brown, Director of People and Inclusion, Camden HR places a significant emphasis on prioritising people and inclusivity. Camden aspires to become the leading public sector employer in the country, establishing a benchmark for exemplary work practices and fostering a climate of fairness and inclusiveness in employment. Camden HR provides a spectrum of services to both the organisation and Camden's educational institutions and partners, working towards delivering the visions set out in We Make Camden and The Way We Work.

1.2. In Summary, the service is comprised of:



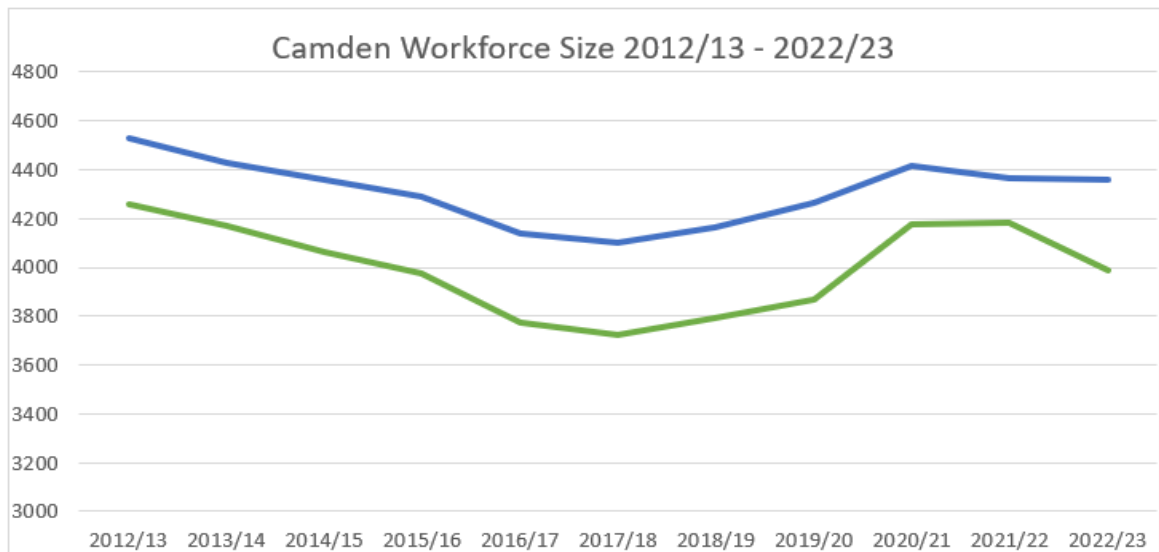
## 2. Current Workforce

2.1. The Camden Annual Employment Profile offers an analysis of the workforce's size, composition, and various recruitment and employment areas, including age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation where applicable data is accessible. This analysis plays a crucial role in guaranteeing that Camden adheres to its responsibilities outlined in equality legislation, particularly in accordance with the public sector equality duty stipulated in The Equality Act of 2010.

2.2. Camden Council is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is representative at all levels. To meet this objective, Camden's employment profile reporting provides a higher level of detail, analysis, and comparative data, all of which is openly disclosed. Ahead of the release of the 2022/23 annual employment profile, the figures up to 31 March 2023 are included below:

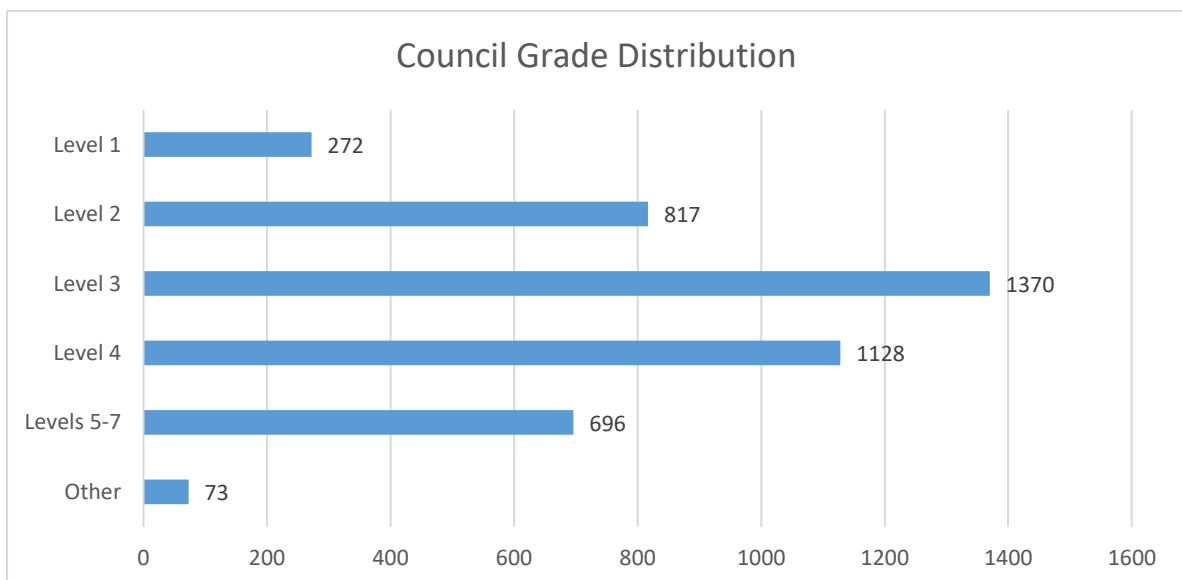
## Workforce Size

2.3. The total number of staff employed by the council is 4,356 with a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 3,987. Current headcount and FTE are 3.76% and 6.35% smaller than they were in 2012/13.



## Grade Distribution

2.4. The table presented below illustrates the distribution of the workforce according to grade. The largest proportion of employees fall under Level 3 (31.5%) and Level 4 (25.9%):



## Gender

- 2.5. Females make up 55.9% of Camden Council's workforce. This percentage ranks Camden as the eighth lowest among London Boroughs, with the median being 59.8% female representation.
- 2.6. Historically, employment numbers for women in local government tend to be higher than those for men. This is attributed to the greater prevalence of flexible and part-time work opportunities in the public sector. The gender ratio within Camden Council has remained fairly consistent from 2015/16 to present - the average percentage of female workers within the workforce during this period being 50.1%.
- 2.7. In Camden Council, 49.8% of the highest 5% earners are women, which shows a slight decrease of 0.7% since 2017/18 when the figure was 50.5%. This has played a role in achieving greater gender pay parity and is favourable in comparison to the Inner London Council average, where the median stands at 51.5%.

Directorate	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Female	50.5%	50.0%	51.6%	46.5%	47.9%	49.8%
Male	49.5%	50.0%	48.4%	53.5%	52.1%	51.2%

## Disability

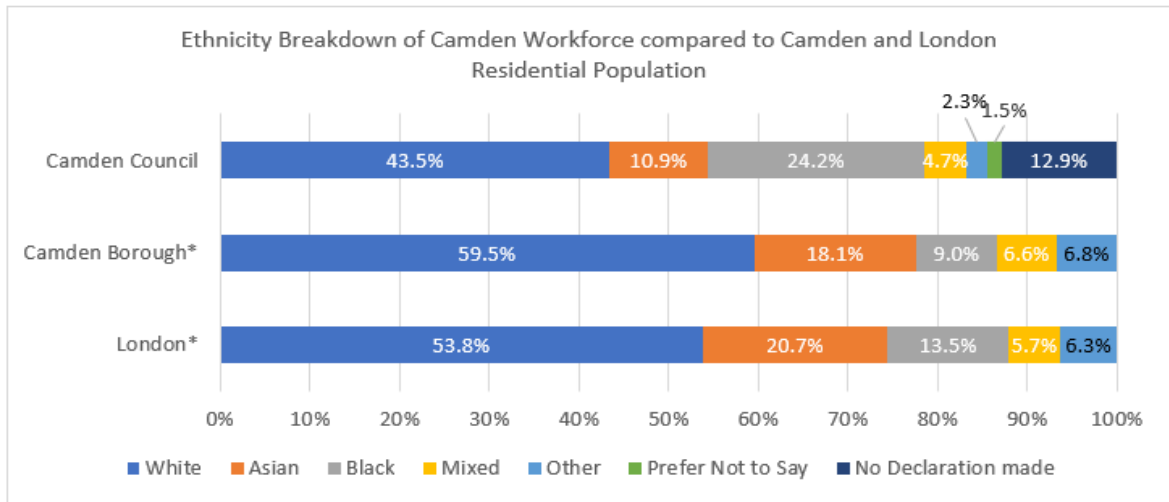
- 2.8. Currently, 7.3% of staff have formally shared their disability status. However, according to the most recent (2023) Wellbeing Pulse survey, 13% of respondents indicated having a condition, whether physical, mental, or related to learning, that could be categorised as a disability under The Equality Act of 2010. We are revising our diversity monitoring form and actively involving our staff to enhance the sharing of this information. Our aim is to assure staff that this information will be handled with care, providing valuable insights and contributing to making Camden a more inclusive workplace.

Directorate	Disabled	Not Disabled	Prefer Not to Say	Unknown	Grand Total
Corporate Services	9.1%	62.2%	5.0%	23.7%	100.0%
Supporting Communities	6.0%	57.0%	1.3%	35.6%	100.0%
Supporting People	8.0%	59.1%	0.6%	32.3%	100.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

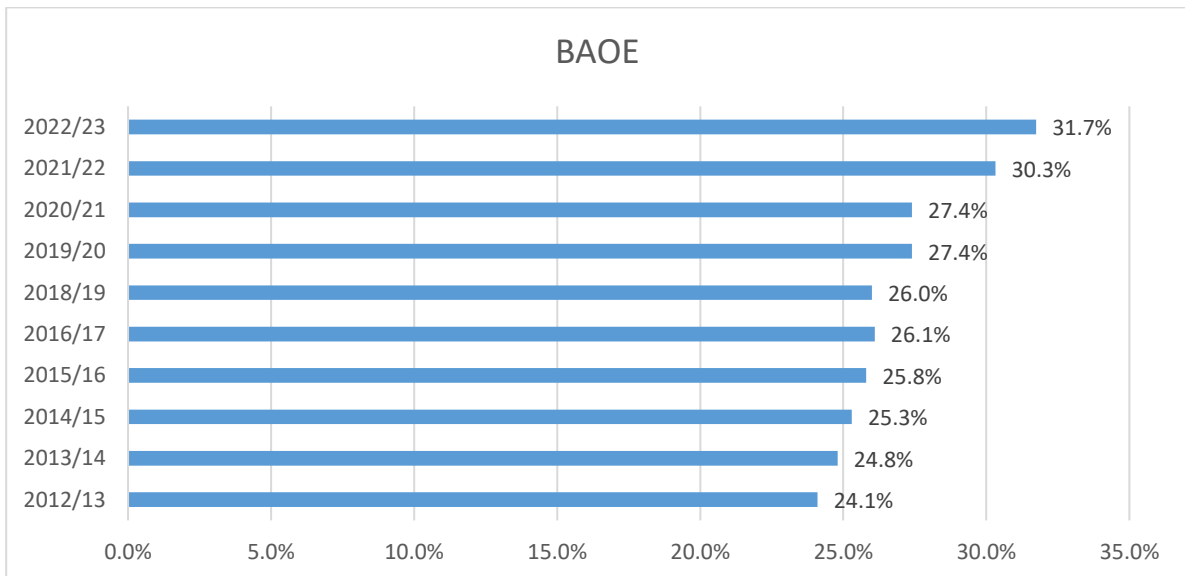
## Ethnicity

- 2.9. The chart provided illustrates the representation of different ethnicities within our workforce in comparison to the working-age populations of both the Camden borough and London:





2.10. While 46.2% of our staff come from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in total, this representation is not uniform throughout our grade hierarchy. Specifically, at higher grade levels, notably Level 4 Zone 2 and above, the proportion of Black, Asian, and Other Ethnic staff is 31.7%. However, it's noteworthy that this figure has exhibited a consistent upward trend since 2012/13. Also of note is the progress made at the most senior level where over 40% of our directors are from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds which for the first time brings us in line with the community.

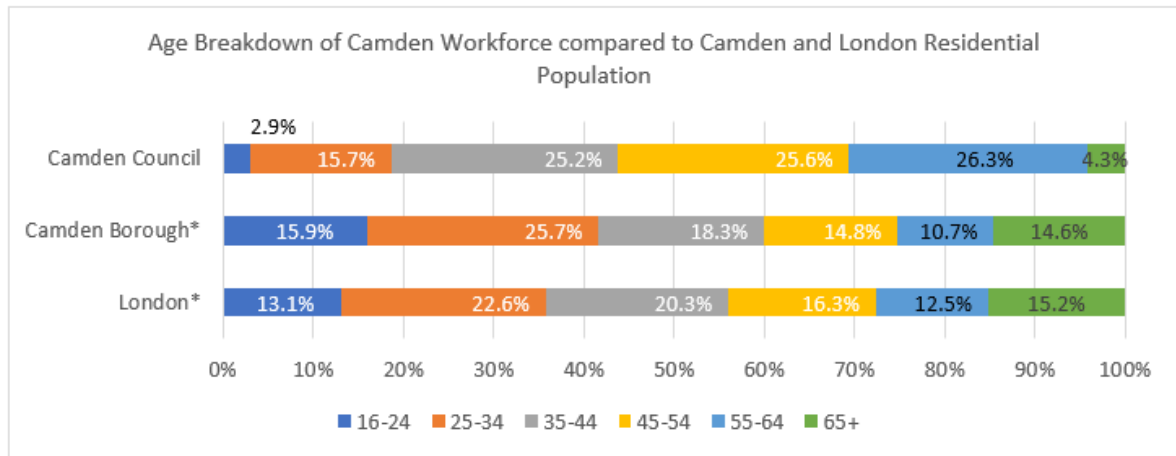


Between 2012 and 2020, the proportion of BAOE staff either stayed constant or experienced a 1% increase, resulting in a total cumulative increase of 3%. However, the period from 2020 to 2023, spanning just three years, has witnessed a growth of slightly over 4%, demonstrating a substantial surge in the rate of increase.

## Age

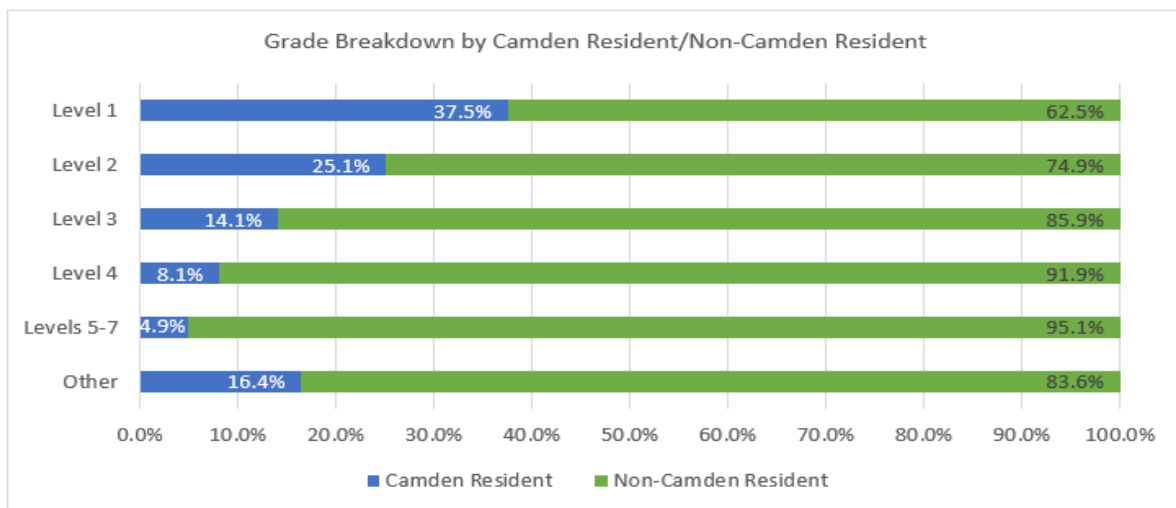
2.11. The age distribution of Camden Council's workforce is notably older compared to both the working-age population of the Camden Borough and London as a whole. Specifically, only 2.9% of Camden Council's employees fall within the 16-24 year age bracket, in contrast to 15.9% of the working-age population in Camden. This lower

percentage of staff in the 16–24 year age range is largely anticipated, given that Camden hosts the largest student population in London, owing to the presence of 11 higher education institutions within the borough. Many individuals in this age group are engaged in some form of education or training.



### Staff Resident in Camden

2.12. A key priority outlined in We Make Camden is to enhance employment opportunities for local residents. To achieve this objective, we have taken the initiative to monitor the percentage of our workforce living in Camden. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 14.6% of our staff (637 individuals) were also residents of Camden. This represents a decrease of 2.49% from the previous year when the council employed 746 individuals (17.09%).

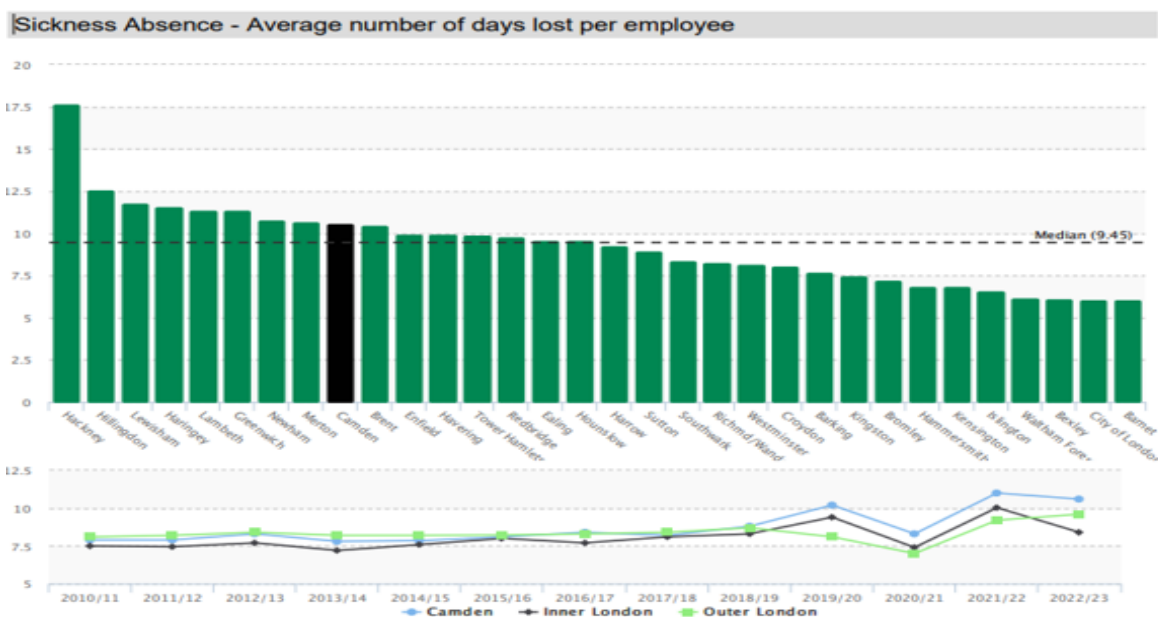


2.13. The table below provides information on the distance at which staff members (Inclusive of Agency workers) live from the 5PS.

Distance (mi) to 5PS Banding	Current Employee Count
1 to 5mi	3,186
5 to 10mi	1,928
10 to 20mi	798
0.5 to 1mi	512
20 to 50mi	417
Under 0.5mi	235
50 to 100mi	140
100 to 200mi	83
-	78
Over 200mi	14

### 3. Health and Wellbeing

3.1. For 2022/2023, Camden Council's average number of days lost per employee was 10.6 days, which falls in the third quartile of all the London Boroughs, and the third quartile for inner London.

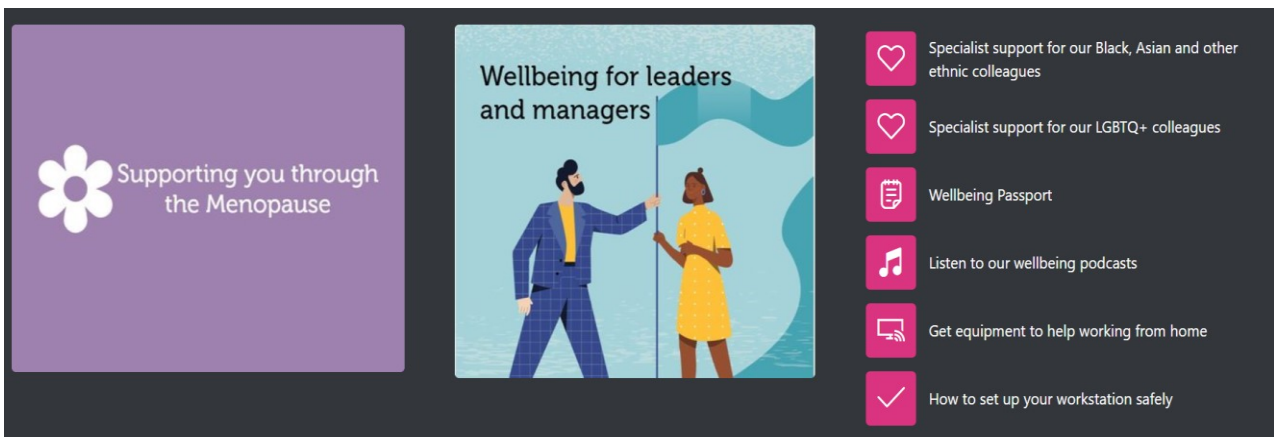
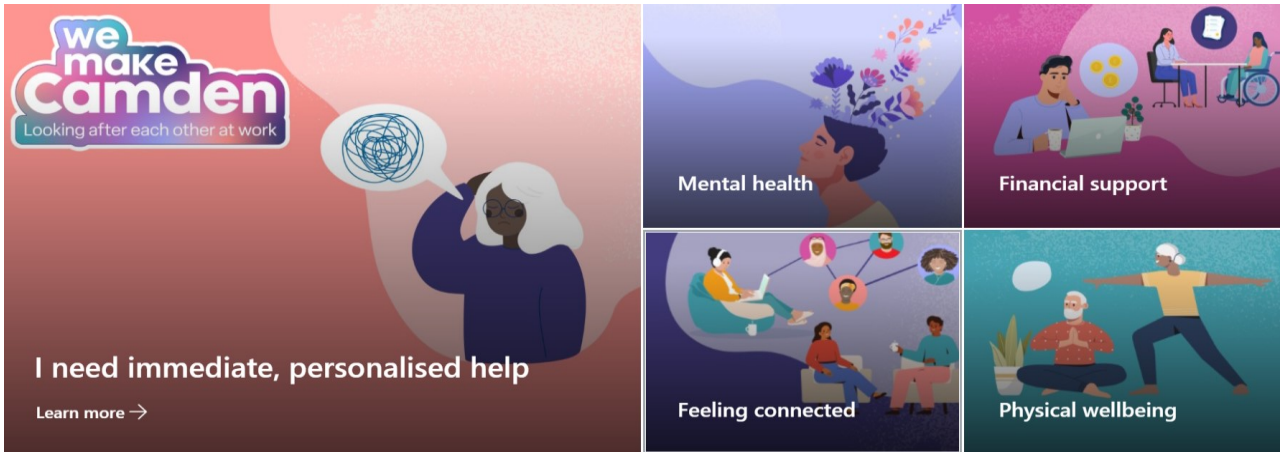


3.2. Camden's average number of days lost per employee has fallen by 3.6% since the last survey in 2021/22, when it was 11 days. This compares with a median average change of -16.3% for inner London since 2021/22.

3.3. Ensuring the health and wellbeing of our staff remains a top priority in Camden. During the pandemic, we expanded our wellbeing initiatives to encompass emotional, physical, financial, and social wellbeing.

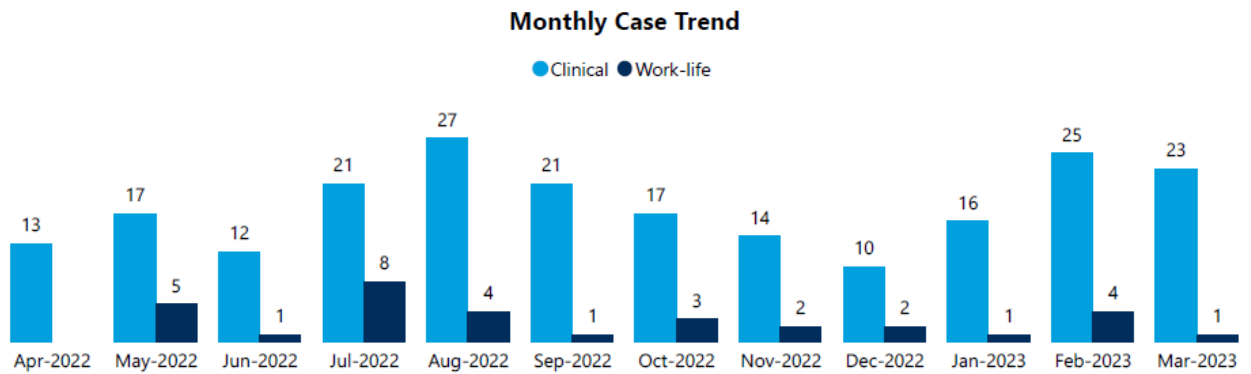
In acknowledgement of the effectiveness and expansion of our wellbeing programs in spring 2023, we consolidated the diverse offerings and introduced a dedicated wellbeing microsite.

The microsite offers a range of wellbeing support, conveniently organised under the following categories:

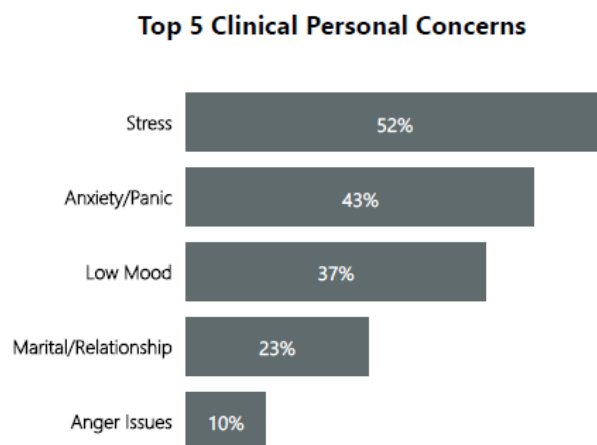


3.4. The microsite is thorough and undergoes regular updates to align with national wellbeing events, such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day. It also addresses specific aspects relevant to Camden, like connecting our physical wellbeing with the Borough's green spaces, outdoor fitness areas, and complimentary fitness events.

3.5. The council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers staff and their family members access to confidential emotional support from qualified counsellors, free of charge. This service is accessible around the clock, every day of the year. Our data shows that 248 employees used the EAP over the last 12 months which is a decrease of 26 from the previous year.



3.6. The provided data reveals that out of the total cases, 216 were categorised as clinical, with the remaining cases pertaining to work-life issues.



3.7. Among the clinical cases, there is a further distinction between personal and workplace-related concerns. The above graph illustrates the primary reasons for clinical personal concerns, accounting for 74% of cases, while the graph below highlights the top reasons for clinical workplace concerns, which make up the remaining 26%.



In May, the Council marked Mental Health Awareness Week with a concentrated emphasis on the theme of anxiety. Camden HR organised a series of webinars facilitated by mental health experts from ThinkWell, covering topics such as:

- Developing Mental Resilience,
- Dealing with Anxiety,
- the importance of self-care.
- Emotional wellbeing

These seminars were recorded and are now permanently available on the microsite.

3.8. Camden HR have also created an in-house podcast series dedicated to various aspects of wellbeing. These podcasts aim to showcase staff experiences and narratives, illustrating how they've managed difficult situations. Over the past year, we've produced and recorded seven podcast episodes, exceeding 750 plays (averaging more than 100 plays per episode). The episodes are as follows:

- **Episode 1: "Psyched Up!"** In this episode, our Educational Psychologists delve into their wellbeing strategies and offer insights into how their team navigated through the challenges of the pandemic. They share valuable lessons that we can all apply in our lives.
- **Episode 2: "Cover-to-Cover":** In this episode, members of our Library Services Team recount their experiences providing support throughout the borough during the pandemic. They discuss how we can all engage with and attentively listen to our communities.
- **Episode 3: "Bussing the Boost"** This episode highlights the efforts of the Vaccine Bus Team as they discuss the vital role of health buses in our communities.
- **Episode 4: "Mind Map"** is a collaborative effort between Camden Council and Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust. In this episode, we gain insight into the experiences of our colleagues regarding mental health and wellbeing, both prior to and during the COVID-19 lockdowns, extending into the period beyond. This discussion is part of our observance of Mental Health Awareness Week.
- **Episode 5: "Cost of Living"** In anticipation of World Mental Health Day, our panellists centre their discussion on the cost of living. They explore how the current demanding financial circumstances can impact our mental health and overall wellbeing.
- **Episode 6: "More Than a Flush"** We delve into the connection between menopause, anxiety, and their implications for Mental Health Awareness Week. This episode sheds light on how these factors can manifest in the workplace.
- **Episode 7: "Leading Light"** centres on leadership, exploring what provides purpose and motivation for leaders, and how they can navigate pressures while prioritising their wellbeing. The episode also touches on best practices and strategies, including the importance of self-awareness.

#### Physical Wellbeing & Social Connection

3.9. Based on feedback from previous staff surveys, it became evident that feeling connected to our Borough was a top priority for our staff. In response, the Council offer a series of evening wellbeing walks around the borough (organised by Camden Guides). These walks provide an opportunity to become more acquainted with Camden as a place, a community, and a borough. Alongside the wellbeing walks, the Council launched yoga for staff in our buildings. This was also on the back of staff feedback.

## Support for Staff through Cost-of-Living Crisis

3.10. Camden's existing pay and benefits package for staff encompasses various forms of support, which are outlined in detail in Appendix One. Notably, there are two recent additions to this package:

- Childcare Deposit loan scheme - an interest-free loan to support staff with the upfront payment of registration deposit/fees and the first month of childcare fees.
- Beyond card – a prepaid shopping card that gives employees up to 15% cashback every time they shop at over seventy popular retailers, in-store and online.

3.11. In response to the current financial challenges affecting living costs, Camden HR has been actively promoting awareness of the existing support available by Camden. We have also been signposting individuals towards other sources of advice. Our initiatives have included:

- In November 2022, we organised a marketplace event for staff to engage with our benefit providers. This provided them with an opportunity to learn about the support options and receive guidance on debt management. During Mental Health Week, we launched a podcast to spotlight the diverse array of support services accessible to our staff, as well as outlining the Council's efforts in aiding our residents.
- We wrote to all frontline staff to highlight the available support and provide directions to additional resources and assistance.
- Reintroduction of our routine schedule of financial education seminars conducted by external experts, covering topics like general financial literacy and pre-retirement planning.
- Partnering with HSBC, we are initiating an ongoing series of practical financial wellbeing webinars for our staff. These sessions will cover a wide array of topics, including optimising your finances, effective debt management, and strategies for dealing with the escalating cost of living.

In anticipation of the 2023 Winter period, HR has initiated a review of our internal communication and engagement strategy in response to the cost-of-living crisis. Our objective is to ensure that all staff members are informed about the available support, understand how to utilise it, and are equipped to guide colleagues and residents towards assistance when necessary.

## Future of work

3.12. Throughout the pandemic and as the council transitioned into a more flexible and hybrid work model for many of our services, HR has established our Future of Work Programme. This initiative encompassed the following key areas of focus:

- Advancing our People and Culture initiatives
- Optimising our use of buildings.
- Ensuring we have the right technology to support the future of work.

## **People and Culture**

### **Flexibility**

- 3.13. It's evident that numerous services have undergone significant transformations in their operations compared to just a few years ago. Colleagues have demonstrated ingenuity and efficiency in how they engage with citizens and one another, whether in person, through hybrid approaches, or virtually. This shift has facilitated the adoption of more hybrid work models for some services, enabling them to adapt office usage while capitalising on the advantages of remote working.
- 3.14. The Council observed a gradual rise in the number of individuals using our facilities, with an average of 800 people at peak times in 5PS. While this figure is still notably lower than pre-pandemic levels, it's evident that hybrid work arrangements are becoming the new norm for the majority of staff.
- 3.15. Undoubtedly, flexible working has emerged as a crucial factor for organisations aiming to retain and attract talent. It not only benefits individuals working within these organisations but also extends a wider range of opportunities to groups that may face disadvantages in the employment market, such as women and caregivers.

To ensure all colleagues remain connected to the Borough, the Council requests that all departments ensure that colleagues spend at least some time each week physically present in Camden. This is crucial for fostering connections with our communities and colleagues. For those colleagues directly involved in serving citizens and working in the community, it is anticipated that they will be in our buildings more frequently than not. It is up to Directors to set expectations for individuals in their services beyond the guidance that has been set organisationally.

- 3.16. As part of our dedication to flexibility, HR have been crafting a fresh flexible working commitment to supersede our current policy. This new commitment will also incorporate forthcoming alterations in legislation. Our collaboration with Timewise has played a significant role in this effort. The commitment will encompass both informal and formal flexible working arrangements, supplemented by illustrative case studies and a manager's toolkit to facilitate ongoing discussions regarding flexible work arrangements.

In addition to this we know that there is a perception in some services, predominantly front line, that access to flexible working across the organisation favours those who are mostly desk based or are in senior positions. We are working closely with front line services such as Repairs, Adults Social Care and Contact Camden to explore the barriers to and experiences of flexible working to better understand what gets in the way for staff in these areas. With our insights, we will be conducting small scale experiments to trial different flexible working arrangements that consider the needs of the resident, service area and the individual seeking to work flexibly.

### **A focus on how we use our buildings.**

- 3.17. As a component of our Future of Work initiative, the council have undertaken pilot projects to implement several alterations to its facilities. These include:
- Installed private calling booths to ensure enhanced confidentiality during video or phone calls.



- Established presentation areas dedicated to group presentations and interactions. These spaces are fully equipped for virtual participation, enabling colleagues to join in remotely or gather around a screen for presentations and discussions. This fosters a stronger sense of collaboration and unity in the workspace.
- Implemented writing walls in select areas, providing a space for colleagues to brainstorm, generate ideas, and collaborate in person, free from screens.
- We are in the process of extending these improvements across our floors, incorporating feedback and insights. This includes implementing changes at Holmes Road and Vadnie Bish House, as well as other locations where services identify a need.

## Café

3.18. We understand that fostering social connections within our Borough and among our workforce is crucial for productivity and overall well-being. In response to feedback from the organisation and in recognition of the increased utilisation of our office spaces, we redesigned the café space on Level 2 at 5PS after conducting a procurement exercise.

The café:

- Prioritises accessibility for disabled staff.
- Utilises a self-service model allowing staff to purchase hot and cold food and beverages through contactless payment or a top-up Pay365 account (facilitating payment via thumbprint).
- Operates on a profit-sharing system, where café profits are reinvested to lower product prices.
- Demonstrates a commitment to social value and sustainability, with fair trade and sustainably sourced coffee and a portion of food sourced from local suppliers. Encourages the use of reusable cups and cutlery.
- Focuses on minimising food waste by monitoring the take-up of products and re-stocking according to demand. Any surplus fresh food is also donated to local organisations.
- Offers value-driven pricing, such as all hot drinks available for £1 per cup and provides a 20% discount on café purchases (excluding hot drinks) for those spending £4.50 or more in a single transaction when registered for a Pay365 account.

3.19. The café's usage is regularly assessed, and foot traffic often correlates with the number of staff present at 5PS. We are actively exploring methods to encourage more staff to utilise the café, and this is reinforced by our dedication to maintaining a competitive offering compared to nearby options in the King's Cross area. Our recent interactions with managers revealed a positive reception to the introduction of the café at 5PS, which was warmly welcomed by many of our staff.

## Technology

3.20. The Council has upgraded over 500 monitors across 5PS to a more modern HD, widescreen, built-in camera and power passthrough monitor to support workers coming into our central office location. We are continuing to monitor the demand for monitors in our buildings.

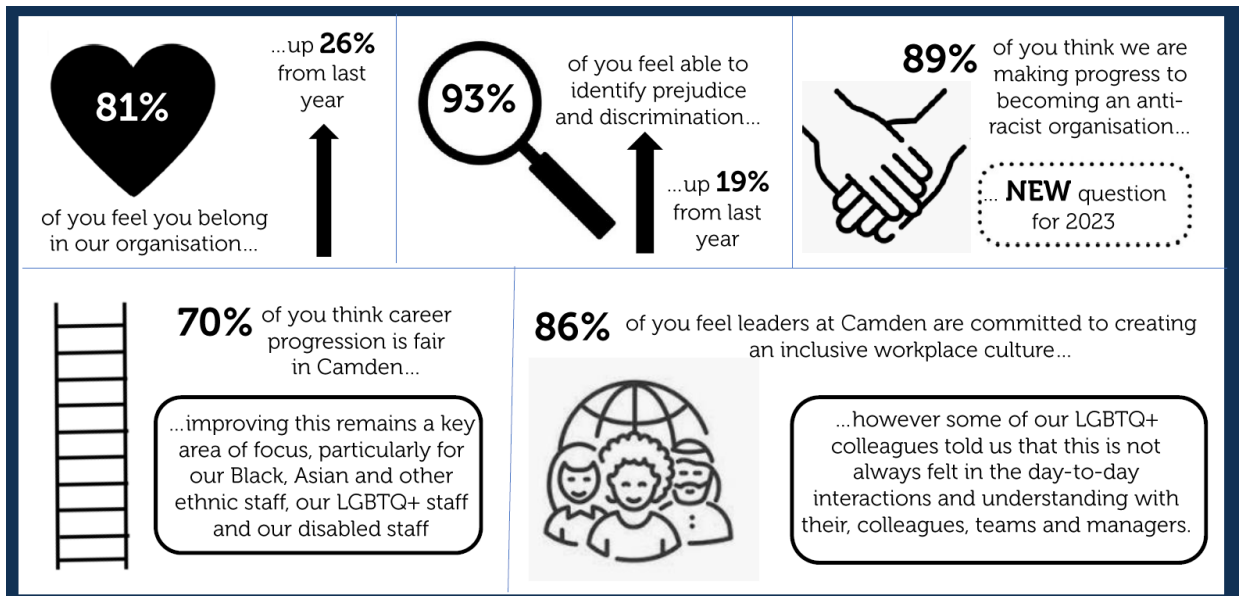
- 3.21. The Council have upgraded 26 rooms across the estate, including 5PS, Crowndale, Town Hall, Holmes Road and York Way with modern hybrid meeting equipment. This equipment ranges from supporting small meeting rooms that hold 4 individuals through to much larger rooms that can hold up to 24 individuals for a hybrid meeting experience. This allows staff to hold a seamless experience for meetings with online and in-person participants. We are continuing to review the demand for this equipment and discuss with departments individual needs when appropriate.
- 3.22. The Council have upgraded our room and space booking system 'Matrix' to a cloud-based solution which allows us to run the most up-to-date system. This has led to quality-of-life improvements, including the removal of dual bookings caused by staff circumventing the system.
- 3.23. The Technology Adoption team continues to work with staff to identify and enable tools and software that can support hybrid working across teams and departments. With this year enabling Miro as an online collaboration tool and working with organisational development to identify and enable an online mentoring platform to support the organisations wider aims.

The team also continues to work with identified pilot departments to move their files from Shared Drives into Microsoft Teams. These pilots are being undertaken to build a wider approach for the rest of the organisation to continue the modernisation of our work practices in a now hybrid working environment.

#### **4. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion**

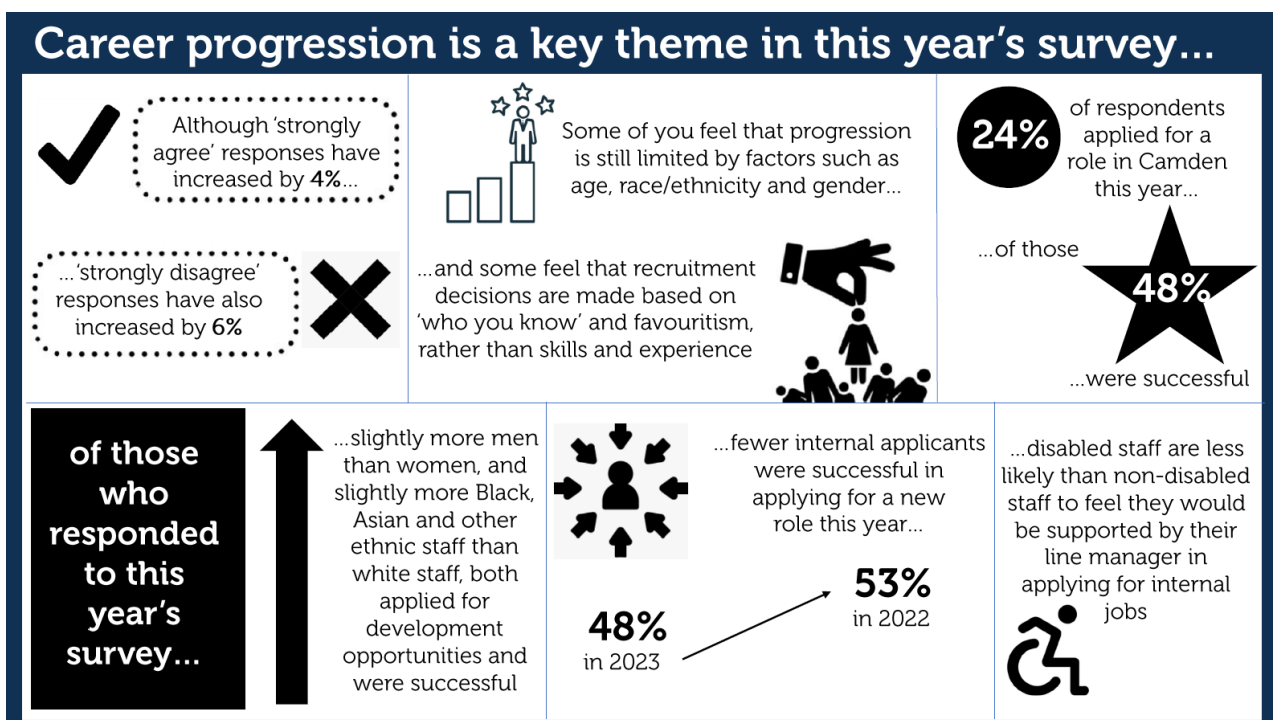
##### Pulse Survey

- 4.1. Camden conducted its third inclusion-focused pulse survey. We were committed to running an annual inclusion-focused pulse survey to ensure we were well-informed about our inclusion work, allowing us to adapt as needed in order to become the inclusive organisation we aspired to be.
- 4.2. Overall, the feedback was positive, showing significant improvements compared to the previous year, which reflects the positive outcomes of our collective efforts. Specifically, 81% indicated a strong sense of belonging to the organisation, marking a noteworthy 26% surge from the prior year. Additionally, 93% expressed confidence in their ability to recognise prejudice and discrimination, reflecting a notable 19% increase from the previous year. Moreover, 70% of the staff believed that career progression in Camden was fair, while 86% felt that the leaders at Camden were genuinely dedicated to fostering an inclusive workplace environment.



4.3. The respondents' demographics closely mirror both the individual and organisational demographics of Camden's staff. This offers valuable insights, encompassing balanced representation in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and religion. This year, we also integrated Social-economic demographics, shedding light on specific aspects within Camden's community, such as single parents, individuals with caregiving responsibilities, refugees, and staff members who adhere to a faith.

4.4. A prevalent theme arising from this year's pulse survey pertains to career development and training, constituting 16% of the comments. Specifically, participants expressed interest in career planning, opportunities for secondments, job shadowing, and mentoring.



4.5. Additionally, there were suggestions for broader support systems for employees dealing with disability, neurodiversity, or mental health and well-being concerns. This encompassed calls for reasonable accommodations and additional assistance in these areas.

It is evident that there have been positive improvements over the past year. However, certain critical areas, particularly our efforts concerning LGBTQ, Disability, and career progression, require more focused attention.

### Anti-Racist Learning Offer

4.6. Camden's Anti-Racism Learning program is a pivotal component of our Race Equality Action Plan. This learning offer equips employees with the knowledge and resources to actively recognise and confront racism in its various manifestations. Additionally, it empowers people managers to grasp and pledge to foster anti-racist leadership practices.

4.7. The learning offer was launched in May 2021 and is categorised into three phases:

Phase 1 (May – September 2021) - creating a shared understanding of racism across the organisation through the design and delivery of virtual Education, Reflection and Managers sessions for staff with digital access. These were delivered via Zoom by internally recruited Anti-racism learning offer facilitators together with our external partner In Diverse Company [IDC].

Phase 2 (October 2021 – May 2022) – focused on embedding the design, delivery and future shape of Anti-Racist Learning into the organisation and delivering the learning offer through face-to-face sessions to those who were able to access or join the previously delivered virtual sessions. This encompassed sessions for front-line workers, those lacking digital access, and sessions for new employees as part of their induction process.

To date, the educational sessions have reached a total of 95% of staff members.

Phase 3 (May 2022 – onwards) – During this period, we integrated the learning into the organisation to make the adoption of anti-racist behaviours a standard practice. This encompassed:

- **Anti-Racism E-Learning Module** – This module distilled the insights from both face-to-face and online education sessions into an easily accessible digital format. It has been integrated into Camden's mandatory learning offer, guaranteeing that all staff members undergo this training at least once every two years. Additionally, it is readily accessible to all new employees and those returning after extended periods of absence, such as parental leave, career breaks, or prolonged sick leave.
- **Managers Session** - In addition to the anti-racism e-learning module, managers are mandated to participate in a two-hour virtual anti-racism session tailored specifically for managerial roles. This session is accompanied by preparatory and follow-up exercises that must be completed. Attendance is compulsory to ensure that managers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to address anti-racism effectively within the organisation.
- **Learning resources** - We have curated a collection of Anti-Racism Learning Resources accessible through Camden's Learning and Development Hub. These resources cover a range of topics related to anti-racism, including subjects like micro-aggressions. They are designed to empower staff to pursue independent learning on these crucial issues.

- **Shared Learning and experiences** - We organised an event for local businesses and various Local Authorities across London to disseminate our anti-racism progress, with a particular emphasis on the learning resources we offer.

### Trauma Support Offer

4.8. As a result of the council's Anti-Racism efforts, it became apparent that many of our colleagues are contending with a wide spectrum of issues and emotions linked to trauma. This includes experiences such as grief, loss, burnout, and the enduring impact of racial and various other types of trauma. These issues may have been exacerbated by the heightened attention on the injustices that many of our colleagues still grapple with. Consequently, we have introduced a new well-being initiative specifically tailored to support colleagues affected by trauma in all its manifestations. This program complements our existing Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and features trauma-informed coaching, as well as access to qualified counsellors who specialise in trauma-related matters. As of now, 160 individuals have sought out and utilised this support.

### Reporting Discrimination

4.9. The insights garnered from the Anti-Racism Learning Offer have underscored the importance of healing, learning, and restoration in our endeavour to transform into an anti-racist organisation. Throughout, our colleagues have expressed the need for a secure and confident avenue to report instances of discrimination, seeking assurance that they will be heard and provided with information about available options.

4.10. During 2023 we have developed a restorative approach to reporting discrimination that will be launched in the autumn.

There are two integral components to this approach:

- 1) **Reporting:** HR wants to create a safe, accessible way for staff to report incidents of discrimination that they trust, which also enables us to collect data so that we can understand the overall picture of these incidents within the organisation.
- 2) **Restoration:** The approach HR are working towards is one that focuses on healing. HR's aim is to create a working environment that is safe, supportive and enables staff to thrive. To do this, we need to create an approach that recognises the hurt that has been caused and looks for ways to restore the relationship through creating a learning environment. This is not about reaching a judgment but about healing a relationship.

4.11. While it's recognised that not all incidents may be suitable for this approach, HR has learned through insights gathered from focus groups, staff inclusion forums, and the Council Anti-Racism Learning Offer that a significant portion of discrimination experienced by our staff manifests as microaggressions, often without harmful intent. In cases where a staff member is open to learning, willing to comprehend the impact of their behaviour, and committed to making necessary changes, we should aim to adopt a restorative and healing approach.

4.12. The Reporting Discrimination hub will comprise a diverse team of 10-12 colleagues, each bringing a range of lived experiences to the table. These colleagues will serve

as an optional initial point of contact for staff to confidentially report any instances of discrimination they may witness, hear about, or personally experience. Comprehensive training will be conducted by the Samaritans to equip the members of the hub with the necessary skills and knowledge.

### Disability Learning Offer

4.13. Camden's Disability Inclusion Learning Offer was introduced in October 2022 and is targeted at all People Managers and HR employees. This program equips managers with tailored knowledge to effectively assist disabled staff and ensures a uniform level of understanding and proficiency throughout the organisation. This programme has been delivered in partnership, with Inclusion London, which is London's sole pan-disability organisation led by Deaf and Disabled individuals.

The learning offer content included:

- Understanding what it means to be disabled, including visible and non-visible disabilities.
- A thorough understanding of the social model of disability.
- Legal and ethical context, including understanding rights and privileges under the Equality Act 2010
- How to effectively identify, minimise, and eliminate barriers, while simultaneously enhancing access and inclusivity.
- Camden specific knowledge including our reasonable adjustment process, our Wellbeing Passport, Camden's Disability Charter and utilising Occupational Health resources.
- Guidance on addressing common issues, including the use of appropriate language.

As of now, a total of 750 people, including managers, senior leaders, and members of HR and equalities teams, have participated in one of the workshops.

### LGBTQ+

4.14. The council remain dedicated as Stonewall Diversity champions and is committed to promoting LGBTQ+ equality. In November 2022, we revised our pledge to trans equality to more effectively address the needs of non-binary staff. This document is instrumental in guaranteeing that all trans individuals are treated with dignity and that we foster a positive and supportive workplace environment. Additionally, in December 2022, we introduced new material in our mandatory Conscious Inclusion e-learning module, which features expanded and improved information regarding LGBTQ+ identities.

4.15. The Council's Senior Leadership consistently conveys a resolute message regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion, actively confronting inequality, and motivating their teams to do the same. An illustrative instance occurred in June 2023 during our 'atrium' briefing, where Osian Jones, our Senior LGBTQ+ Sponsor, emphasised the significance of Pride month, the ongoing battle for genuine LGBTQ+ equality, and the vital role of robust and outspoken allyship.

4.16. In July 2023, a group of 50 Camden staff, councillors, along with their families and friends, united to participate in the 2023 Pride in London parade. By joining millions of others throughout the capital, we collectively celebrated our LGBTQ+ communities and amplified our voice in the ongoing pursuit of genuine LGBTQ+ equality and advancement.

We collaborate with Gendered Intelligence, a local company based in Camden, to conduct a range of Trans Awareness workshops. These sessions provide valuable insights into what it means to be transgender and how to be a supportive trans ally. To date, we have organised a total of 11 workshops.

### Menopause and Period Awareness

4.17. Camden HR has reviewed, updated and relaunched our Menopause Commitment, which acknowledges that each individual experiencing perimenopause or menopause will have distinct symptom experiences. Its objective is to make accommodations for individual circumstances wherever possible. In line with this commitment, we have:

- Introduced portable USB fans that can be connected to staff members' laptops or computers.
- Ensured the availability of complimentary menstrual products in all our primary buildings.
- Encouraged staff to seek out quiet spaces for short breaks to manage symptoms or take medication.
- Initiated a series of workshops for managers aimed at destigmatising menopause and understanding its impact on women's lives.
- Conducted eight workshops within our organisation to break down stigma, normalise conversations about periods and menopause, and cultivate a working environment that is truly inclusive for everyone.

### Bloody Good Employer

4.18. In September 2022, Camden officially joined 'Bloody Good Employers', an initiative designed to empower employers to actively engage in conversations surrounding menstruation and cultivate a more inclusive workplace for individuals who menstruate. The council firmly believe that nobody should face any form of disadvantage due to menstruation. This is why we are committed to establishing enduring, sustainable measures to provide support for our staff, ensuring that nobody ever feels embarrassed or uncomfortable while they are at work.

The Council's endeavours as Bloody Good Employers have entailed:

- Conducting a staff survey to gain deeper insights into the perspectives and encounters related to menstruation within the organisation.
- Undertaking a self-assessment of HR and Camden leadership to gauge the existing support framework and evaluate how effectively we cater to the needs of individuals who menstruate in the workplace.
- Hosting a series of workshops with a focus on:
- Challenging norms, dispelling myths, and eradicating stigma surrounding menstruation.

- Enhancing awareness of issues arising from menstruation, appreciating cultural variations in menstruation practices, and fostering greater comprehension.
- Communication and fostering inclusive leadership.

A total of 54 individuals participated in these workshops, and we anticipate that the insights gathered will propel us towards achieving the distinction of becoming the first local authority recognised as a Bloody Good Employer.

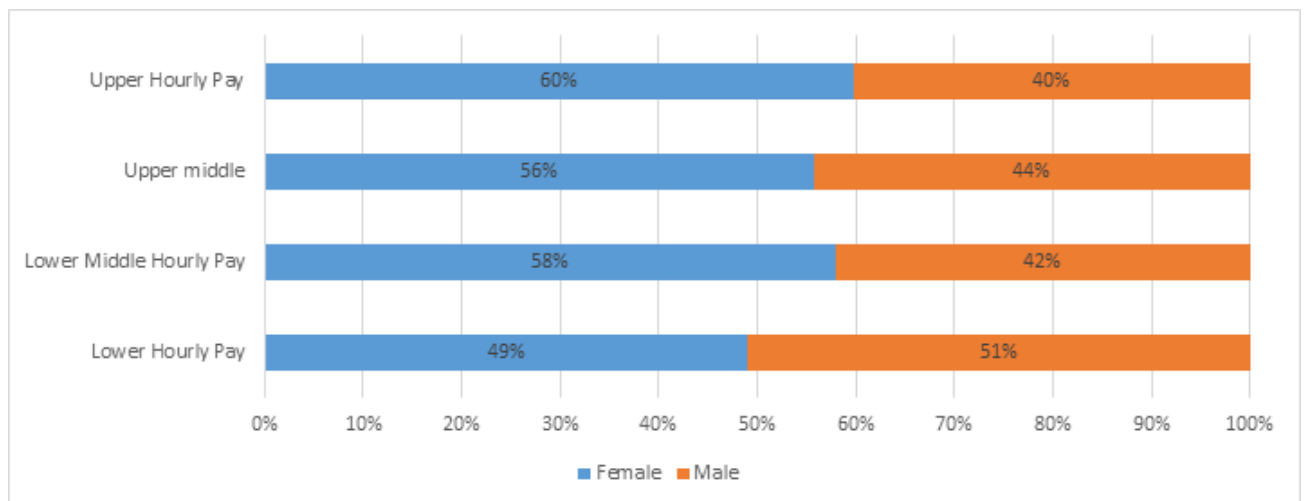
As a direct outcome of this initiative, HR has implemented the provision of free period products in all restrooms within the council's primary facilities. Additionally, HR is currently in the process of formulating an organisational action plan to further solidify our commitment.

### Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

4.19. Having become one of the first organisations in the country to independently publish a pay analysis of its workforce by gender in October 2015, Camden will soon be publishing its eighth version of the report this year (report covering the snapshot date of 31 March 2023), still going beyond the statutory requirements, by including analysis by disability and ethnicity.

The data indicates a slight gender pay gap in favour of women, with a recorded median gap of 4.5% and a mean gap of 1.7%. This is primarily attributable to the slightly higher representation of women in the upper middle and top 25% quartiles of the earning range.

4.20. The table below highlights Camden's position as part of London Councils data:



4.21. Camden's additional analysis of ethnicity pay gap data showed that median and mean gaps of 11.2% and 13.3% between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and white staff. We attribute this to the higher proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff employees in the lower quartiles of the earnings distribution.

4.22. Analysis of the disability pay gap revealed a more even distribution of disabled employees and that was reflected in median and mean gaps of 1.1% and 1.4% respectively.



## 5. Workforce Resourcing

### Turnover

- 5.1. In the fiscal year 2022-23, there was an increase in overall turnover, rising from 9.5% in the previous year to 11.9%. Voluntary turnover, which includes resignations, also saw an increase of 1.8% from 6% to 7.8%. Both of these figures position Camden below the median for London boroughs, which stands at 11.1% for resignations and 14.7% for overall turnover. The critical turnover rate for employees with less than one year's service in Camden remained consistent at 9.1% compared to the previous year.

### Attraction and Resourcing

- 5.2. During 2022-23, the Camden Resourcing team made a total of 799 job offers to both internal and external candidates, achieving an overall vacancy fulfilment rate of 84.1%. This marks an increase from the previous year, 2021-22, when 629 job offers were made, resulting representative workforce indicating a notable improvement of 10.8%.
- 5.3. We're in the process of enhancing our Employer Value Proposition (EVP) to acknowledge our unique position as an employer and advance our goal of true inclusivity as an organisation. At the core of our redefined brand is a deep appreciation for our people as individuals, valuing them beyond their job titles. Our EVP will exemplify this by spotlighting the experiences and narratives of Camden employees. These enhancements will notably elevate the significance of shared purpose and social values.
- 5.4. In Autumn 2020, we established an Inclusive Recruitment Working Group comprising a diverse team of staff to conduct a thorough review of our recruitment process. With the valuable input of this group, we've been dedicated to enhancing the fairness of our recruitment procedures.

Our accomplishments so far include:

- Implementation of anonymised recruitment for Senior roles through the Be-Applied Platform from 2019 to 2022.
  - Comprehensive review of job profiles and adverts, ensuring they are inclusive and accessible. Additionally, we advertise on leading D&I sites such as Vercida and Stonewall's job board, Proud Employers.
  - Initiation of the inclusive recruitment volunteers' program, boasting a roster of 60 trained volunteers from diverse backgrounds. These volunteers play a vital role in ensuring diverse representation on recruitment panels. We're currently in the process of recruiting a second cohort to expand this initiative.
  - Conducted Hiring Manager Training, with a refresh in November 2021. Over 150 managers have been trained, covering best practices for fair, transparent, and inclusive recruitment processes.
- Active engagement and communication efforts, which encompass sharing positive stories, regular communication with People Managers, and organising two 'show and tell' sessions to keep the organisation informed about our progress and its impact.

- 5.5. In July 2022, we introduced the "No All-White Shortlist" pilot, which became mandatory in October of the same year. Currently, we are testing this approach for all

Level 5 and higher roles to gauge its effectiveness in promoting fair recruitment practices, comparing it with anonymised recruitment. Preliminary findings indicate a positive impact on BAOE headcount at Level 4, although further analysis is underway for Level 5 and above positions to understand its influence on senior levels. Notably, we've successfully recruited a diverse candidate into the ACS SMT using this approach. As we approach the 12-month milestone, we're preparing to review the data to assess the pilot's impact and its distinctions from anonymised recruitment.

- 5.6. The Council has been actively supporting our residents and refugees, recently hosting our first recruitment event tailored specifically for refugees. Our HR service has been working in close partnership with Inclusive Economy to offer residents valuable assistance in job applications, work experience, and connecting them with our Camden Talent pool. As a result of these efforts, we've successfully welcomed two new hires to Camden.

Our commitment to diversity is evident in the table provided, which illustrates the percentage of staff hired from Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic minority backgrounds. We're proud to report a steady increase in recruits from these diverse backgrounds each year.

December 2020 – 30.33%	December 2021 – 32.59%	December 2022 – 33.66%
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### Talent Pool

- 5.7. In February 2022, Matrix SCM was granted the agency staffing contract, and together we integrated a talent pool feature into their existing platform. This creates opportunities for temporary roles to be filled by our residents, aligning with the Council's goal of facilitating stable, well-paid work, which we recognise as pivotal to broader outcomes such as health, well-being, and secure housing.
- 5.8. Since its launch in November 2022, we've been actively recruiting Camden residents for Level 1-3 agency roles through the Talent Pool. Our aim is to meet temporary staffing needs whenever possible from our resident talent pool. So far, we've successfully recruited 18 residents into temporary positions in the 10 months since its inception. 67% of these workers remain employed, with some transitioning into permanent roles at the council.
- 5.9. Currently, we have 85 active users in the Talent Pool, and data indicates a 5% monthly growth in our pool. Looking ahead, we plan to continue our close collaboration with Good Work Camden and Job Hub colleagues to expand the pool and extend its application to Level 4-5 roles. Certain positions, like social workers and ICT roles, may require more specialised skills, prompting us to continue using agency suppliers in tandem with our Camden Talent Pool.

## Temporary Agency Staff

5.10. The table below outlines the Council's yearly spend on our contingent workforce:

Financial Year	Agency average headcount	Camden Employee average headcount	Agency Cost (Total Charge)	Camden Employee Cost	Total Employee Spend <sup>^</sup>	Percentage of Total Workforce Spend on Agency Workers*
2015/16	462	4323	£18,374,673	£172,687,385	£191,062,058	9.6%
2016/17	438	4237	£18,213,024	£175,369,289	£193,582,313	9.4%
2017/18	448	4093	£20,334,674	£174,715,566	£195,050,240	10.4%
2018/19	458	4114	£24,410,651	£180,992,688	£205,403,339	11.9%
2019/20	460	4190	£28,724,195	£191,386,143	£220,110,338	13.0%
2020/21	381	4356	£23,141,050	£203,016,562	£226,157,612	10.2%
2021/22	438	4386	£23,673,850	£191,348,009	£215,021,859	11.0%
2022/23	476	4355	£28,378,200	£226,460,552	£254,838,753	11.1%
2023/24 to date~	555	4377	£14,420,951	£97,476,053	£111,897,004	12.9%

5.11. Agency workers in 2021/22 increased to 438 and again to 476 in 2022/23. Expenditure has seen a notable rise due to several factors, primarily stemming from an expanded workforce, particularly in the interim positions which constitute a significant portion of our expenses. This category encompasses external IR35 consultants, who are now overseen through Matrix as part of our heightened IR35 compliance efforts.

## **6. Future Talent**

### Internal Progressions

6.1. As well as ensuring our external recruitment is inclusive we have also focused on growing our own. We have established a career coaching program accessible to all staff, empowering them to take proactive steps in advancing their careers. Later this year we will re-launch our mentoring and sponsorship initiatives to promote greater equity and diversity, as well as introducing a tech-style profile matching solution.

6.2. In addition, we've introduced an Emerging Leaders program funded through an apprenticeship levy, which offers staff the opportunity to nurture talented individuals and groups into leadership positions.

### Internal Apprenticeships

6.3. We continue to advocate for the benefits of apprenticeships and to generate opportunities that align with organisational requirements. During 2022/23 twenty-eight staff enrolled on apprenticeship qualifications. This approach not only supports the sustainable development of apprenticeships but also fosters progression and long-term retention within the organisation whenever feasible.

6.4. Camden is continually integrating its internal apprenticeship program to support staff in engaging with apprenticeship courses and attaining qualifications relevant to their chosen fields.

- 6.5. In Adult Social Care, several staff from the social work and occupational therapy teams are in the process of attaining their qualifications in Camden. Two members of staff hold the distinction of being the first ASC apprentices to successfully complete the social work degree apprenticeship. Their dedication and diligence over the past three years have been remarkable, with a rigorous schedule of university studies one day a week, complemented by practical application in their roles for the remaining four days. These individuals are now officially qualified as social workers and are poised to embark on their ASYE year.
- 6.6. This year, we've partnered with Solace, which offers a city-wide emerging leader apprenticeship program in London. Eleven members of the Camden team have secured a spot in this internal apprenticeship initiative. The program is due to commence in October 2023 and will span two years. Throughout this period, we'll be actively engaged in monitoring and evaluating their learning journey to chart their career growth.

### External Apprenticeships

- 6.7. As of March 2023, there were 116 individuals within the Council engaged in apprenticeships, with 53 of them being recent hires. We are actively collaborating with directorates and services to pinpoint additional opportunities for recruiting and training new talent through apprenticeship programs. Since March 2021, we have achieved a notable 125% increase in new apprentice recruits. The spectrum of apprenticeship training covers a wide array of occupations, offering qualifications ranging from GCSE level up to fully accredited Masters degrees. We're leveraging apprenticeships to enhance the skills of our staff, providing training in crucial areas like social work, town planning, and accountancy. Furthermore, services are being encouraged to utilise apprenticeships to construct clear career progression pathways within their teams, effectively addressing long-term skills gaps while simultaneously enhancing job satisfaction and employee retention.
- 6.8. Public sector organisations with 250 or more staff in England are mandated to annually report apprentice starts as a percentage of their staff headcount. Camden's performance in this regard was significantly impacted by the pandemic, dropping from a peak of 1.46% in 2019/2020 to a low of 0.67% in 2020/21. However, we have demonstrated steady improvement each subsequent year, achieving a rate of 1.11% in 2022/23. Moreover, we are poised to continue this positive trend and anticipate a further increase in the upcoming year.

## **7. Pay Changes, Terms and Conditions**

- 7.1. Camden has a track record of pioneering fair pay. In 2012, we proudly attained accreditation as an employer with the Living Wage Foundation. To further this commitment and narrow the disparity between the Council's lowest and highest earners, we took substantial steps. Specifically, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, we implemented a minimum earnings guarantee, increasing the earnings of our lowest-paid employees.
- 7.2. Our pay strategy is oriented towards offering compensation above the median for all positions. As a result, we have shifted away from adhering strictly to the NJC pay spine, aligning with a broader trend seen in several other London Boroughs. This approach allows us to more effectively address this agenda at a local level.

- 7.3. In response to the challenging economic climate and the pressures in the labour market, we have conducted a comprehensive review of the pay schemes in Camden over the past year. The recommendations stemming from the initial phase of this review received approval from the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee in June 2023 and were put into effect in September.
- 7.4. Maintaining our status as an upper quartile pay employer holds significant importance in preserving our competitiveness within the employment market. It's worth noting that our broader brand and employment proposition are already robust. This aspect is crucial in our ongoing efforts to attract and retain high-calibre talent, particularly given our Inner London location. In the initial phase, we thus prioritised benchmarking our pay against the London and South East Public and Not for Profit Sector.
- 7.5. The analysis demonstrated that we maintain competitiveness in terms of pay across most of our salary grades. However, we noted a growing trend of being less competitive at levels 5 and 6, as well as at the Chief Officer level. While our lower grade salaries held up well against market standards, they were particularly susceptible to agreements regarding the local government pay award and shifts related to the London Living Wage. Therefore, it was imperative to proactively safeguard these salaries, not only to maintain our status as a Living Wage Employer but also to facilitate the Council's ability to endorse an increased Minimum Earnings Guarantee.
- 7.6. In light of these findings, we have initiated a restructuring of our two lowest pay levels, with initial adjustments taking effect from 1st April 2023. Additional changes are scheduled for implementation in April 2024 and April 2024, as depicted in the figure below.

Pay Points	Current	2023 changes	2024 changes	2025 changes
1				
2	Level 1 Zone 1	-		
3				
4		Level 1 Zone 2		
5				
6	Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 2	
7				
8				
9			Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 2
10				Level 1 Zone 3
11	Level 2 Zone 1	Level 2 Zone 1	Level 2 Zone 1	Level 1 Zone 3
12				
13				Level 2 Zone 1
14				
15				
16	Level 2 Zone 2	Level 2 Zone 2	Level 2 Zone 2	Level 2 Zone 1
17				
18				Level 2 Zone 2
19				
20				

7.7. These changes enabled us to commit to a new Minimum Earnings Guarantee increasing our minimum salary from £24,974 (£13.30 per hour) to £25,841 (£13.77 per hour). This is equal to £1.82 per hour (or 15%) more than the current LLW of £11.95 per hour. The national pay award for 2023 has not yet been agreed however modelling using the National Employers final offer showed this would result in an hourly rate of just over £15 per hour.

7.8. To support improved recruitment and retention and maintain our market position at the higher end of our pay structure we uplifted the minimum of the pay bands for pay grades Level 5 Zone 2 to Level 6 Zone 3. These changes aligned the midpoint with our target market position of upper quartile and reduced overlap between the pay bands.

Level	Zone	Minimum	New Minimum	Mid-point	New Mid-point	Maximum
Level 5	Zone 1	£49,930	No change	£53,736.50	No change	£57,543
	Zone 2	£53,897	£55,832	£59,623.50	£60,591	£65,350
Level 6	Zone 1	£63,268	£64,086	£70,035	£70,444	£76,802
	Zone 2	£72,636	£79,072	£80,446.50	£83,664.50	£88,257
	Zone 3	£78,676	£89,544	£88,869.50	£94,303.50	£99,063

7.9. We recognise that in addition to these adjustments to our pay band then opening up the range for appointment salaries and progression management will be required to align pay to the market anchor over time. Phase two of the review is therefore focussed on these aspects as well as changes to the My Reward Scheme to ensure the pay scheme meets the changing needs of the Council whilst minimising the potential for inequity to occur.

## 8. Organisational Development

### Imagination Work

8.1. In Camden, we believe in the capacity and innovation of our staff and communities to develop new ideas and new ways to tackle the complex challenges in our Borough. We Make Camden captures our communities' imaginative vision for the future of our place and challenges us to act differently in the way we partner with citizens and communities to make the vision a reality. With increasing pressure on Council staff to deliver the same quality of services with less, the risk is that we get stuck into narrow thinking, focussed on immediate solutions. We need to build towards greater visions of how things could be, as well as fix the here and now. We see Imagination Activism as a means by which we can think differently, to transform the system and create something better.

8.2. Camden Imagines makes the case that we should:

- See imagination as an emerging competency of 21<sup>st</sup> century civil leadership.

- Prioritise building imaginative capacity in our teams and organisations.
- Imbed imagination in our organisation at the level of governance.
- Equip employees with horizontal leadership skills to unleash cross-collaboration.
- Embark on collective imagining with communities.

8.3. We engaged Moral Imaginations to conduct an 8-week program, equipping 32 Council employees with the tools and skills to serve as Imagination Activists throughout the organisation. The program was crafted with the following objectives in mind:

- Broaden and reshape perspectives.
- Equip with creative tools and techniques.
- Cultivate new habits and ways of working.
- Build commitment to imaginative practices.
- Establish a foundation for more profound policy and governance transformation.

8.4. The program had four primary objectives:

- Increase imagination capacity, as an emerging competency of civic leadership.
- Boost agency and confidence in fostering psychological safety at work.
- Equip participants with skills and tools for generating, prototyping, and iterating new ideas.
- Strengthen cross-organisational relationships, breaking down silos.

8.5. We intentionally selected the 32 participants from various departments and pay grades within the Council. This deliberate approach has fostered lasting relationships between services that previously did not exist.

8.6. The program has resulted in the following accomplishments:

- All participants reported a high level of imaginative capacity, with 92% noting a significant increase.
- 82% of participants reported an increased sense of psychological safety at work, with 69% noting a significant improvement.
- 100% of participants felt they had gained practical tools to incorporate imagination into their teams and everyday work.

8.7. We've recently initiated Phase Two, which involves:

- Incorporating Imagination Activism into our Senior Leadership Group development programme.
- Establishing a Community of Practice to support the initial 32 IAs and help them embed skills across their teams.
- Instituting a regular Imagination Drop-In session on the 2nd floor, co-hosted with Think & Do.

### Mandatory Learning

8.8. The Mandatory Learning modules serve as foundational training that every employee must complete. They are designed to assist staff in working safely, improving interpersonal relationships, and safeguarding information and resources. Additionally, they enable Camden to adhere to the regulations governing these areas.

The core compliance eLearning modules consist of:

- Conscious Inclusion
- Fire Safety
- Fraud Awareness
- Health and Safety
- Information Handling
- Introduction to Safeguarding

These courses undergo regular updates to ensure they remain relevant, meet the latest legal requirements, and align with strategic objectives.

8.9. In recent years, achieving genuine inclusivity within the council has been a paramount and pressing objective. Organisation-wide efforts have been made to ensure that all staff members feel secure, valued, and included. As a testament to this commitment, in June 2022, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) resolved to incorporate three additional eLearning modules into the 2023 Cohort of Corporate Mandatory Learning. These modules are:

- Anti-Racism
- Introduction to Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Suicide Awareness

Between 5th December 2022, and 22nd January 2023, the entire workforce participated in a mandatory learning update, encompassing all nine modules. Staff with no digital access to the eLearning modules received face-to-face abridged versions of the nine modules.

8.10. By 10th February 23, 4,154 staff members (97%) had successfully completed all nine modules. Camden maintains a commitment to continuous compliance through an automated system, and new hires receive reminders to complete all nine modules within one month of joining the organisation.

### Corporate Induction

8.11. The onboarding process encompasses a monthly in-person Corporate Induction for all newly hired staff and managers under Camden's employment terms and conditions. This comprehensive induction spans 1.5 days and offers participants an introduction to various aspects of the Council:

- The Council's aspirations and priorities as outlined in We Make Camden and The Way We Work.
- The organisational and political structure, inclusive of governance practices.
- Employee expectations, encompassing the code of conduct.
- Internal employee benefits, covering learning and development, the My Performance framework, staff benefits, networks, and well-being.
- Fundamental IT platforms and applications.

8.12. The Corporate Induction features a guided walking tour of the vicinity surrounding Kings Cross and 5 Pancras Square, along with a leadership breakfast. During this breakfast session, participants engage in a question and answer exchange with three senior leaders from the Council.



8.13. In addition to the Corporate Induction, newly appointed or internally promoted people managers are offered the opportunity to attend a half-day Managers Induction. These sessions are conducted virtually on a quarterly basis. The content of these sessions provides an overview of the essential responsibilities associated with managing within Camden. This encompasses My Performance conversations, inclusion, effective use of our facilities, team collaboration, health, safety, well-being, financial budgeting, recruitment, and available learning and development opportunities. The Managers Induction is further reinforced by an accessible online guide that offers additional information and support accessible to all managers throughout the organisation.

## 9. Absence Management, Grievance, Underperformance and Disciplinary

9.1. Absence Management, Grievance, Underperformance, and Disciplinary data collection continues to allow Camden to effectively monitor staff wellbeing and to identify and resolve issues as they arise.

### Summary of AMGUD Cases – Directorate

Directorate	Absence Management		Disciplinary		Grievance		Underperformance		Total	
	No of cases	Average (%)	No. of cases	Average (%)	No. of cases	Average (%)	No. of cases	Average (%)	No of cases	Average (%)
Corporate Services	21	16%	6	19%	2	13%	1	20%	30	16%
Supporting Communities	64	48%	16	52%	7	44%	2	40%	89	48%
Supporting People	48	36%	9	29%	7	44%	2	40%	66	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Absence Management

#### Average Sickness Days 2022-2023

Directorate	Average No. Working days Sick Leave per Employee
Corporate Services	9.1
Supporting Communities	11.8
Supporting People	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.7</b>

In all Directorates, the average number of sick days per employee stands at 10.7. The Supporting Communities Directorate has the highest average number of sick days per employee, followed by the Supporting People Directorate.

9.2. In the 2022-23 period, there were a total of 185 relevant AMGUD cases, marking an increase of 9 cases from the previous year. Among these cases, Absence Management cases constituted the majority, accounting for 71.9% of all AMGUD cases. The distribution of cases across Directorates remained roughly proportionate to their respective sizes.

In September 2020, we introduced an updated Sickness Absence Management Procedure aimed at fostering a more supportive and inclusive approach to staff sickness.

We also acknowledged that the primary causes for prolonged, continuous absence were cited as 'Anxiety/Stress/Depression/other Psychological Illness'. In light of this, we've heightened our efforts in promoting staff well-being and have launched a dedicated Wellbeing Microsite.

### Grievance

- 9.3. In this period, a total of 16 grievances were submitted, which is a slight decrease of two compared to the previous year, 2021/22. Grievances are typically raised when there are ongoing management processes related to an employee's performance, conduct, or sickness absence.
- 9.4. The most frequent concerns expressed in these grievances pertain to allegations of bullying or micro-management. Additionally, in two cases, allegations of discrimination were included as a factor. One case involved race-related discrimination, while the other was related to disability discrimination.

### Underperformance

- 9.5. The total count of underperformance cases has decreased in this period, showing a reduction of eight cases. This shift could be attributed to managers adopting a more relational approach, engaging in early conversations with employees, and subsequently implementing tailored training and support measures. It's worth mentioning that probationary cases are encompassed within this category, accounting for two cases in this period.

### Disciplinary

- 9.6. During this period, there has been a notable rise in the number of formal disciplinary cases, which primarily contributes to the overall increase in AMGUD cases compared to the previous year. It's important to note that assessing trends in disciplinary cases is challenging, as the reasons for taking formal action range from isolated, severe incidents (where no prior concerns existed) to more routine concerns about behaviour and attitude at work.
- 9.7. In instances of recurring concerns, managers may opt to issue a formal written warning (which occurred in three cases during this period). However, there's also a growing trend towards a more relational approach, with managers opting to provide further training and support instead of imposing formal sanctions (which was observed in five cases).
- 9.8. For the more serious cases, the reasons behind taking formal action vary widely, from police investigations to the recurrence of past behavioural issues. The outcomes of these cases also vary, with three resulting in final written warnings, three leading to dismissals, and in some instances (three cases), the employee chose to resign during the disciplinary process. Notably, the three dismissals did not lead to any appeals.

## **10. Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments to add.

**11. Comments of the Director of Finance**

There are no finance comments arising from this report.

**12. Environmental Implications**

There are no Environmental Implications.

**REPORT ENDS**

## Appendix One

### Summary of Camden staff benefits and external accreditations

#### Quality of life/work-life balance

- Agile working: Flexible work from any location (where role allows)
- Working Abroad Scheme: this enables staff to work from abroad for a period of up to 6 weeks, (subject to risk assessment conditions being met) to facilitate staff reconnecting with family living abroad
- Annual leave: 27 days, increasing to 31 days after 5 years of service, with the option to purchase up to an additional 3 days
- Leave Banking Scheme: this enables staff to bank up to 10 annual leave days over a 5-year period which can be used to take an extended holiday.
- Family leave and occupational pay available from day 1 of employment for:
- Appointments related to pregnancy/adoption - all at full pay for Birth Parent/Main Adopter and 2 at full pay for Other Parent/Adopter
- Staff taking Paternity leave - 2 weeks at full pay
- Staff taking Maternity, Adoption, or Shared Parental leave - 6 months at full pay
- Staff experiencing Pregnancy Loss - 10 days at full pay
- Parents of premature babies - additional leave and pay between actual birth date and due date
- Parents of full term but hospitalised babies - up to 4 weeks of additional leave at full pay
- Staff who are Foster Carers, prospective Foster Carers and 'Special Guardians' - up to 5 days of additional leave at full pay
- Staff who are Parents or Carers – up to 5 days of paid Dependency leave
- Disability Leave - up to 10 additional days of leave at full pay for our staff who have declared a disability or declared that they are a carer to attend planned appointments etc.
- 10 days of additional leave at full pay for victims of domestic violence and abuse - to allow employees time to make practical arrangements, take a break from work commitments and facilitate leaving an abusive partner or family member
- Bereavement Leave – up to 10 days of paid leave
- Public Duties – up to 10 days' paid leave per year in total to undertake public duties
- Jury Service – paid time off for the duration (there is no statutory entitlement to continue being paid whilst on Jury Service)
- Volunteering – one day of paid leave to volunteer with an organisation based in Camden
- Other types of paid and unpaid leave are also available such as sabbatical/employment break, and special leave to cover other exceptional circumstances.

#### Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Disability Leave - up to 10 additional days of leave at full pay for our staff who have declared a disability to attend planned appointments related to their disability
- 10 days of additional leave at full pay for victims of domestic violence and abuse - to allow employees time to make practical arrangements, take a break from work commitments and facilitate leaving an abusive partner or family member.

- 1:2:1 counselling, support, and guidance on a wide range of areas through our Employee Assistance Programme
- Free eye tests and seasonal flu jabs
- Advice and support for healthier living including: stop smoking support, Workshops on nutrition and healthy eating, Backcare awareness, breathwork, yoga and mindfulness sessions, and exercise groups
- On-site massage clinic, Osteopathy - 25% discount, Discounted Hypnotherapy
- Life stage workshops, e.g., perimenopause, menopause, pre-retirement planning etc.
- Wellbeing, mindfulness & resilience training and workshops
- Mental health awareness training
- Give as You Earn – payroll giving scheme

### **Financial Advice and Guidance**

- One to one financial advice and guidance through our external independent financial advisers. Staff can access one free financial advice session with a financial expert. We are also in process of agreeing delivery of a new series of webinars/face to face workshops and webinars for staff.
- Ongoing programme of financial wellbeing webinars giving practical advice on a range of topics including – making the most of your money, managing debt, coping with the rising cost of living etc.
- Financial wellbeing support and guidance accessed through our Employee Assistance Programme – their website has a specific section for financial wellbeing, which has range of articles, checklists, and resources as well as access to counselling if required.

### **Support to reduce costs**

- Cycle to Work and City Bike salary sacrifice schemes save staff 32-42% on hire and purchase of a bike and accessories or the cost of City Bike hire membership with payments spread equally across 12 months. Savings come as this scheme attracts both tax and National Insurance relief.
- Staff noticeboard – where local discounts and other offers are found and advertised by staff. Also offers a forum for staff wanting to buy or sell goods, give items away, or find somewhere to live.
- Byond card –a prepaid shopping card that gives employees up to 15% cashback every time they shop at over seventy popular retailers, in-store and online.
- Lifestyle Discounts – many discounts are accessible to staff through Kaarp and CSSC from savings on everyday shopping to entertainment and family days out. We also promote a range of other individual discounts/offers to Camden staff from companies such as e.g. Microsoft, EE, Dell, Warren Beds etc. EE Perk (20% discount)
- Health Plan – option to join at discounted local government rates that provides access to face-to-face check-ups or appointments, video GP services and 24/7 access to a counsellor as well as cash back on medical expenses e.g., dental, chiropody, physiotherapy, hospital admission etc.
- Childcare vouchers – a salary sacrifice scheme closed to new applicants since government changes in 2018, but for those for those still eligible vouchers may be obtained and used to pay for childcare for children up to the age of 15, or 16 for

children with disabilities. The savings come as the scheme attracts both tax relief and National Insurance relief.

### **Saving for future**

- Pension Scheme – The Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) provides valuable benefits and protections for staff and their family. Staff can pay lower contributions and build up your pension more slowly when times are financially tough. This is called the 50/50 section of the LGPS - staff keep full life and ill-health cover if they join the 50/50 section.
- Shared Cost AVC scheme – cost effective saving to increase value of pension as this scheme attracts both tax relief and National Insurance relief because the cost is 'shared' through a salary sacrifice agreement. Guidance and advice on LGPS and saving for the future is accessible from the Knowledge Centre and helpline. A regular programme of webinars are also available.
- London Capital Credit Union (and Camden Mutual Credit Union) – these not-for-profit organisations offer savings accounts, and we have arrangements in place for deductions to be made via payroll. Saving with a credit union can increase the chances of a loan application being approved by them and give access to lower interest rates.

### **Loans**

- Tenancy deposit loan – an interest free loan of up to £3,000 repayable over up to 10 months to support staff with paying tenancy deposit costs.
- Childcare deposit loan – an interest free loan of up to £2,000 repayable over up to 10 months to support staff with the upfront payment of registration deposit/fees and first month of childcare fees.
- Season travel ticket loan – an interest free loan enabling staff to benefit from reduced travel costs by purchasing an annual season ticket but spreading the cost of over 10 months.
- Immigration loan – an interest free loan of up to £5,000 repayable over up to 36 months that staff can use towards payment, for them and their dependents, of British Citizenship or Indefinite Leave to Remain application fees or the payment of the Healthcare surcharge to the UK Visas & Immigration Service.
- Corporate Gym membership – an interest free loan enabling staff to benefit from reduced price by paying annual membership fee upfront but spreading the cost over 10 months.
- London Capital Credit Union (and Camden Mutual Credit Union) – these not-for-profit organisations offer loans, and we have arrangements in place for deductions to be made via payroll. Staff that otherwise find it difficult to gain access to credit can potentially access loans with a lower interest rate than standard high street/other lenders.

## External Accreditations.

- We have been an accredited employer with [The Living Wage Foundation](#) since 2012.
- We have been an accredited [Timewise Employer](#) for over six years demonstrating our commitment to flexible working to help balance work and other life demands and have been recognised as a role model employer.
- We were an early adopter of the [Mayor's Good Work Standard](#) and were rated as excellent when we received accreditation. This reflects the many ways in which we are striving for the best possible working conditions for our colleagues and our commitment to a healthy, fair and inclusive workplace.
- The support we provide to the parents of premature babies and full term but hospitalised babies is accredited by the ['Employer with a Heart Chartermark'](#)
- In 2020 we were accredited as a 'Fostering Friendly Employer' by the [Fostering Network](#) for the additional support provide for staff we who are prospective or approved foster carers
- In 2021 ranked 47th out of around 450 organisations in [Stonewalls Workplace Equality Index](#), We were the highest ranked council and achieved a gold award. This is great recognition of the work we have done, and continue to do, around LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

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<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARD: ALL</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Work Programme 2023/24 and Action Tracker	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Executive Director Corporate Services	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE:</b> 14 November 2023
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This paper provides an outline of the 2023/24 work programme and provides an update on actions requested at previous meetings of the Committee in the Action Tracker.</p> <p><b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - ACCESS TO INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report</p> <p><b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b> Osian Jones Head of Corporate Strategy London Borough of Camden Five Pancras Square, 5 Pancras Rd, London N1C 4AG <a href="mailto:osian.jones@camden.gov.uk">osian.jones@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Consider its work programme for 2023-24 and propose any amendments; and</li> <li>ii. Note the Committee's Action Tracker</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SIGNED: Jon Rowney, Executive Director Corporate Services</b></p> <p><b>DATE: 27.10.2023</b></p>	

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This paper provides an outline of the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee 2023/24 work programme, including the agenda items for the remainder of the year. The Committee is asked to review the contents of the work programme and provide their views on what the Committee may wish to discuss during the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 2.1 The paper also presents an update on progress in following up on actions from previous meetings at Appendix B.

## **2 Terms of reference**

- 2.1 The Committee was set up with the following terms of reference:
  - To scrutinise the strategic and corporate policies and performance of the Council.
  - To assist the Cabinet in the development of the Council's annual budget (capital and revenue) and to review and scrutinise the Council's performance in relation to overall budgetary management.
  - To scrutinise the provision, planning, financing, management and performance of the Corporate Services Directorate (excluding parking operations), and any other Council functions not otherwise addressed by any other Scrutiny Committee.

## **3 2023/24 meeting dates**

- 14 November 2023
- 19 December 2023
- 22 January 2024
- 27 February 2024

## **4 Suggestions by Committee Members**

- 4.1 The work programme should be informed by the corporate priorities of the Council, the priorities of the relevant portfolio holders, and issues raised by our communities.
- 4.2 At previous meetings, the Committee and the Chair have suggested items for the Committee to consider at future meetings. These items have been programmed for the work programme for the year 2023/2024 included at the end of this report.

## **5 Scrutiny Panels**

- 5.1 The Committee can form scrutiny panels to look at more specific areas under its remit. These are task-and-finish panels and should be established with clear terms of reference and target date to report back to the main Committee.

5.2 The Committee is constitutionally limited to one panel at a time, and co-ordination of Panels should be agreed by the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee to ensure effective use and co-ordination of resources across all scrutiny committees.

5.3 Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee does not currently have an operating Panel.

## **6 Legal comments of the Borough Solicitor**

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add.

## **7 Finance comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

7.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no comments to add.

## **8 Appendices**

Appendix A – RCP Work Programme 2023/24

Appendix B – Action Tracker

**REPORT ENDS**

14 November 2023	<p><b>Pre-Cabinet:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasury Management Annual Report and Mid-Year Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Reports:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Services and the Camden Council Website</li> <li>• Risk Deep-Dive – energy procurement</li> <li>• HR Annual Report</li> </ul>
19 December 2023	<p><b>Pre-Cabinet:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Camden Medium Term Financial Strategy</li> <li>• London Borough of Camden Annual Complaints Report 2022/2023</li> <li>• Council Tax Support 2024/25</li> <li>• Corporate Performance Report Quarter 2 2023-24</li> </ul>
22 January 2024	<p><b>Other Reports:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living</li> <li>• Citizen interaction</li> <li>• Camden’s Strategic Approach to Partnerships</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>
27 February 2024	<p><b>Pre-Cabinet:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024/25 Revenue Estimates and Council Tax Setting</li> <li>• Community Investment Programme (CIP) – CIP Annual Report</li> <li>• We Make Camden: State of the Borough report</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Reports:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Approach to Debt Update</li> </ul>

Future Meetings (TBC)

**Other Reports:**

- Camden's Strategic Missions - leadership, challenges and success
- Procurement and contract management
- Equalities approach

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**Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee action tracker 2023/ 2024**

Meeting Date	Item	Action	Action by	Status
10 July 2023	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4/END OF YEAR 2022-23	A Member asked about staff performance data and why there had been an increase in underperformance. The Executive Director agreed to provide Members with performance data from previous years.	Executive Director Corporate Services	In progress
		Members asked for a briefing on disciplinary and grievances data.	Executive Director Corporate Services	This data is included in the HR Annual Report, which is on the agenda for the 14 November 2023 RCP Scrutiny Committee meeting
		Members asked if there was available data that differentiated customer services queries related to council tax. The Executive Director agreed to bring back information to provide more detail.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Relevant information has been circulated to Committee Members
		Members discussed complaints and asked officers if data for complaints could separate out housing complaints so that	Executive Director Corporate Services	This will be actioned in the Annual Complaints Report

		greater detail around different service areas could be seen. The Executive Director explained that the Annual Complaints Report was being written and separate data could be included.		
		Members noted that the by-election in South Hampstead was the first time voter ID had been used in Camden, they asked if data was available about the number of people turned away or who did not have the correct ID with them.	Executive Director Corporate Services	At the South Hampstead by-election, there were 10 electors who did not have the correct ID. Seven of these electors returned with the correct ID and were able to vote. Three electors did not return and were therefore unable to vote.
		The Committee commented that they would like to receive complaints data and information more frequently and in a more targeted way. They were concerned that receiving data once a year made it difficult to identify important elements.	Head of Corporate Strategy	In progress
	AN UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S WORK TO TACKLE THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS	The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment agreed to include in future updates more detail around the support, advice and signposting offered to businesses.	Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment	This will be actioned in future updates



		In response to a question around the Cost of Living Crisis Response Group, the Head of Corporate Strategy said that they had understood all of the funding requests from the ward councillor meetings to have been allocated. They agreed to confirm whether the full budget had been allocated and respond to the Committee.	Head of Corporate Strategy	Complete - The full budget has been allocated
		The Committee asked about the Universal Basic Services Pilot and whether there was any more information. The Head of Corporate Strategy said that Camden continued to work with the Institute for Global Prosperity at UCL to look at potential work and what universal basic services might look like in different place settings. They agreed to circulate an update.	Head of Corporate Strategy	In progress
	2023/24 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION	Responding to a question from members about the forecasting of rent default rates, the Head of Finance agreed to provide an update.	Head of Finance, Corporate Services	Complete

		When asked about the retendering of schemes such as the hostel at Camden Road, the people waiting to be housed would be managed through the homeless provision service. He agreed to provide information, including timescales for the retendering of the hostel.	Head of Finance, Corporate Services	Complete
12 SEPTEMBER 2023	REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S INCOME	Members were interested in social value being gained from assets. They asked whether Camden had a policy of using unfilled assets to generate social value. The Head of Finance agreed to take this away to the Property Team for a response.	Head of Finance, Corporate Services	Complete
		In response to a question about the debt servicing cost of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Head of Finance agreed to come back with the confirmed figure.	Head of Finance, Corporate Services	Complete
	AN UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CHANNEL STRATEGY (COMMUNICATIONS) - CONNECTING WITH CAMDEN'S COMMUNITIES	The Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living extended an invitation to the Committee to view the updated Council Tax pages, via the beta site, before they went live. A link	Policy Designer	In progress

		to this was agreed to be circulated to the Committee.		
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