

Scrutiny Panel Recommendations

Reference Number	Recommendation	Theme	Response
1	Camden should develop and publish a clear set of objectives for the CIP programme going forward. Camden should clearly identify what the priorities are for the CIP programme over the next 5 years, based on an up-to-date assessment of Camden's needs. And explicitly recognise the trade offs involved in pursuing the chosen priorities.	Objectives of CIP	<p>The Council published its priorities and objectives for the CIP Programme, over the next 5 years and beyond, in its Camden's Community Investment Programme: Future Strategy Report (SC/2022/46).</p> <p>The decision to pursue priorities around increasing the supply of affordable housing is set out in We Make Camden and specifically the section on 'Everyone should have a place called home'. We Make Camden states that <i>'We are not building enough homes to meet the needs of our communities now and in the future, which increases housing costs for everyone. High housing costs mean people are more likely to get into debt, to cut back on essentials like food and heating, or to live in overcrowded or poor-quality homes.'</i></p> <p>Camden has made a commitment to scale up our house building programme in response to local housing needs. Camden will be increasing our housebuilding programme to deliver 1,800 council homes under a £1.3bn investment plan. The Council's Cabinet has agreed to expand our Community Investment Programme to build more council homes that provide affordable housing to families and energy-efficient homes that help residents with the cost of rising fuel bills and tackle climate change.</p> <p>The report includes principles to guide the programme that have been developed through 10 years of working with our residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we will be bold, ambitious and rigorous - we will be transparent and open - we will invest in participation and capacity building - we will increase the number of good homes in our Borough as quickly as possible - we will have equality and housing justice at the heart of what we do - we will tackle the climate emergency - we will prioritise affordability now and for the future
2	CIP objectives should be developed in collaboration with residents, tenants, community groups, councillors, and relevant organisations both within Camden and externally.	Objectives of CIP	<p>The CIP objectives agreed at Cabinet in September 2022 reflect the priorities and issues residents have told us about as part of our community engagement and as part of We Make Camden. They reflect the ask of our communities that the Council continue to do all it can to address the housing crisis, and to do all it can to enable residents to live in good-sized, safe, warm, affordable and accessible homes.</p> <p>The resident voice is at the heart of every Community Investment Programme scheme. We work with local ward cllrs, local and neighbouring residents, local businesses and Camden institutions. These collaborations are done through a variety of means; from steering groups, to one off events through to continual ongoing engagement.</p> <p>We employ Community Liaison Advisors, who tend to be residents living on the estates undergoing regeneration, to work as part of the project team. This has proved to be hugely successful and is demonstrated through the two successful resident ballots held by Camden. One of which, on the West Kentish Town estate, delivered an 85% resident turnout and a Yes vote of 93% of residents in support of the regeneration proposals.</p> <p>On Camley Street, we had more than 700 people attend an event to discuss proposals for this important part of the borough. Young people from the National Citizens Service took part in a Camley Street youth engagement event and young people created artwork as part of the Connecting Camley Street which is now displayed in the arches. This example is one of many delivered through an engagement programme on Camley Street that has engaged hundreds of local people including local businesses, residents and community groups all across Camden.</p>
3	Camden's CIP targets and pledges should be refreshed to reflect these objectives. These targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. They should be refreshed on a 3-yearly cycle.	Objectives of CIP	<p>Camden's Community Investment Programme: Future Strategy Report (SC/2022/46) refreshed the principles which guide the programme based on 10 years of working with our residents and contained targets that are specific, measurable and time-bound.</p> <p>The Camden pledges remain our core commitment to our residents. New proposals recently approved at Cabinet will see a large increase in new homes built through CIP. Increasing our ambition to 4,850 new homes, including 1,800 social rented.</p> <p>In the next 4 years CIP is targeting to build 771 new homes of which 58% will be affordable, including 304 for social rent, 53 Camden Living and 89 new temporary accommodation homes for homeless families. We plan to start building 150 further affordable homes in the next four years.</p>

4	The new targets and objectives should be used to identify, develop and prioritise new development proposals, and to assess delivery options for individual schemes ahead of Cabinet approval.	Objectives of CIP	<p>CIPs published targets and objectives are based on actual developments either within the approved programme or in the agreed pipeline. The ambition is to deliver all of these schemes.</p> <p>Any new development proposals would add to those targets and would need to be appraised as to whether they are viable and affordable.</p> <p>As with all projects, they will be assessed as to which delivery model best achieves the outcomes that the Council and its residents want and the report to Cabinet in September 2022 sets out how these options would be appraised.</p>
5	RCP and Housing Scrutiny Committees should monitor performance against these targets.	Objectives of CIP	<p>The Community Investment Programme already reports performance to RCP and Housing Scrutiny Committees via the CIP Annual Report.</p> <p>CIP Cabinet reports are also brought to Scrutiny Committee before they are presented at Cabinet and we will continue to do this.</p> <p>The CIP Annual Report will report on performance against the new targets at Scrutiny Committee.</p>
6	Details relating to CIP, both strategically and in relation to individual sites, should be available at one central, publicly accessible, location (for example, a dedicated spreadsheet on the CIP website) as well as published as an Annex to the CIP Annual Report.	Objectives of CIP	<p>The Community Investment Programme website (https://cip.camden.gov.uk/) provides programme and project level detail for CIP schemes. There is a project map showing the location of each CIP scheme, a section on Facts and Figures, individual project pages and updates on latest news .</p> <p>The website provides links to all Cabinet decisions relating to the CIP Programme and CIP projects.</p>
7	RCP and Housing Scrutiny Committees should develop a set of data that the Cabinet member should publish and updated annually	Objectives of CIP	<p>Scrutiny committee is welcome to develop a set of data for the Cabinet Member to consider publishing and updating annually. Officers will advise the Cabinet Member on any data that may be deemed commercially sensitive and through its publication impact the Council's ability to obtain best value from the market.</p>
8	As part of its overall review of CIP objectives, the Council should consider the benefits of diversifying its overall delivery strategy, to reduce the Council's exposure to future sales risk.	Current financial position and level of risk	<p>In 2020 the Council received an external and independent review of our delivery and priorities by the London Government Association (LGA) Peer Review including on our Community Investment Programme. The recommendations included that Camden looks to work with partners that can help accelerate and deepen the impact of CIP on the housing crisis in the Borough.</p> <p>The September 2022 report to Cabinet seeks partnerships to increase impact and in Table 3.6 of that report sets out a diverse delivery strategy for the approved and pipeline CIP schemes. This includes bringing Bacton II forward as a development agreement where Camden retains the affordable housing and a development partner finances the development and takes sales risk.</p>
9	Camden should publish a publicly accessible CIP project tracker setting out, for each of the main project benchmarks: the originally anticipated date for completion and the current anticipated date for completion. If there is material change in any of the main project benchmarks, the tracker should be updated and actively shared with affected communities, local organisations and ward councillors.	Project delays	<p>The annual report provides information on project timelines and performance against original business case.</p>
10	Camden should continue to benchmark its performance against other local authorities on an annual basis	Benchmarking CIP against other London Authorities	<p>The CIP Annual Report will look to benchmark Camdens performance against other local authorities where possible.</p>
11	Camden should explore opportunities for more formalised partnership working, sharing of resources and best practice.	Benchmarking CIP against other London Authorities	<p>10 years of delivery combined with this new plan for scaling up our house building programme has confirmed Camden as a national leader for building new council homes and as such have a range of formal and informal partnerships.</p> <p>Camden has Investment Partner status with the GLA which is a formal partnership, allowing Camden to apply for grant funding to support the delivery of more affordable housing in the borough.</p> <p>We are an active member of Future of London, the capital's independent network for regeneration, housing, infrastructure and economic development practitioners. We work closely with London Councils at both a political and officer level, being a member of their Council-led Housing Task and Finish Group and the London Housing Directors Group. We also partner with the NHS through the NCL STP Estates Board and the One Public Estate initiative, bringing forward projects such as the recently completed Abbey Health Centre.</p> <p>Camden, Islington and Hackney have formed a close relationship where we share resources and best practice. And the Council as a whole has partnerships with some of major institutions such as UCL where again we look to share innovation and best practice whilst also collaborating on development projects.</p>

12	Cost benchmarking should be an integral part of the CIP process going forward. When developing a business case for a particular project, anticipated costs should be benchmarked against other CIP projects, other private development projects in Camden, and where possible against other projects being delivered by other local authorities outside of Camden.	Build costs	Benchmarking forms a central part of any business case coming through the gateway decision-making process. External, independent cost consultants provide cost assumptions for each individual project which are benchmarked against similar projects being delivered elsewhere by local authorities, Registered Providers and private house builders. In addition to this Camden is a founding member of the Beacon Partnership cost benchmarking club, where local authorities share tender returns on a confidential basis which enables club members to benchmark build costs across local authorities.
13	In making benchmarking comparisons between different projects, the Council should fully account for any abnormal and additional costs associated with estate regeneration proposals.	Build costs	Camden is a founding member of the Beacon Partnership cost benchmarking club, where local authorities share tender returns on a confidential basis which enables club members to benchmark build costs across local authorities.
14	The Council should review the assumptions it uses to assess the financial viability of proposals in comparison to other Council development programmes and ensure it is fully accounting for revenue income from new homes and facilities.	Viability assumptions	As mentioned above benchmarking forms a central part of any business case coming through the gateway decision-making process. In addition to this Camden is a founding member of the Beacon Partnership cost benchmarking club, where local authorities share tender returns on a confidential basis which enables club members to benchmark build costs across local authorities. Additional revenue income created through CIP schemes, either through residential or commercial rents is accounted for in appraisals.
15	The Council should maximise the involvement of ward councillors in the CIP gateway process.	Democratic oversight	Ward cllrs are always consulted on CIP developments that take place in their wards and their involvement is welcomed. We have ward cllrs who chair steering groups and construction working groups, ward cllrs who support engagement and participation activities. All of this helps create positive relationships with local communities. Specific to CIP's gateway process, the governance arrangements are clearly set out for every project and in the main involve Cabinet members.
16	The Council should review the practice of the Cabinet Member responsible for CIP sitting on the Planning Committee when CIP applications are being decided.	Democratic oversight	Government guidance on council constitutions makes clear that Councils are able to appoint any members of the local authority (whether or not they are a member of the executive), including an elected mayor, to committees or sub-committees which take decisions on functions which are not the responsibility of the executive, such as development control and licensing. It goes on further to say that full exchange of information between the executive and any committee which takes development control decisions is essential and that local authorities should consider including a member of the executive, if possible with responsibility for the Development Plan, on one or more committees which take development control decisions although she or he should not normally be the chair. The size and membership of planning committee were reviewed after the May elections, with the membership reducing from 16-12 members, and the number of Cabinet Members from 3-1, with the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment (The lead member for planning) remaining. Part 5, Section 2, of the Council's Constitution contains the Planning and Licensing Protocol. Paragraphs 3.20 – 3.24 deal with the development of council owned land. It provides advice on protocol for those members who participated in a collective Cabinet decision in relation to a site that is the subject of a planning application. Officers consider that this advice remains valid.
17	Given the size of the Council's housing waiting list, the focus for the future CIP programme must be on the delivery of new additional social-rented homes, rather than replacement homes, new schools or community facilities.	Delivery Model	Over the last 10 years the Community Investment Programme has supported a range of priorities across the Council and the borough; from schools, to health centres, to community centres, to specialist housing for our most vulnerable residents through to general needs housing. It is a great strength of CIP that it can flex between priorities. After losing hundreds of millions of funding for our schools from the Government's cuts to Building Schools for the Future, the CIP has enabled Camden to invest £165m in our family of schools - meaning 17,000 children are learning in improved schools they deserve. We've built 4,516m2 of community space through CIP and this includes vital community hubs where people can come together such as the new St Pancras Community Centre, the Abbey Health Centre and the Bourne TRA Hall. We have also created the UK's first Centre for Independent Living at the Greenwood Centre. CIP's new focus, as set out in the September 2022 Cabinet report, is to increase the number of good homes in our borough as quickly as possible. We want to build more homes and better homes - moving families out of overcrowded, poorly designed properties into homes and places that are healthy, safe and affordable. CIP achieves this through a mixed approach which includes estate regeneration (such as Agar Grove and Maiden Lane), and new developments which allow net additional affordable housing such as Central Somers Town. The CIP Programme does recognise the importance of increasing the overall supply of affordable housing in the borough. Cabinet recently approved the regeneration strategy for Camley Street which will create 350 brand new homes on a site where there are currently none. We have also been out to consultation via a Call for Ideas for small development sites across the borough. This will build on the success of previous infill schemes such as Kiln Place and the HS2 replacement housing.

18	The Council should develop clear metrics for assessing the environmental, social and opportunity cost of different delivery options	Delivery Model	<p>The Council has adopted a mixed approach of delivery models to bring forward new affordable homes as quickly as possible. The prioritisation of projects and the assessment of delivery models will be done using the following objectives and measurements:</p> <p>Delivery of new homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net additional affordable homes (social rent and Camden Living) - Replacement social rent homes - Reduction in the number of households living in overcrowded homes - New community facilities - Placemaking improvements - Quality of place and buildings <p>Speed of delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How quickly can we deliver positive outcomes <p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimising carbon impacts - Positive impact to the local environment - Minimising the local environmental impact of development <p>Financial affordability/viability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall financial viability – supporting breakeven or surplus to the programme - Capital Financing Requirement limited to an affordable level
19	A standardised approach for assessing value for cost should be adopted across the CIP programme and used to compare different delivery options	Delivery Model	<p>External, independent cost consultants provide cost and value assumptions for each individual project which are benchmarked against similar projects being delivered elsewhere by local authorities, Registered Providers and private house builders.</p>
20	The key question when deciding on future CIP projects should be whether a particular proposal delivers sufficient value for cost in comparison with alternative options	Delivery Model	<p>The Council has adopted a mixed approach of delivery models to bring forward new affordable homes as quickly as possible. The prioritisation of projects and the assessment of delivery models will be done using the following objectives and measurements:</p> <p>Delivery of new homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net additional affordable homes (social rent and Camden Living) - Replacement social rent homes - Reduction in the number of households living in overcrowded homes - New community facilities - Placemaking improvements - Quality of place and buildings <p>Speed of delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How quickly can we deliver positive outcomes <p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimising carbon impacts - Positive impact to the local environment - Minimising the local environmental impact of development <p>Financial affordability/viability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall financial viability – supporting breakeven or surplus to the programme - Capital Financing Requirement limited to an affordable level