

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: Disability Oversight Panel Review of 2019/20 and Forward Plan for 2020/21	
REPORT OF: Strategy and Change	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Disability Oversight Panel	DATE: 18 February 2020
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This paper aims to review the Disability Oversight Panel’s achievements from 2019/20 and support the Disability Oversight Panel in deciding its priorities and focus for 2020/21. Developing a work plan for the year which enables the Disability Oversight Panel to fulfil its purpose requires a two pronged approach which looks to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on evidence, including the Panel’s engagement work over the past year, to identify big strategic priorities (themes) for disabled people within the borough, which are relevant to all disability groups represented on the panel. • Ensure that the panel receives insight from residents with a disability to identify emerging trends and issues which the panel may want to champion on residents behalf. <p>The Disability Oversight Panel is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider recommended key areas of focus/priorities for the Disability Oversight Panel for 2020/21. <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alex Evans Senior Policy and Project Officer Strategy and Change 5th Floor, 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG 020 7974 2794 alex.evans@camden.gov.uk</p>	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Camden 2025 vision and the Council's Our Camden Plan set an ambitious vision for a borough which works for everyone. To achieve this, Camden 2025 must act as a call to action that inspires a new way of working, where Camden's people, the Council and others come together to work differently to develop new solutions. In fact, the Council has long valued the powerful role residents can play, whether through consultation and engagement in strategic decision-making and service design or through building and utilising community assets to build resilience. However, a recurring message from the Camden 2025 engagement programme was that many people who want to get involved do not know currently know how to. Both residents and businesses have asked for a clearer focus to participation activities and for greater consideration to be given to how their involvement could make the biggest impact. This suggests that there is an untapped desire for citizen participation within the borough, as well as a challenge for the Council in establishing meaningful participation pathways for our different stakeholders.
- 1.2 Additionally, the Council is increasingly bringing citizens closer to the democratic process and ensuring Members can learn from their insights. Camden aims to be honest and open about what actions are taken, by whom and on what grounds. The Council wants to help ensure that citizens, Members, partners and the organisation itself can have conversations where questions can be asked and answered openly and honestly. Being a more open organisation is not only the right thing to do as a publicly funded and democratic body, it also helps build trust and stimulates greater citizen participation. By 'participation, we mean involving citizens in all aspects of the Council's work and enabling them to take action to improve their lives and the lives of others. In doing so, we can collectively work together to make Camden a place where nobody gets left behind and where everybody has a voice.
- 1.3 Building on these ambitions, and the priorities previously identified by Disability Champions, this paper reviews the Disability Oversight Panel's achievements from 2019/20, and proposes key areas of focus for the Disability Oversight Panel's 2020/21 Forward Plan.
- 1.4 Recommendations put forward in this paper aim to support the Disability Oversight Panel in ensuring that their meetings are effectively fulfilling the purpose of the panel as set out in their terms of reference:
- Champion the needs of residents with a disability and ensure their voices are heard in key areas of Council policy.
 - Discuss key issues for different groups of disabled residents that the Equality Champion Leads have identified through their individual roles following engagement and networking across Camden during the preceding year.
 - Hear directly from service users as to their experiences and any recommendations.
 - Hear from appropriate experts.
 - Support Councillor Champions to be effective in their role.

- Identify issues and areas of exploration to pass to the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny meeting so that key issues for those groups can be considered for regular inclusion on the agendas of the Council's formal scrutiny committees and for consideration of such issues forming the basis for relevant panel work by the committees.
- Consider further individual liaison with the Chairs of the relevant Scrutiny Committee to ensure that disabled residents are involved in the scrutiny of relevant issues on the agendas to the Council's scrutiny committees.
- Consider whether other recommendations should be made to other parts of the Council, in particular concerning decision-making which impacts disabled residents.
- Review progress and work undertaken during the year.

2. Achievements from 2019/2020

- 2.1 The Disability Oversight Panel places huge importance on ensuring that the focus of their work is shaped directly by the experiences and insight of residents with a disability and their carers. The active role Councillor Champions play across Camden communities ensures that emerging issues and trends can be identified and voices of residents with a disability are heard across the Council and beyond.
- 2.2 In addition to this role, the Disability Oversight Panel focuses on themed topics. Councillor Champions and Strategy and Change work together to identify council priorities and emerging projects, which would benefit from insight from residents and partners, from a disability perspective.
- 2.3 Public events on these topics are organised by Strategy and Change, in collaboration with the lead departments, who know the subject matter. Typically local residents and partners take part in a workshop style session to share their views with Councillors and officers. The insight is then used by the service areas to shape new strategies and ways of working, which is reported back to both the Councillor Champions and the residents.
- 2.4 The events are well attended, with circa 50 local residents attending the most recent event, in November 2019. The themes of the topics have been as follows:

Employment support (February 2019)

- 2.5 Camden 2025 calls for strong and inclusive growth - everyone should be able to access the work that is right for them. This will involve reducing unemployment in the borough, particularly amongst vulnerable and social groups where long-term barriers to unemployment exist. Camden 2025 says "growth in Camden should be strong and inclusive and everyone should be able to access the work that is right for them". Jobs in Camden should be flexible enough to support people's wider needs and commitments, they should recognise and nurture the talents and skills of each individual and give people a path to development and progression.
- 2.6 The theme of the February 2019 public event was Employment Support. The lead service area was Inclusive Economy.

2.7 Examples of issues raised

- Get out into the community and champion things with people with disabilities and with disability groups.
- Work in partnership with groups like Camden Disability Action Group, not just for Camden Council to do alone.
- If the employer does not understand the disabled person's needs, there is a risk that the employment will be a negative experience for both the employer and the employee. Educate employers about the needs of the staff member they will hire. People conducting interviews need to be aware of disability, be trained well, and have good listening skills.
- Through the online offer and neighbourhood hubs, offer workshops, mentors, bring services together, also advertise employers who met the gold standard for accessible jobs in Camden.

2.8 Outcomes from the event

The Council has taken the feedback on board, and are incorporating this into a long-term piece of work that will allow development of the four ideas for improving and building on current employment support. 'Good Work Camden' is not about helping residents find 'a job,' but creating a system of support that works for people throughout their lives, that enables them to prepare for, enter into, and flourish within good work that enables them and their family to lead secure, sustainable lives. The focus is currently on the following elements of the Good Work Camden offer:

2.9 Taking a neighbourhood approach to delivering employment support

In order to deliver accessible, face-to-face, holistic support within neighbourhoods, the Council has soft launched a neighbourhood 'hub' in Gospel Oak; appointing a Job Hub Lead who is leading on the ongoing development of the service and delivering support to residents, and are working towards the soft launch of another 'hub' in Regents Park.

Plans are being devised to develop a specialist employment support service for residents with disabilities and health conditions; recognising the need for bespoke support for this cohort. We will work with external partners and residents to develop this service.

2.10 Integrating Camden's current employment support offer to make sure it is working as effectively as it can together

Employment support partners have identified three areas where together they will develop and test increased collaboration to create a more coherent experience for residents. These are sharing knowledge and experience, defining and embedding good practice in delivering employment support amongst partners and initial assessments and referrals.

As part of this, the Council's role in supporting increased collaboration is being explored, and a capability building programme for partners is being developed; part of which will focus on providing better support for disabled residents. The Council are talking to a user-led organisation with links with people with lived experience about them providing this.

The Council are also looking at providing training for the Economic Development/Inclusive Economy service, so that their policy development and own direct delivery is better informed about disability.

2.11 Working with and supporting Camden employers to be good, inclusive employers

Over the next three months the Council will be testing at a small scale the creation of an Inclusive Business Network, and the provision of HR consultancy style support to help businesses adapt their recruitment and employment practice to be more inclusive.

2.12 Creating a digital platform to make it easier for residents to identify support

In response to the challenge identified by residents that it is difficult to know what support is available, and then how to access this support, the Council are building a website that will help residents to navigate support, understand what providers offer, and how this may be relevant to them.

2.13 The Council are also continuing to develop ideas that respond to systemic barriers to unemployment and are exploring an alternative approach to delivering welfare.

Healthy and active lives (May 2019)

2.14 Camden 2025 calls for a borough where everyone is able to live a healthy, independent life – where everyone knows how to take charge of their own health and wellbeing and is encouraged and supported to keep active.

2.15 The theme of the May 2019 public event was “Healthy and active lives, with a particular focus on the new Leisure centre contract”. The lead service area was Sport and Physical Activity.

2.16 Examples of issues raised

- Provide different brochures for different disabilities that are easier to understand that enable users to be independent
- Swimming sessions need to have more friendly and well trained staff
- Having staff with disabilities and sharing knowledge with colleagues to broaden the knowledge base which will help them be more confident and understanding when offering support to disabled users
- Provide more specialist equipment for disabled users that functions correctly

2.17 Outcomes from the event

The views and ideas from the event were incorporated into the leisure management contract specification. The contract was awarded to GLL, and the new contract will commence from 1 April 2020. Examples of how GLL will meet the needs of residents with disabilities are as follows:

2.18 Promoting services

1. Produce annual Easy Read timetables, co-designed alongside a range of community stakeholders who represent Camden's disability community, including Camden Disability Action and The Camden Society.
2. Disability Customer Service Video
3. PoolPod video
4. Dementia friendly facilities (aligned to dementia action alliance and Swim England best practice)

2.19 Activity programming

GLL propose to increase the provision of targeted community learn-to-swim lessons. This provision would include a lesson programme catering to under-represented groups including disability-swimming lessons. GLL would ensure that all teachers working on specialised and targeted lessons are provided with appropriate additional training, including the Better Inclusive CPD and sign language training. GLL have already demonstrated the success of this programme at Pancras Square Leisure, where all school swimming teachers have undertaken this training enabling more effective teaching of the pupils who attend school swimming lessons from Frank Barnes' School for Deaf Children.

2.20 Target Equality Groups

GLL will work with the Disability Sports Coach organisation to deliver a new disability sports programme within a Camden Leisure centre and community venues to increase physical activity levels amongst young disabled Camden citizens. In partnership with Para Dance UK, GLL will introduce a new Inclusive Dance Programme for Camden citizens with all disabilities.

2.21 Staffing

A minimum of 25% of apprenticeship places shall be ring-fenced for Camden citizens with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. GLL will continue to work with the Camden SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Team to offer four supported internships per year within Camden Leisure Centres. GLL are keen to work alongside SEND to ensure young, Camden Citizens (16-25 year olds) living with a disability are able to gain work experience within a safe, engaging and inspiring leisure environment.

2.22 Equipment

PoolPods will continue to operate at the Swiss Cottage and Kentish Town Leisure Centres. Their installation in the last 12 months has enabled several less-abled citizens to access the pool environment in a safe, dignified and independent manner. GLL have also created a PoolPod training video for staff and customers that will be utilised by PoolPod in all future installations and training programmes

2.23 Access

For disabled or less abled prospects, a Disability Customer Service Video has been created. This video helps identify the most appropriate customer journey for a disabled user and informs them of all services, facilities and equipment available in the leisure centre. The video will also be used to educate customers on how best to use disabled equipment for safe and effective use.

GLL will continue to provide a variety of accessible equipment, such as Hearing Loops, Accessible Chairs, beds and hoists. This will ensure the continuous support and customer service required to help and assist our most vulnerable citizens. The equipment provision will be serviced and reviewed to ensure it is safe and practical for each facility. GLL will continue to be advised on the latest equipment by the Camden Disability oversight panel and the Accessibility audits.

Growing up in Camden as a disabled child (July 2019)

2.24 Camden 2025 calls for a borough that is safe, strong and open, where everyone should be able to contribute to their community. However, successive economic crises have concentrated both advantage and disadvantage. There are people in our communities who feel left out in the discussion of Camden's success. Children should be given the best start in life, with the opportunity to develop all their capabilities.

2.25 The theme of the July 2019 public event was "Growing up in Camden as a disabled child". The lead services were Special Educational and Inclusive Intervention Service, and the Children and Young People with Disabilities Service.

2.26 Examples of issues raised

- Parents need more information on eligibility or how to access short breaks.
- It is important that the Local Offer is signposted via school or other services.
- Could we link more with the voluntary sector?
- We like to be asked how we feel in a way we can understand. If we can't understand, we can't contribute. Qualified interpreters should be booked.

2.27 Outcomes from the event

A social care and short breaks action plan was circulated to residents and the Councillor Champions in September 2019, which responded to insight provided at the event.

- In November, voluntary sector providers – both local and national - were invited to attend the Preparing for Adulthood Event which was organised jointly by Social Care, Education, Health and parents. The event was well received and saw the launch of the revised Preparing for Adulthood Document.

2.28 Services have been preparing to recommission the Short Breaks services and redesigning the Local Offer website.

2.29 Recommissioning of Short Breaks services

- In recent months there has been extensive consultation with parents and young people on what is working well and what changes people would like made to short breaks in Camden. This is being fed into service specifications for the new contracts, due to launch in October 2020. The Council will continue to involve parents and young people in the procurement process as this work progresses.

2.30 Local Offer website

- The Local Offer is being redesigned to ensure that information about activities is easy to access. The Steering Group has ongoing / monthly meetings.
- A mock-up of the front page has been designed. The Insight team are meeting content providers to populate the information required, prior to user testing a mock-up of the site in the summer and making any necessary changes.
- The group are also working through the business requirements (the specifications which will go to the design team once we have populated the site).
- The group are aiming for a December 2020 launch. Any parent of a disabled child in Camden who would like to help us improve the website are encouraged to contact Sandra Soteriou (Sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk)

Disabled residents' experience when contacting Camden Council (November 2019)

2.31 Key to delivering Our Camden Plan is designing services focused on residents. To address the inequalities that can hold people back, the Council has been redesigning some of its services to make sure residents are at the heart of everything it does, including involving those who use the services in this approach. The Council are also tapping into the expertise of colleagues who deliver those services – the people who know what works and what gets in the way.

2.32 The theme of the November 2019 public event was “Disabled residents’ experience when contacting Camden Council”. The lead service areas were Contact Camden, Camden Learning Disability Service and Strategic and Joint Commissioning.

2.33 Examples of issues raised

- Letters are helpful, to be able to refer to. However, have Easy Read with symbols, rather than just writing. Easy Read letters are best. E.g. Housing Benefits and Repairs letters are not in Easy Read.
- Staff need training about visible and invisible disabilities. It’s daunting to prove your disabilities, as many people aren’t registered as disabled.
- 5 Pancras Square isn’t disability friendly, it’s busy, noisy, hard to navigate and difficult to wait in the queues as it is unclear which queue to stand in.
- Sign video is good when it works, but delays are stressful. Might be a connectivity issue with the council’s broadband.

Outcomes from the event

2.34 Colleagues from the services areas have met to discuss all of the feedback and suggestions from each of the tables to understand what residents’ views are.

2.35 Much of the feedback relates to things which are within the remit of individual services who attended the event, but there was feedback which also relates to other services, such as Housing Repairs Contact Centre, Facilities Management and IT. Conversations will be taking place to understand what improvements can be made together, so that services are working in a joined up way, but not duplicating efforts or making changes that will benefit and meet the needs of one group, but negatively impact on another’s.

2.36 Contact Camden have started some research to find any good practice that will help to identify anything new they can do to improve. The new Contact Camden Manager joined in January 2020 and the feedback from the DOP event will be shared with her. Once Contact Camden have completed their conversations they will provide residents with more detailed responses to the specific feedback they have provided.

2.37 Camden Learning Disabilities Service (CLDS) is undertaking a collaboration with Central St Martins MA Graphic Communication Design students to design solutions to improving contact experience in three areas – Spaces (arriving and navigating), Dialogue (connecting and communicating) and Documents (reading and understanding). The service is ensuring the collaboration work considers the needs of all users of the building by using Disability Oversight Panel feedback and liaising with property management and Contact Camden managers to ensure general issues affecting access are fed into this work.

2.38 CLDS is holding refresher training sessions for Camden's customer service team around awareness of assisting people with learning disability to improve visitor experience and information sharing.

2.39 A CLDS 'Meet and Greet' service is now available 3 days a week to meet service users on arrival at 5 Pancras Square and escort them to their appointments to improve visitor experience.

2.40 A new language service will go live on 1 April 2020, which includes communication support for d/Deaf and hard of hearing residents. In line with the feedback from the public event, there will be a new video British Sign Language service, which will be delivered in partnership with Deaf Direct, who are a d/Deaf Charity.

2.41 Other achievements and developments over 2019/20 are as follows:

- The Disability Oversight Panel's business meetings now include updates from Commissioners about Learning Disabilities, Children and Young people, Mental Health, Special Educational and Inclusive Intervention Service, and Carers.
- Actions and outcomes from the business and public meetings are now chronicled through an action tracker.
- The Joint Chairs of Scrutiny agreed that the issues identified in the Disability Oversight Panel's report, accessibility and employment support, should be taken away by the chairs of each scrutiny committee to consider in relation to the development of their scrutiny committees work programme. In addition, they agreed that a key set of questions in relation to disability should be devised should be addressed in scrutiny committee reports. The questions agreed by Councillor Champions in June 2019, and the template has now been updated and circulated to scrutiny clerks and policy officers for use in drafting scrutiny reports.
- The Accessibility Strategy will be published on Camden's website in February 2020. This will also include an Easy read version of the action plan.
- Asif Iqbal, Rehabilitation Officer for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, will deliver deaf awareness training to the leisure centre (GLL) staff in March 2020. The training is to improve communication between deaf people and the staff at Camden.

2.42 Many of the areas the Disability Oversight Panel have explored are ongoing, and will be revisited next year. These areas are set out in section 3.

3. Establishing the Disability Oversight Panel's key priorities for the year

3.1 The Disability Oversight Panel formally meets three times a year. The provisional meeting dates for 2019/20 are as follows:

- Wednesday 3 June 2020
- Tuesday 3 November 2020
- Wednesday 3 February 2021

- 3.2 To maximise the impact and effectiveness of the Disability Oversight Panel, it is recommended that the panel continues with the themed approach. This section of the paper aims to assist panel members in deciding the focus of the Disability Oversight Panel over the next 12 months. It is recommended that the themes identified are cross cutting areas which are of relevance to all the disability groups represented on the panel. There will, of course, be other themes that Champions want to progress within their disability areas over the year, which they may wish to update the panel on at meetings.

Proposed theme: Wellbeing Index

The headline objective for our Camden 2025 strategy is 'to make Camden a better borough', so in order to measure how we are doing against this objective the council is proposing to develop a wellbeing index for the borough. The project will have two distinct strands; one will be to work with a group of Camden citizens to develop a borough-wide set of measures, using existing data sources. The other will be a very local piece of research, undertaken by trained residents and co-ordinated by UCL, which will be much more qualitative in nature and result in a detailed story of life in a neighbourhood (Euston). The wellbeing index needs to produce data that is relevant to all our citizens including those with a disability.

With that in mind, a future Disability Oversight Panel could contribute by reviewing a draft borough-wide set of measures and also comment/advise on the research methodology adopted for the local research. This could include looking at how measures relate to citizens who have a disability and are also from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background.

Proposed theme: Employment support

Camden 2025 and Our Camden Plan call for strong and inclusive growth - everyone should be able to access the work that is right for them. Building on our previous Camden Plan ambitions, this will involve reducing unemployment in the borough, particularly amongst vulnerable and social groups where long-term barriers to unemployment exist. In 2025, growth in Camden should be strong and inclusive and everyone should be able to access the work that is right for them. Jobs in Camden should be flexible enough to support people's wider needs and commitments, they should recognise and nurture the talents and skills of each individual and give people a path to development and progression.

A future Disability Oversight Panel could review the progress that has been made since the Employment support public event in February 2019. The Disability Champions have expressed a particular interest in exploring the relationship between mental health and employment.

Recommendation that the Disability Oversight Panel consider whether the Wellbeing Index and Employment Support are themes they would like to focus on in 2020/21.

Keeping the February 2021 theme open, to be able to react to developing priorities during the year

3.3 When they met on 13 January 2020, the Disability Champions identified the following future agenda items:

- Leisure Services accessibility
- Deaf interpreting and Council services
- Blind and partially sighted experiences
- Mental Health

In addition to these items, based on the priorities previously identified by the Disability Champions, the Disability Oversight Panel could consider whether it would like to receive updates on the following:

- Camden Learning Disability Services (CLDS) project
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)/Disability intersectionality
- Update on Camden's Accessibility Strategy
- Camden Town Hall refurbishment - Design for Accessibility
- Liberty Protection Safeguards
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/2021
- Dockless bicycles
- Customer Contact
- Blind and partially sighted experience

Recommendation: that the Disability Oversight Panel consider whether these are priorities which they would like to continue to receive updates on and whether they would like to include any additional priority areas.

In relation to the Leisure Services accessibility, the Disability Oversight Panel must decide if this is a theme they want to look at further themselves, or refer it to Joint Chairs of Scrutiny

REPORT ENDS