

Update of the Cabinet Member for Young People & Culture Children, Schools' and Families (CSF) Committee – February 2024

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the CSF Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months.

The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting, subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Youth Mission

Camden's Youth Mission, within We Make Camden, is that by 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure. The Youth Mission Officers Steering Group are continuing to meet regularly and are thinking about ongoing governance of the Youth Mission. Each of the missions have quarterly sessions with Members and Officers coming together and I am the lead Member for the youth mission. The third Members session is taking place in March and will have a specific emphasis on the Care Experienced and Youth Justice Service priority cohorts. The collaborative session will look at the progress, challenges and next steps with professional leads and members. This session follows the momentum generated by the Full Council Debate on 29th January where a motion was unanimously passed on making Care Experienced a Protected Characteristic.

3. Youth Justice Plan

At the January full council meeting, I presented an update on Camden's Youth Justice Plan. Every year Camden's Youth Justice Board is required to complete a Youth Justice Plan demonstrating our achievements and priorities moving forward – this is a condition of the grant funding we receive from the National Youth Justice Board. However, this is the first time, the national board has required boroughs to obtain full council sign off on the plan, rather than Executive Director sign off. Camden has a strong performing Youth Justice Service (YJS), achieving the highest rating under the national framework. In 2020, Camden's **YJS was rated 'outstanding' by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, placing the service as one of the top performers in the country.** The Inspectors commended the service as effective, solution focused, and embedding collaborative leadership. As a result of this, Camden are subject to the lightest oversight arrangements, and we are encouraged to share our work with peers and partners as best practice.

The YJS works across three key performance indicators:

1. Reducing first time entrants to the Youth Justice System
2. Reducing Custody
3. Reducing Re-offending.

In 2022/23, we have continued to reduce the numbers of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System, with a 33% reduction in last years' figure and a reduction in the number of children receiving custodial sentences, with no children receiving a custodial sentence this year (compared to 2 children with 3 custodial sentences in the previous year). There is still further work to be done on reducing re-offending, which remains a top priority.

Camden's Youth Justice plan covers the 2023-25 period and gives an overview of the work of the YJS in Camden, setting out revised priorities that have been agreed in partnership with staff, children, families, and the Board. The plan was endorsed at the Full Council meeting in January 2024 and will be reviewed in 12 months.

4. Holidays Activity Fund (HAF)

The Council has commissioned the Young Camden Foundation to manage its Department for Education's grant funded Holidays Activities Fund. This provides free, fun activities and a healthy meal in a safe environment for children aged 5 to 16 in receipt of free school meals. In early January, I joined the Young Camden Foundation's CEO Daisy Srblin, and HAF Programme Manager Sophie Kruger on some visits to activities running during the winter HAF programme. This included attending a programme run by the Sir Hubert von Herkomer Arts Foundation (HvH ARTS) which included nutritional education and a cooking class for young people provided by the Mother Canteen, a community kitchen based in Gospel Oak. Young people were taught to cook globally inspired recipes that were both healthy and nutritious.

I also visited a different group of children and young people, also on the HvH ARTS programme, on a visit to Kentish Town City Farm. The children took part in an 'Explore and Create' workshop with artist in residence Louise Adjei. The City Farm provided environmental inspiration in the studio, where children created artwork using charcoals watercolour, gouache, and acrylic paints. On these visits, I was joined by the Mayor of Camden, and the Deputy Lieutenant for Camden. It was inspiring to see how the HAF has been implemented supporting young people to be creative and simultaneously addressing the issues of healthy eating, hunger and food poverty. A group photo is included below showing the young people's culinary creations.

