

# JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 6.30 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, JUDD STREET, LONDON WC1H 9JE

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## MEMBERS

Councillors Danny Beales (L), Jenny Headlam-Wells (L), Alison Kelly (L),  
Awale Olad (L) and Don Williams (C)

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

Issued on: 15th September 2015

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Everyone is welcome to come to the public meetings in Camden to see decisions being made. Agendas for these meetings are available in advance. 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 so that your request arrives no later than:

- 9am on the day before the meeting for *Development Control Committee*
- 5.00pm, two working days before the meeting for *Cabinet*,
- 12.00 noon, five calendar days prior to the meeting for full *Council*
- Two clear days before the meeting for *Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, Pension Committee, Licensing Committee and Scrutiny Committees*
- NB *Licensing Panels* do not receive deputations

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The Chair of the meeting controls the debate. Those present discuss the business by addressing the Chair; this helps to keep the debate in an orderly manner. The Chair takes each item in turn and when s/he considers there has been sufficient debate, s/he will call for a decision on the item. At this stage, a vote may be taken on the recommendations, which are either found at the front of each report or put forward by Councillors. The reports are usually taken in the order on the agenda. Please note that it is not possible for you to take part in the discussion (unless you are invited to make representations) and smoking is not allowed on Council premises.

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# JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS - 23 SEPTEMBER 2015

THERE ARE NO PART II REPORTS

## AGENDA

Wards

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

To elect a Chair for the meeting.

### 2. APOLOGIES

### 3. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PECUNIARY, NON-PECUNIARY AND ANY OTHER INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

### 4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

### 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

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

### 7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

‘To discuss the Leader’s Annual Statement to the Council and other relevant cross-cutting matters arising from the business of the Cabinet.’

The membership of the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee will comprise the chairs of the five scrutiny committees, with the Chair being appointed by the Committee. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will attend each meeting of the Committee to discuss issues arising from the Leader’s Annual Statement to the Council.

The Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee shall meet annually. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council shall attend this meeting to discuss issues arising from the Statement.

### 8. MINUTES

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

(Pages 7 - 14)

**9. THE LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT TO FULL COUNCIL**

(Pages 15 -  
26)

Report of the Leader of the Council

To consider the Leader of the Council's Annual Statement to Full Council.

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

**AGENDA ENDS**

## **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

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## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS** held on **TUESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2014** at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

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

Councillors Meric Apak, Jenny Headlam-Wells, Alison Kelly and Don Williams

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

Councillors Awale Olad

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors Sarah Hayward, Leader of the Council, and Pat Callaghan, Deputy Leader of the Council

**The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting.**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Councillor Alison Kelly be elected Chair for the meeting.

### **RESOLVED -**

THAT Councillor Alison Kelly be elected Chair of the committee for the meeting.

### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Awale Olad, Chair of the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

### **3. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PECUNIARY, NON-PECUNIARY AND ANY OTHER INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were none.

**4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

There were none.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

There were none.

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

There were none.

**7. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the terms of reference of the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee as set out in the order of business be noted.

**8. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**9. THE LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT TO FULL COUNCIL 14TH JULY 2014**

Consideration was given to the Annual Leader's statement, as considered at the full Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

The Leader and Deputy Leader gave the following key responses to Members questions;

**Housing and Regeneration**

The Leader agreed to provide Councillor Don Williams with information relating to the number of commercial property voids that there were in the borough.

**ACTION BY: Leader of the Council**



When the Council originally applied to the Government to be allowed extra borrowing to build Council housing it was told that it would only be allocated £129,000. No reasons were given as to why Camden was allocated such a low figure. Since then the Council has re-applied for housing funding and it has now been allocated £11 Million. Again no reasons were given as to why the Government changed its mind on granting the Council a higher funding allocation.

The Council was able to meet its financial obligations in relation to borrowing to build Council housing. Greater flexibility from the Government to allow Camden to borrow more, would enable the Council to go some way in meeting the demand for social housing in the borough.

The Government and HS2 had a poor record of consulting and engaging with the local community regarding their proposals. The Council had a strong record of undertaking meaningful consultation and active engagement with the local community regarding its Community Investment Programme (CIP). These CIP initiatives were delivering badly needed homes (e.g. Gospel Oak and Maiden Lane), school refurbishments and places, all of which the local community were playing an active role in helping to shape, something that HS2 were not allowing to happen.

The Council's CIP was delivering one of the biggest capital programmes in the country. Members and officers were constantly reviewing and monitoring the programme to ensure it was being delivered.

### **Private Rented Sector Landlords – Licensing**

Camden was currently consulting on a scheme to licence private rented sector landlords. The aim of the scheme is improve the quality of the properties, help with rent stability for tenants, enable landlords to fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and produce a comprehensive list of all private rented sector landlords operating in the borough.

### **Schools**

The Council and the local community had worked together, along with the Institute for Education (the proposed sponsor), to try to set up a secondary school on the Wren Street site. This proposal was turned down by the Government, again no reasons for its decision were given. The proposal to see a secondary school established south of the Euston Road was still being taken forward by the local community. Who would be submitting a new bid to the Department for Education soon, but this time without a sponsor. The local community would need a sponsor for the proposal to be eventually taken forward, and the Council hoped that any such sponsor would wish to work within Camden's family of schools and would share the boroughs aims.

## **Ofsted Inspection – Child Sexual Exploitation**

Ofsted had carried out a thematic inspection in Camden on child sexual exploitation. Camden was 1 of 8 local authorities to be inspected. This inspection involved a review of the statutory functions of Camden's Safeguarding Children's Board in relation to this matter. The Council was arranging a development session for Members on child sexual exploitation with Professor Jenny Pearce on 6<sup>th</sup> November. All Members had a responsibility to report this, so Members would be expected to attend the training session. Overall the country did not seem to be learning any lessons from the past in relation to child sexual exploitation. It was time that a national inquiry was set up to look at the causes of child sexual exploitation and why it happened in some places but not others.

## **Corporate Parenting Board**

The Council had set up a cross-party Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) that had a joint chair, and sought to ensure that looked after children and young people placed in and out of borough, had the best opportunities in life. The CPB was seeking to ensure this through the children having stability in their family lives, improving their educational outcomes, and increasing the numbers in education, employment and training.

## **Mental Health Issues**

The Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Board saw tackling mental health issues as one of its key priorities, as in Camden 1 in 7 of the population had a mental health issue. People from more deprived areas of the borough were more likely to suffer from mental health issues, than those from the more affluent parts of Camden. The HWB work with partners to challenge the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health problems, along with helping the Council and partners to develop practical schemes (e.g. specific apprenticeship schemes) that would help people get back into employment. Unfortunately Jobcentre Plus did not seem to have been very successful in supporting people with mental health issues, to get back into employment.

## **Young People's Mental Health initiative**

An innovative Council led project is being set up in the old Jack Taylor School site to help 16 – 25 year olds with mental health problems have access to a young people centred facility. This initiative sought to improve early identification, better engagement and support, improve their wellbeing by ensuring their wider needs (such as access to housing, sexual health and relationships, substance misuse and employment) were addressed.

## **Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) priorities**

The HWB was working with partners to seek to reduce the health inequalities that exist for the people of Camden. In doing this it had identified the following as being its key priorities;

- healthy weight healthy lives – this had an action plan in place that sought to ensure a healthier food environment; healthier physical environment; development of good integrated treatment pathways; and ensure effective communication and collaboration with all partners involved. One of the ways this was being progressed was through the healthier catering commitment, whereby Camden's Food Safety Team were encouraging food businesses to make healthy changes to the way they prepared and displayed their food, especially those business close to schools. Other initiatives included the Active Space Project that was seeking to build innovative outdoor facilities in Camden Schools, to help improve children's physical activity, and reduce childhood obesity levels. Camden had secured funding for a two year Breakfast Club pilot for all primary schools which should help tackle food poverty, childhood obesity, improve school attendance and educational attainment. This initiative sought to ensure that at the end of the contract the breakfast club would be self-sustainable. The growing for health project was seeking to improve mental health wellbeing and behavioural outcomes by involving the socially isolated and people with substance misuse problems, in community food growing projects.
- complex families – this scheme was seeking to reduce the number of families with complex needs. This was being done through building stronger families, so that they could improve their own situation. The approach sought to ensure that the family had just one key worker representing all the agencies rather than one from each. This was leading to a more streamlined provision, better levels of satisfaction and user experience, along with possible cost savings for the service providers.
- Alcohol – here the aim was to change the current fragmented approach through the establishment of a multi-disciplinary alcohol harm reduction officer group. Also the establishment of independent domestic and sexual violence advocates were being sought to deliver training to staff working across a range of hospital settings, and help develop clear referral pathways. These advocates would be based in the Royal Free and UCL hospitals. Also awareness was being raised through the Don't Bottle It Up, Dry January, Reducing the Strength, and Quiet Streets campaigns.

The HWB recognised that it still had work to do including helping to reduce health inequalities; seeking to improve educational attainment; taking forward the health issues arising from the Equalities Task Force report; and achieving this with a reducing budget.

The Leader thanked Councillor Pat Callaghan for leading the HWB so successfully, as she was aware that HWBs were not working as well elsewhere in the country.

## **Living wage**

Camden was one of the first Council's to sign up to become a living wage employer. As part of this commitment the Council has sought to bring in a minimum earnings guarantee, and had agreed to remove its lowest salary spine point so that no member of staff would earn less than £20,000 per year. The Council was working with contractors to ensure that they paid their staff the London Living Wage. The Council was also looking to provide school loans as well as providing schemes geared around helping adults to get back into work. Poverty pay was one of the biggest problems facing the country, it was a scandal that so many people in work lived in poverty.

## **Foster Carers**

The Council had sought to attract local residents to become foster carers and to retain existing foster carers. One of the ways this was being achieved was through exempting foster carers from paying Council Tax. Out of borough foster placements were very expensive for the Council and disruptive for the child. This initiative had seen an increase in enquires from members of the public expressing an interest. This initiative was unique to the Council and was not linked to any funding stream to pay for its cost.

## **Empty Homes Council Tax supplement**

The Council was using the ability to charge an extra supplement for empty private sector homes to bring such homes back into use. The evidence was that this was working with a number of homes being brought back into use.

## **Financial Strategy**

The Council was facing a huge financial challenge as the Government had decided to reduce the amount of revenue grant Camden received by £70 Million. This was on top of the £93 Million that the Council had to save during the last administration. This reduction in Revenue Support Grant, the 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the country, meant the Council would be faced with having to make real cuts in service provision. The Government had sought to penalise boroughs like Camden with its high levels of need and deprivation to favour the more affluent parts of the country when allocating resources.

It was unclear why the current Government were targeting Local Government when looking to reduce Government spending overall. Local Government had not only proven itself to be the most efficient part of government, but large parts of its work was preventative (e.g. improving ill health through the work of HWBs in turn saving money for the NHS). This in-turn saved money for the public purse overall.

The Council was constantly looking at innovative ways that services could be delivered as well as using such approaches to deliver savings. Examples of this included Greenwood Place (Centre for Independent Living), where services for

people with special needs would now be delivered in one location. This would not only mean a better level of service being provided in a modern purpose built building, but with the closure of the buildings currently all providing the specific services, this would mean a cost saving to the overall budget. The Council's reablement service was another example of innovation leading to better services, and to an overall saving to the public purse. Here the extensive support given to people leaving hospital led to a 56% reduction in those people then needing further care as a result of their hospitalisation.

As part of its future financial strategy the Council may look at the possibility of collocating services in libraries, or allowing a café to be located in a library to off-set costs. These proposals were not without controversy, as they would mean a reduction of space available for books.

Only sound financial planning and listening to the views of the local community regarding the identification of key priorities would enable the Council to come through this challenge.

Councillor Alison Kelly, then thanked the Leader and Deputy Leader for answering the chairs of scrutiny's questions.

#### **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

#### **CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi**

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**MINUTES END**

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September 2015

## LEADER'S ANNUAL (INCLUDING PORTFOLIO) REPORT

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Local government is facing a potential cliff edge. After the elections in 2010 we tried to be realistic and talk about 'two parliaments of pain' for public services. That now looks to have been optimistic. We are only part way through implementing £168m worth of cuts. Half our budget for services will have gone between 2011 and the end of the municipal year 2017/18. Now the outlook for future funding looks more bleak and will certainly not be over by 2018. In introducing my annual report I am proud of the achievements we have made for residents and our communities, despite these pressures. I will bring a report to October Cabinet on progress against the ambitions set out in the Camden Plan and reflect on how we will need to adapt in light of further cuts and the policy direction coming from central Government which has far reaching consequences for many of our residents and services.

1.2 Despite these significant challenges, we will remain focused on finding ways to help our most vulnerable residents and making Camden a better place to live. My administration will show that there is an alternative to the national austerity agenda, and show the value of public services in making real differences to people's life chances. In my annual report I want to highlight some of the key ways we are doing this, through an update on each of my strategic priorities:

- finance
- childcare and maternal employment
- housing
- High Speed 2
- devolution/public service reform

1.3 I have specific portfolio responsibility for equality and so I include a wider update on this work, where it is not already covered in my key priorities. This reflects the importance of tackling inequality and our continued commitment to creating a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and no one gets left behind.

1.4 My report does not cover everything we have achieved or all portfolio areas – I am not seeking to replicate the annual portfolio reports of the rest of cabinet. However, it does cover some key achievements in the past year and challenges ahead.

### 2. Tackling inequality

2.1 I commissioned the Equality Taskforce to help us better understand the drivers of inequality, and areas where we could make an impact and narrow the gap locally. The final Taskforce recommendations were published in 2013, and focussed on maternal employment, attainment and housing as key to tackling inequality, with additional

recommendations to make Camden a 'No Wrong Door' borough and testing new ways to finance and deliver services, making every pound count. Since then we have made some notable progress towards these, with a few examples given in this section, while others are mentioned elsewhere in this report. This is testament to how we have increasingly mainstreamed a commitment to promoting equality across services – both linked to Taskforce objectives and our Camden Plan ambitions.

- 2.2 We are tackling the high costs and quality of housing in the private rented sector with a variety of work, from our rent stabilisation research with the London School of Economics to our new licensing scheme (see section 6 for more on this). Overcrowding can have a severe and detrimental impact on children's health and development. We are exploring ways to tackle overcrowding and alleviate its impacts, including developing a pilot that will look at how we improve advice and support to overcrowded households, and seek to make better use of communal spaces, for example by using space for homework clubs.
- 2.3 The achievements and aspirations of Camden's children and young people are being raised and championed, for instance in our second primary schools careers conference in March where over 200 people attended. We have invested in projects that develop career pathways, vocational provision and apprenticeships, to date over 300 young people benefited via these projects.
- 2.4 We are pioneering approaches to employment that help people balance work and life demands, from ensuring our staff are paid the London Living Wage to high quality flexible employment. For example, in the past year we have signed up to the Ethical Care Charter to drive up standards for homecare workers by taking steps which include payment of the London Living Wage.
- 2.5 We have targeted support for mothers from backgrounds with particularly low rates of employment, via two projects led by the voluntary sector - Camden Women Like Us, is developing a universal service for mothers seeking employment; and the Camden Parents First project (led by Hopscotch), is supporting long-term unemployed mothers with complex barriers to employment. More detail on both of these projects can be found in section 4.
- 2.6 We have worked with residents to identify new and better ways to deliver services, for instance by employing 40 community researchers – local people who know their areas and their communities. Two of these researchers have since gone on to be employed permanently in other roles in Camden. We have engaged extensively about our financial strategy – over 2,000 residents fed back to early engagement, with many others feeding back on more detailed consultations since then.



2.7 The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB), which I now chair, has taken on responsibility for monitoring our progress towards becoming a 'No Wrong Door' borough, recognising the cross-cutting and ambitious nature of this work. One example of success in embedding the principles to improve outcomes is mentioned in section 4 of this report (childcare and employment). We have made some progress tackling health inequality, for example, alcohol related admissions have reduced in Camden over the past 3 years and we ranked among the top 10 areas in London for the rate of smoking quitters per 100,000 smokers in 2013/14. A key milestone in making health everyone's responsibility this year was our Health and Housing Summit in November 2014. One of the key areas identified for further work in the coming years was mitigation of health impacts of regeneration and construction projects.

**Challenges and priorities for the year ahead:**

2.8 We expect that significant challenges will emerge from government's proposed changes to housing and welfare policy. These could have a significant impact on our ability to tackle inequality, and risk undermining much of the progress we have been making (see section 5 for more on this).

2.9 Despite these challenges, we will continue to focus on the areas where we can make the biggest difference. We will continue to work on initiatives that deliver sustainable and affordable housing – especially where this helps us protect the social mix of the borough and reduce child poverty. We will also explore ways to scale up our successful maternal employment and adult apprenticeship initiatives. The findings from the New Economics Foundation evaluation will help us build our case for EU funding to help us do this.

2.10 Tackling health inequality remains a significant challenge - there is still a life expectancy gap of over 11 years between the most and least deprived men in the borough. In recognition of this key challenge, as chair of our Health and Wellbeing Board I will work with colleagues on the development of a new health and wellbeing strategy – looking to accelerate improvements in this area. As part of this we will renew our focus on mental health that looks at both prevention and treatment of mental health conditions.

2.11 To address the complex factors that cause health inequality, we also need significant reform and innovation, above all in the form of greater devolution to local areas. As a member of the recently refreshed London Health Board, I'll be pushing with colleagues from across London to drive improvements in London's health and care and looking for approaches that help us tackle the root causes of health inequality. We will be making the case for greater investment and powers to enable the improvement of health and care services and address the wider determinants of health in London.

### **3. Financial Challenge**

3.1 Despite saving £93m from 2011/12 to 2014/15, continuing government cuts and demographic changes mean that we face another substantial budget gap by 2017/18, and have developed a £75m programme to address this. The scale of the challenge means traditional 'salami slicing' of budgets is not an option. In response, we have pioneered Outcomes Based Budgeting (OBB); looking in detail at all spending to understand how to transform services to provide maximum value for residents by focusing our investment on the things that make most difference.

3.2 By focusing on outcomes rather than reducing every service, we have been able respond to what residents value the most and protect some of the things that have been found to make the most difference. For example, maintaining 25 hours of free childcare a week and increasing funding in key areas such as tackling domestic violence.

3.3 We have reduced our budget by the required £30m for this financial year. Although implementation has progressed strongly, we are very much in the early stages and many proposals will be subject to the outcomes of public consultation, and we have many difficult decisions ahead.

#### **Challenges and priorities for the year ahead:**

3.4 Early indications suggest that the autumn spending review will cut local government budgets further meaning we will have to make more savings (government has indicated anything between 25% and 40% reductions for non-protected departments, requiring deeper cuts to essential local public services). Many of our local partners will be facing similar pressure and uncertainty.

3.5 As the implications of the July budget policy proposals become clearer, we will have additional work to do to understand the financial impacts – which may put us under even greater pressure.

3.6 We know 2015/16 will be a difficult year – with both implementation of savings and more difficult decisions to make. We know that even with our current plans 2016/17 will be equally difficult. If Osborne persists with his plans to take another 40% of our budget then we will simply be in uncharted territory.

3.7 The rest of this report should be read in that context. We had planned a three year financial strategy but the indications are that the Chancellor might rip that up in the comprehensive spending review later in the autumn.

### **4. Childcare and maternal employment**

## September 2015

4.1 If we are to make sure that everyone has the chance to succeed, we need to make sure that everyone has the best possible start in life. Starting in early 2015, Cllr Mason led a wide-ranging public service review of early years – this has set us an ambitious vision for transformation, proposing a ‘Camden Sure Start’ approach to early years, focusing investment on those in most need and, as far as is possible, protecting front line services. We are working towards:

- a new integrated 0-5 service for children and families in Camden – ‘Camden Sure Start’
- moving away from ‘single centre delivery’ to a model based on networked localities
- a commitment to maintaining balanced offer of universal and targeted early education and childcare

4.2 In the past year, work has also continued to increase the number of free entitlement places available to disadvantaged two year olds and to increase take-up. We’ve also started our 1001 days programme (pre-birth to age two) in partnership with Public Health, to provide an integrated offer of universal and targeted services across children’s centres and health services.

4.3 If we have the right childcare offer, it means that mothers have a much more realistic chance of returning to work. We have piloted locating Job Centre advisers in Children’s Centres, ensuring it is much more convenient for mothers to access employment advice. Its success means this approach is being rolled out across the borough.

4.4 We have also supported projects specifically aimed at helping mothers return to work. As mentioned in section 2, Camden Women Like Us and Camden Parents First have helped more than 250 women. One fifth of these have moved directly on to education, training or employment. According to salary tracking of those mothers taking part in the Women Like Us project, clients are on average £108 better off per week, rising to £197 per week for those in full time work. We will use more details from the evaluation of the projects by New Economics Foundation to help future plans that will help us to build on this success.

4.5 Our commitment to championing part time and flexible working is demonstrated by our re-accreditation as a Timewise Council in March 2015. We want to improve workplace equality across the Borough as well as within the Council. Since 2013, Camden has already more than doubled the volume of quality part time jobs offered to successful applicants, and further to a recent employee engagement survey, now 71% of all staff feel they are able to work flexibly without impacting on their output. Our work with suppliers, local businesses and residents is also progressing.

## **September 2015**

4.6 To help promote the Council's leading role in supporting parents into work, we held a Timewise Roundtable with senior officers from across London boroughs in July, which focused on sharing good practice and in preparation for European Social Fund (ESF) bidding. We are also engaging employers through a series of bespoke workshops and events.

### **Challenges and priorities for the year ahead:**

4.7 Following Cabinet decision on the proposed changes to early education and childcare, the next year will see the focus shift to implementation of the agreed approach.

4.8 We will also be analysing the implication of national policy changes. In particular we will be looking at the government's commitment to increase free childcare to 30 hours a week for families where both parents (or a lone parent) are working. From the information available during the general election campaign it seems that this pledge was not properly funded to meet the true costs of providing the additional hours. We are still awaiting details, so it is hard to be sure of the impacts but the worst case scenario could be a potential loss of up to £6m a year. While we hope that the government would fully fund mandated changes of this nature, past experience says that we have considerable work to do to make this a reality.

4.9 We are part of the Working Capital pilot which will test a radical new model to support residents who claim Employment Support Allowance (the main out-of-work benefit for people with long term health problems) but have left the national Work Programme after two years without finding long term employment.

4.10 Every person supported by Working Capital will receive dedicated help from a multi-skilled case worker who will find out more about the problems their clients are facing, and help them develop a plan of action for getting back into work. Key to that plan has been the agreement to work towards a greater devolution of powers to borough councils for their employment services.

4.11 We will continue to invest in high quality childcare, in supporting mothers back to work through advice, training and flexible working, and will use our networks to encourage Camden's employers – large and small – to do the same.

## **5. Housing**

5.1 We are tackling the crisis-level shortage of affordable housing through Community Investment Programme (CIP). This, and other programmes, mean that around 6000 new homes will be delivered in the borough by 2018. Although the attitude of government and the Mayor of London mean that fewer of these will be genuinely affordable than we would hope. Elsewhere on this agenda, Cllr Jones will provide a

more comprehensive update, but in summary the Council has become one of the biggest builders of genuinely affordable housing in the country, helping many who would not be able to live here rent or buy, including key workers. CIP has also delivered £22m of investment over the last year in 17 schools and internal works to almost 3000 homes.

- 5.2 We have recently consulted on introducing a new housing allocation scheme. The current scheme is no longer enabling people with the worst housing situations to improve their situation as quickly as it should. One obvious side effect of this is that children living in overcrowded circumstances are harming their prospects of a successful transition into adulthood. The new scheme, approved by Cabinet in July, will help us to improve this situation.
- 5.3 We continue to develop a range of new supported living schemes and sheltered schemes for older and disabled people to live in-borough, and near to their family and friends. A second new self-contained block of studio flats for homeless single people will open in Holmes Road later this year.
- 5.4 We are working hard to improve conditions through enforcement and through our Private Rented Sector Strategy, for example by looking to introduce a licensing scheme for shared private rented properties in December 2015. This will introduce a set of minimum conditions and management standards to protect approximately 20,000 tenants living in this kind of housing.

### **Challenges and priorities for year ahead:**

- 5.5 Housing prices continue to rise, and in the private rented sector rents continue to escalate, increases in the last year in the highest demand property types and locations are around 8% - significantly above current wage inflation. These rent increases are not accompanied by a commensurate improvement in quality. The average rent for a 2 bed is now £460 per week, making Camden unaffordable for many people and presenting a risk to the social mix of the borough, and availability of homes for key workers. We will continue to use CIP and our PRS strategy to tackle the chronic shortage of affordable housing and standards in the private rented sector.
- 5.6 There are huge challenges ahead around recent government housing proposals, for example, the proposal to force the sale of high value council voids to pay for extension of Right to Buy for Housing Association Tenants. At least 38% of the council's housing stock is valued above the threshold which would make them eligible to be sold when void, and it is still not clear how much of the receipts generated would need to be handed back to the Treasury. Any loss of stock will have a knock on effect on re-lets and likely reverse our recent progress in reducing numbers living in Temporary

Accommodation. And in any event, Right To Buy will not be the right option for everyone – we need to have a range of solutions to our housing pressures.

- 5.7 London is disproportionately affected by the voids proposal and we will work with London Councils on lobbying against the proposals and for a more even distribution of disposals and replacements if the proposals proceed. We will lobby for reduction of red tape in relation to use of capital receipts (see also section 7) and for exceptions to disposals e.g. adapted, sheltered, hostels.
- 5.8 The ‘pay to stay’ proposal (to put in place mechanisms to make tenants pay up to a market rent) could also have a significant impact. We await further details of the policy but early indications suggest that this could effectively be a new “tax” for around 2,000 tenants, and potentially act as a disincentive to work. We will do everything we can to resist this block on aspiration for our working tenants.
- 5.9 The forced 1% annual reduction in social rents effectively rips up the self-financing policy agreed between councils and government just 4 years ago. We are still awaiting details from government, but if the reduction were applied to current rents, it could reduce resources for major repairs by £69m by 2019/20 compared to current assumptions.
- 5.10 In terms of welfare reform, we are worried about the impact on young people of the proposed end or reduction to housing benefit for 18-21 year olds who will find it more difficult to relocate to access labour markets.
- 5.11 With the proposed reduction in the benefits cap we estimate even small families with 1 adult and 1 child will be worse off and could face moving out of Camden – and away from the jobs market here.
- 5.12 We are also worried about the implication of tax credit and housing benefit changes, and that these could also create a disincentive to work. Universal Credit is also due for rollout in Camden from 2016 although the government regularly moves the timescales which makes planning for the impact of the changes even harder to manage. We remain very worried about the impact that Universal Credit will have on our most vulnerable residents; whether DWP computer systems will be ready to support on-line claims and the impact on tenants’ financial circumstances and the HRA when help with rent is paid to the tenant unlike now. We urgently need to know when our existing Housing Benefit claims from working age people will be migrated to Universal Credit so that we can plan properly to help our residents adjust.
- 5.13 As with the last round of welfare cuts, we will identify those impacted as soon as we can and work with them to mitigate the financial losses through helping them to find

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employment, increase their hours and look for alternative cheaper accommodation. We will continue to consider the cumulative impacts, be proactive and ensure we are responding as quickly as we can and using our resources to help those most in need.

### **6. Responding to the threat posed by HS2**

6.1 In the past year we have secured replacement housing for all tenants who will lose their homes as a result of HS2 and those leaseholders who wish to stay in the area, funded by HS2 and built by Camden to a high standard.

6.2 Following extensive consultation with local residents we submitted a planning application to build replacement homes on nine sites in and around the Regents Park Estate in May 2015. Planning permission was granted earlier this month and construction will begin soon so the tenants and leaseholders affected can stay in their community and move only once. As well as the provision of new homes, the development is replacing the Tenants Residents Association within a new central location on the estate, replacing a public house on Albany Street, providing new commercial units on Hampstead Road and undertaking improvements to communal gardens, public realm and open space on the estate to serve both existing residents and those within the new homes.

6.3 We have also successfully negotiated the move of Maria Fidelis School from North Gower St to Drummond Crescent to consolidate on a single enlarged site in Somers Town and are working to ensure this takes place as quickly as possible.

6.4 We have secured commitment from the Euston Strategic Board, co-chaired by Camden, to fund a Growth Strategy and Planning Brief for Euston area designed to deliver a comprehensive redevelopment of the station based on a level deck solution and bring much needed jobs and homes to the area.

6.5 Meanwhile, we have facilitated the use of the National Temperance Hospital by Camden Collective prior to HS2 construction.

6.6 Through the Fair Deal for London Alliance we launched a compensation charter designed to get a fairer deal for London residents and businesses, which got national media coverage and MPs statements on compensation in the House of Commons.

### **Challenges for the year ahead**

6.7 In September 2015, we will be responding to HS2 Ltd's revised plans for Euston, to be set out in an additional provision (AP3) to the Hybrid Bill. We expect to appear at the Select Committee in December to make the case for comprehensive redevelopment at

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Euston and press for mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the scheme on local residents and businesses.

6.8 Camden continues to make a strong case on a range of issues including, the need for like for like replacement of open space lost as a result of the scheme, the habitability of homes closest to the construction works, support for local businesses and removing spoil by rail rather than road. We'll also continue to push for a positive agreement over the future of Albany Street.

6.9 We will work closely with the Euston Strategic Board to secure funding for comprehensive redevelopment of the station to ensure that the Borough is provided with long term benefits if the scheme goes ahead.

6.10 HS2 continues to be a very significant threat to the borough. The newest versions of the plans for Euston station still leave the community with all the blight and none of the benefit. The government has failed to task Network Rail and HS2 to work in consort. This means the plans are ill thought through. The stations will not be integrated and is making it difficult for proposals for Crossrail 2 to be integrated in to the station. Ultimately this failure will mean more blight for longer and possibly more demolition. We will keep pressing for agencies to work together.

## 7. Devolution

7.1 Councils across London are working with the Mayor to influence the devolution agenda. As chair of Central London Forward, the grouping of eight central London boroughs, I have been leading a detailed piece of work to put together a package of proposals on what powers we believe we need. This work is integrated with pan-London work and is leaving no area of public policy untouched. The London Health Board is working similarly on the health devolution agenda (see section 2 for more on this).

7.2 CLF and its member authorities are already working together to deliver for our communities through the ESA Working Capital pilot (see section 4). This pilot will help us make the case that many services are better designed and delivered at a local level to meet local need, and that when they are, better outcomes are delivered. Delivery will commence in October.

### Challenges and priorities for the year ahead:

7.3 Public service reform features in the government manifesto with a particular emphasis on devolution, so we have a significant opportunity to secure extra powers that will help us deliver better, more tailored services for our residents. Greater devolution will help



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us manage the impacts of the cuts, but will not be a cure all however, and we must also be extremely cautious of any attempt to devolve powers without adequate funding.

7.4 Work has been commissioned by the London Councils Executive to develop detailed proposals for devolution to London – this is due to form the basis of engagement with the government in the autumn.

7.5 We will be aiming for a long term settlement that will help us to deliver local priorities set and voted on by our communities, to deliver devolution that helps us deliver better healthcare, an improved FE skills offer, get more people into employment and deliver more affordable housing.

7.6 We will use the findings of the Working Capital initiative in Camden - commissioning and providing welfare to work services that will help get our long term unemployed and most vulnerable residents into sustainable employment – to argue for devolution of responsibility to tackle unemployment at a local level (see 4.9 for more on this)

7.7 Fiscal devolution is not part of the existing public service reform and devolution package being pursued by London Councils and the GLA. However Central London Forward has agreed to prioritise this area as part of CLF work programme, with a view to developing a distinctive central London position.

7.8 We will also be exploring the impact on devolution by conflicting policy developments in housing (see also section 6). Emerging government policy is highlighting how quickly this government wants to move away from social housing as a concept as well as amounting to a further step towards centralism and against devolution.

7.9 We will develop a local case and lobby against the harmful impacts of these policies.

## 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 We have had an extremely busy and challenging year, yet the achievements outlined in this report highlight the impact we can and still make. Tackling inequality remains my number one priority and I will use this as the driving theme in helping us meet our challenges and our aims in the coming year.

8.2 The financial challenge continues to be our most pressing. In the year ahead we must make some incredibly difficult decisions about what we cannot keep doing, and what we must do differently in order to deliver services that are so vital to our residents. The autumn spending review will likely offer no let up, with local government remaining unprotected from cuts.

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8.3 At the same time, there are a range of emerging policies around welfare and housing that may put even more pressure on some of our most vulnerable residents, and in turn on our services.

8.4 Despite all these challenges, the achievements outlined in this report highlight that we can and we must still seize the opportunities available to us to do things differently, get best value and help set the agenda for future public services.

8.5 The current interest and political momentum around devolution is a key example of this. While being wary of any deal that seeks to offer us more responsibility for services without the necessary resources to deliver them, this is a major opportunity to shape a future vision for public services – based on a genuinely local and joined-up approach.

## **9. THANKS**

9.1 I want to give broad thanks to all those staff, businesses, voluntary sector organisations, residents and councillors who've given so much to make our borough a better place over the last year.

9.2 Although we have our political differences across the chamber I look forward to continuing to work cross party where we can agree, for example on HS2 or modern slavery.

9.3 I specifically want to thank Camden staff who have had another year of cuts and redundancies but have continued to deliver first class services to residents, businesses and visitors in one of the most diverse and vibrant boroughs in the country.

9.4 I also want to specifically thank councillors from all parties who give so much to make our borough a better place.

Councillor Sarah Hayward,  
Leader of the Council  
September 2015