

## **COUNCIL – 4<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022**

### **BUSINESS FROM THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH and 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022**

#### **Report of the Borough Solicitor**

This report relates to the unconsidered motions and the responses to written Council questions from the Council meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

#### **1. Background**

The Constitution advises that where motions have not been dealt with by the conclusion of the meeting of the Council, they fall without discussion and are passed to the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair whose response is then to be provided to the next meeting of the Council. Also the responses to written questions that were provided for last ordinary Council meeting are to be circulated as part of the next meeting's agenda for information. These responses are then noted at that next meeting without debate.

#### **2. Responses to motions**

At the meetings of the Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> March there were 4 motions that were not considered due to lack of time. At the Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April there was one motion that was not considered.

As the Constitution requires, these motions were passed to the relevant Cabinet Members or Committee Chairs, who are required to report back to the next meeting of the Council. A copy of the motions and the responses are attached at Appendix A to this report.

#### **3. Responses to written questions from Councillors**

The written questions from Councillors and the responses from Cabinet Members linked to the Council meetings on 7<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 are attached as Appendix B.

#### **4. Recommendation**

That the report be noted.

## **COUNCIL 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

### **UNCONSIDERED MOTIONS**

### **Appendix A**

#### **1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Richard Cotton and which was seconded by Councillor Meric Apak**

The Council notes the huge housing need in the borough, with over 500 homeless families in temporary accommodation, and over 40% of all families with children living in overcrowded homes. The increasing lack of affordability of Camden threatens the important social mix of the borough. Long term lack of funding for council housing in Camden from government means that the council stock in Camden needs significant investment.

This Council notes that grant funding for council house building severely reduced in 2010. Nationally, over 1 million households are waiting for social homes - but since 1991 there has been a loss of 24,000 social homes each year. Despite being left with only 6-7 % of the funding coming from government, Camden has delivered over 450 new council homes, the first council housing in the borough for a generation - moving over 1000 people including 453 children to new, larger homes. The Council has also bought back 85 new properties lost to right-to-buy in order to house homeless families. The levelling up white paper risks eroding the little support there is for house building,

The Council notes that the pandemic has put huge pressure on every part of the Council's finances. Despite promises to reimburse councils for costs on the pandemic, councils have been left with a black hole by Government. The Housing Revenue Account has been hit hardest as businesses and residents have struggled to pay rent. The Council is funding new homes and improvements to our housing stock at the same time as managing pandemic costs and a £69m loss of income as a result of Government intervention in the way we run our services.

Keeping residents safe is the Council's first priority. The Council pledged to work with tenants to ensure buildings had the highest standard of safety. This has meant Camden Council investment of over £43 million into building safety works. This investment is crucial but without more support from government it has slowed down other important capital works to ensure council homes are at the highest standard.

The Council notes the action taken by Camden Council to support private tenants. The Council's House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing scheme and Rogue Landlord Taskforce are continuing to improve the standards in Camden's private housing sector. The Council is taking action against rogue landlords and has secured the highest number of landlord banning orders in the country. The Council needs new powers from central government to make sure that the private rented sector is a secure, safe and affordable route for local residents.

Lack of government support for house building, fire safety works, building improvements and lost income from the pandemic has left huge pressures on local government housing budgets.

This Council notes the Government's warm words about its commitment to long term secure, sustainable, high quality, greener council homes, and thus calls on the Prime Minister to restore Attlee's postwar vision of building council homes fit for kings and for all, set 100 years ago, and fix the current broken housing market by re-energising that radical vision.

This Council calls on the government to urgently:

- Reimburse councils for all lost income from the pandemic and national policies that prevented councils from investing in council housing.
- Reimburse councils for the cost of vital fire safety works so that the burden does not fall on tenants and leaseholders.
- Back us to build, with a council house building and improvement fund, to allow us to double the number of council homes we are building and invest in improving existing council homes.
- End the housing benefit cap so Camden can help more homeless in Camden.
- Bring in a moratorium on right-to-buy in Camden so no more homes are lost.
- Provide new powers to local government to license the private rented sector and new protections for renters to support security and affordability.
- Invest with councils in ambitious plans to decarbonise homes to reduce fuel poverty, tackle damp, create new jobs and tackle the climate crisis.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES**

As you know, had we reached the motions, I would have been proud to second this motion from my colleague Cllr Cotton.

Acknowledging the human right to a safe, secure, warm and dry home, state investment in social housing is a key part of housing provision in many European countries.

Accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for safe, affordable homes is on the increase and is vital if we are to ensure inclusive growth and recovery.

Central government have left local authorities under significant financial pressure with the absence of promised central Government reimbursement to councils for the costs incurred tackling the pandemic, as well as, funding to address the requirements of the Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill.

Allowing the private rented sector to self-regulate makes it impossible to balance supply, demand and genuine affordability. This is particularly acute in Camden which has some

of the highest private sector rents in the country, which makes housing unaffordable for many of our residents, significantly impacting their lives.

Our Private Rented Sector Housing team work proactively to improve standards within the sector and tackle rogue/criminal landlords. Without stronger statutory powers and adequate funding, we are limited in the change that we can effect on the system.

Today's unfortunate reality is that the government's strategy appears to be to starve council housing, run it to the ground, and then point fingers to it as a failure, paving the way to realise their obsessions of ownership only for those who can afford it. Ownership should have its rightful place in our society. But allowing a deliberate government strategy of disinvestment in council homes in preference of private ownership, would be an insult to Attlee's legacy 100 years ago of council homes for all, not just those who need it.

This motion resonates with what my residents have been asking for, both directly to me in my surgeries, and at DMCs, and it holds the government's feet to the fire, for a properly funded council housing strategy. One which is genuinely affordable by all. I wholeheartedly support it.

**2. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Sian Berry and which was seconded by Councillor Lorna Russell**

Over the last decade there has been a significant increase in the size and scale of developments emerging across Camden, all of which have lasting impacts on the communities around them – for better or for worse.

It is therefore important that our communities have a role in shaping the future of their own neighbourhoods and ensuring that every new development meets their collective needs – after all, our residents know their communities best.

In particular, we believe that the Council's own Community Investment Programme (CIP) projects must have support and buy-in from local communities and residents from the outset.

While the requirement for resident ballots for many such CIP projects is a positive initiative, we believe that there needs to be a fairer playing field for residents who wish to oppose demolition plans, as large amounts have been spent by the Council to secure a 'yes' vote.

More widely, in the planning system, residents seeking to oppose or propose changes to large developments have no access to independent expert support to assess the impact of plans or develop alternatives.

We believe that there would be huge benefits if there were a source of truly independent funding for residents to engage effectively with the planning system and play their full part in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods.

Therefore, we are calling on the Council to create a £100,000 Resident Empowerment Fund.

In the case of estate ballots, residents would be able to use this fund to independently commission the advice and advocacy support they need, in which they could have full confidence.

In the case of major planning applications, expert analysis and verification of claims by developers could be achieved in a truly independent way, which would aid the Planning Committee in its decision making and create the ability to get expert help to devise credible community-led people's plans for large development sites.

Representative resident groups affected by large developments would also be able to bid for grants from this fund. As a result, they would be genuinely empowered to influence changes that affect their homes and their lives in our borough.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Create a £100,000 Resident Empowerment Fund to empower residents to engage fully in the planning processes and have greater input into shaping developments in their local areas.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

See response to the amended motion for the Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

### **3. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Oliver Cooper and which was seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkinson**

This Council notes and agrees with residents' opposition to tall buildings being built in low-rise areas, which include the vast majority of the London Borough of Camden.

The London Plan states, "Tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable." The London Plan furthermore states that "boroughs should determine if there are locations where tall buildings may be appropriate" and if so, where. They should furthermore define 'tall building' for each part of the borough.

Camden has not designated any areas so far as either suitable or not suitable for tall buildings, despite some areas clearly and objectively being unsuited to tall buildings. Not designating any areas as suitable or unsuitable for tall buildings reduces the protections against high-rise developments in low-rise areas.

The overwhelming majority of responses via Commonplace to the consultation on Camden's Site Allocations Local Plan stated that there were no sites in or near either West Hampstead or Kentish Town that were suitable for tall buildings: reflecting those communities' low-rise character and that of most of the borough. The same is necessarily true of other low-rise areas where large developments are not proposed.

There were a number of responses via Commonplace to the Site Allocation consultation for West Hampstead and Kentish Town named ten storeys as the height at which development would be unacceptable in the area. This reflects the heights of the tallest buildings in both locations. This Council therefore takes this as a guide to the definition of 'tall building', pending more detailed collection of evidence through a public consultation.

This Council therefore asks the Cabinet to note that:

- This Council opposes tall buildings being built in low-rise areas, and is committed, subject to consultation to seeking the protections in the London Plan to protect low-rise areas from skyscrapers.

And that the Cabinet therefore receives an officer report leading to:

- Urgently publish a draft amendment and conduct a Regulation 18 consultation to reflect paragraphs 1 above in the Local Plan.
- Urgently publish an interim position statement stating the position in paragraph 1 would be a material consideration in any forthcoming planning applications, pending the publication of any draft amendment following consultation.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

The Council notes and agrees with residents' desires and concerns to see development which respects Camden's neighbourhoods and responds to their special character and diversity. Camden's Local Plan 2017 planning policies (D1 – design), considers all of Camden sensitive to the development of tall buildings due to the specific character of our borough, the large numbers of conservation areas, strategic views, and listed buildings.

Suitability of tall buildings can vary significantly across neighbourhoods, streets and even on the same site. Tall buildings therefore need detailed design assessments and careful consideration. Camden's existing policy has been used and can be used to reject unsuitable development, including that of tall buildings – such as the council's rejection of the 100 Avenue Road proposals (regrettably later overturned and approved by the Secretary of State).

The 2021 London Plan, Policy D9 says that “Boroughs should determine if there are locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development, subject to meeting the other requirements of the Plan, and if so, where. Councils should also define ‘tall building’ for specific localities. This process should be based on assessment and evidence and consideration of local contexts. For the purposes of the London Plan, tall buildings are generally those that are substantially taller than their surroundings and would cause a change in the skyline. It is clear from recent case law with a Hillingdon Council case, that these tall buildings policies are a guide, and need to be viewed along with the existing planning policies in their entirety, and as with Hillingdon’s Judicial Review case, they do not preclude consideration of proposals outside of these designated areas.

Camden has existing policy which is clear that all areas of the borough are sensitive to taller buildings. This Council notes that so far this policy has ensured that development in Camden has generally been of a lower scale than many boroughs. For example, the NLA Tall Buildings Survey (2020) shows that of the 587 tall buildings planned in London, 2 were in Camden, 28 in Barnet, 9 in Westminster and 5 in Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

The Council intends to commission a study on building heights looking at local character and sensitivity to help inform where tall buildings may be more appropriate as part of a future policy. This will inform part of the scheduled upcoming review of the Local Plan in 2023, and will involve extensive public consultation and engagement. The Council will also continue to robustly apply Camden’s existing Local Plan policy which views all of Camden as sensitive to tall buildings.

Finally the Council will work with other boroughs in London to press for reform of the Housing Delivery Test. The Government has set a significant housing delivery test for London and Camden specially, of over 1,000 homes per year. Not meeting these targets, further weakens the borough’s planning policies and our ability to push for affordable housing, community benefits and more sustainable scale development. We believe that the housing delivery test is inappropriate for Camden, that does not take into account the character of boroughs, and the need to deliver family-sized homes and more affordable housing as an absolute priority.

**4. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Tom Simon and which was seconded by Councillor Nancy Jirira**

This Council notes:

- The grave threat to the health of our planet posed by the climate emergency.
- The Climate and Ecological Emergency declared by the Council in November 2019.
- The cost of living crisis, driven by Brexit and the increase in energy prices, which hits the poorest in our society hardest.
- That, on average, 80% of energy used in homes is for heating.

- Insulating homes is one of the simplest and most cost effective measures that can be taken to mitigate both rising costs and high energy consumption.
- The abject failure of the Conservative Government's 'Green Homes Grant' scheme, which reached only 41,300 homes nationwide out of a target of 600,000. In Camden, just 17 homes benefited, of which seven were low-income households. There are 29 million homes nationwide.

This Council further notes:

- The vision expressed in the Council's 'Climate Action Plan' that all buildings in Camden will be energy efficient.
- The support offered by the Council to residents to insulate their homes or take other steps to improve their energy efficiency, such as through installing solar panels.

This Council believes:

- Insulating all homes should be a priority for governments at all levels.
- Financial support should be provided to incentivise and enable residents to undertake work to properly insulate their homes, with the greatest level of assistance available for those least able to afford it.
- In the absence of an effective national scheme, the Council should significantly enhance the support available under its Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2021-26.
- That work to improve the energy efficiency of Camden homes has the added benefit of creating new jobs and training opportunities for Camden residents.

This Council calls on:

- The Conservative Government to set up an effective and properly financed nationwide scheme to provide support to all homes that could benefit from better insulation.
- The Leaders of all four groups on the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy calling for a new, more effective scheme to be established, backed by adequate funding for those who need it most.
- The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet to increase the funding available, and redouble other efforts, to support and encourage residents to insulate their homes.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

Though not considered at March's meeting of Full Council, this motion was subsequently re-submitted, and amended, at the next meeting held in April. This Council is committed to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies and doing so is amongst our highest priorities. We have made ourselves constitutionally bound to properly consider relative impacts and mitigations in all of Camden's decision making, and would of course welcome cross-party support in those endeavours.



## **COUNCIL MEETING – 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022**

### **UNCONSIDERED MOTION**

- 1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Sian Berry and which was seconded by Councillor Lorna Russell**

#### Resident Empowerment Fund Motion

Over the last decade there has been a significantly increase in the size and scale of developments emerging across Camden, all of which have lasting impacts on the communities around them – for better or for worse.

It is therefore important that our communities have a role in shaping the future of their own neighbourhoods and ensuring that every new development meets their collective needs – after all, our residents know their communities best.

In particular, we believe that the Council's own Community Investment Programme (CIP) projects must have the support and buy-in from local communities and residents from the outset.

While the requirement for resident ballots for many such CIP projects is a positive initiative, we believe that there needs to be a fairer playing field for residents who wish to oppose demolition plans, as large amounts have been spent by the Council to secure a 'yes' vote.

More widely, in the planning system, residents seeking to oppose or propose changes to large developments have no access to independent expert support to assess the impact of plans or develop alternatives.

We believe that there would be huge benefits if there were a source of truly independent funding for residents to engage effectively with the planning system and play their full part in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods.

Therefore, we are calling on the Council to create a £100,000 Resident Empowerment Fund.

In the case of estate ballots, residents would be able to use this fund to independently commission the advice and advocacy support they need, in which they could have full confidence.

In the case of major planning applications, expert analysis and verification of claims by developers could be achieved in a truly independent way, which would aid the Planning Committee in its decision making and create the ability to get expert help to devise credible community-led people's plans for large development sites.

Representative resident groups affected by large developments would also be able to bid for grants from this fund. As a result, they would be genuinely empowered to influence changes that affect their homes and their lives in our borough.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Create a £100,000 Resident Empowerment Fund to empower residents to engage fully in the planning processes and have greater input into shaping developments in their local areas.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

Over the last decade the Council has launched the biggest council house building programme in a generation. These have had lasting positive impacts on the communities around them, ensuring over 500 new council homes have been built, 2 new hostels, a new centre for independent living, new community spaces, and £165m invested in our family of schools - meaning 17,000 children are learning in the improved schools they deserve.

It is agreed that our communities have a role in shaping the future of their own neighbourhoods and ensuring that every new development meets their collective needs – after all, our residents know their communities best.

Estate regeneration schemes can only proceed with the support of the majority of estate residents to ensure that residents have a continuing opportunity to feedback and have their voice heard on schemes – this includes opportunities to say whether they think schemes should proceed.

Tenants and resident leaseholders are involved every step of the way in designing their new homes and neighbourhoods, from the layout of new flats to the design of open spaces.

The requirement for resident ballots for many such CIP projects is a positive initiative. These are the largest democratic exercises seen on these estates in their history – with turnouts of 75-85 per cent, showing the level of engagement and strength of support.

The voices of our tenants and leaseholders expressed through ballots is respected. Yes, or no, the Council listens deeply and responds to the democratic will expressed in these processes which are the culmination of many years of work and engagement.

More widely, in the planning system, the Council intends to update its statement of community involvement to build on good practice and ensure a strengthened role throughout the planning process for residents. Residents seeking to oppose or propose

changes to large developments should be supported to access independent support and involved and engaged by applicants.

The Council will also continue its support for neighbourhood planning, to support groups of residents to develop their own local plans for their areas, as well as producing council planning frameworks to help guide and shape developments and ensure that residents can be further involved in shaping development from an early stage, with the use of neighbourhood assemblies and other forms of engagement as has been done for the Gospel Oak and Haverstock Framework.

In the case of major planning applications, expert analysis and verification of claims by developers will continue to be achieved in a truly independent way, with the commissioning of independent advice to verify documents submitted by applicants, made publicly available in full.

The Council:

- Commits to continue the Camden People's Regeneration Pledge and conduct full, independently conducted ballots on estates where demolition is taking place.
- Will continue to respect the outcome of resident ballots and work to implement these resident decisions.
- Will continue to ensure all leaseholders and tenants can access independent advice as part of regeneration schemes.
- Will continue to support neighbourhood planning and the use of citizen assemblies in the development of neighbourhood planning frameworks.
- Will continue to support representative resident steering groups to oversee projects, employ members of estates and communities to lead engagement, and ensure deep ongoing engagement is conducted on all our council projects from start to finish.
- Will continue our focus on delivering as many new council and living rent homes as possible in line with the priorities of our residents.

**ENDS**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022**

#### **RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

##### **QUESTION 1**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR LARRAINE REVAH**

Can the Cabinet Member set out the various means by which the Council is providing welfare support during the cost-of-living crisis for residents facing financial hardship and access to food?

##### **REPLY**

The increased costs of living from soaring energy, food and transport costs are impacting on every household but for those on low incomes, the impact can be severe as they find they do not have enough money to pay for essentials.

Some 4.7 million adults experienced food insecurity in January 2022, according to The Food Foundation - with 1 million saying they or someone in their household had to go a whole day without eating because they could not afford or access food. Meanwhile, 59% of households said they were worried increased energy prices will mean they have less money to afford enough food for themselves or their family.

For those in work, wages are not increasing at the same rate as costs with the average UK worker worse off than they were before the financial crash in 2008, before any changes to tax and energy price caps come into effect in April. For those out of work the loss of the £20 has been devastating, especially for single adults who have seen a 25% reduction in the weekly income as a result.

In Camden, residents face the added burden of high housing costs, leading to increasing hardship. According to the Council's data analysis, more than 10000 benefit recipients are in fuel poverty and 7200 are in food poverty. More than 4000 are at risk of financial crisis which means they are unlikely to have enough income to cover the average household costs.

Through the Household Support Fund, the Council has provided nearly £1m in food vouchers for children in Camden, provided funding to our community food partners, and is working with Cooperation Town to encourage the creation of resident led food co-operatives across the borough.

The Council is also working closely with the Camden Advice Network to ensure residents seek help, enabling advice workers to award £150 hardship payments to those in financial hardship. Since November more than 1200 payments have been awarded. Using data, the Council has also undertaken targeted take-up campaigns to ensure residents are aware of the help that's available.

Neighbourhood Housing Officers are supporting a number of tenants with arrears and financial worries including benefit maximisation work. The homelessness prevention service is using data to reach out to people in the private rented sector at risk of eviction, and the new Jobs Hubs are supporting residents to find work.

The year ahead is likely to be very challenging for everyone. That's why, in addition to the Government's £150 energy rebate, Camden is investing £2 million in a Cost of Living Fund for those hardest hit by the pandemic. Whilst the Council cannot fix the global factors or the inadequate welfare state, as a community Camden will continue to help those facing poverty.

## **QUESTION 2**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR ANDREW PARKINSON**

Finchley Road is a major road with major problems. In the last few years, Finchley Road has become blighted with poor waste collections and permanent fly-tipping, uneven and broken pavements, an unsafe and unwelcoming underpass, unregulated Deliveroo delivery riders, and a failure to beautify the sunk pedestrian walkway near Goldhurst Terrace. This is in part due to the TfL responsibility for the roadway itself, and the consequently disjointed approach to service delivery.

Will Camden designate a single officer as responsible for delivering a joined-up approach with TfL on Finchley Road? And will that officer be clearly signposted to councillors to resolve issues with Transport for London?

## **REPLY**

Finchley Road is one of London's 'Red Routes' and is managed by Transport for London (TfL). Camden officers work closely with TfL to manage issues on their entire Red Route network across Camden, including Finchley Road and its underpass. As part of this the Council meets TfL to present any concerns it has across the network. The officer overseeing this and other environmental issues including recycling and waste collections is the Director of Environment.

Major public realm issues facing Finchley Road include:

- heavy traffic dominance, with the consequent road safety and health problems this can cause;
- poor crossings at side roads, too many of which have only 'uncontrolled' crossings for pedestrians;
- and poor connectivity for cycles wishing to cross east-west over the main road (which the CS11 gyratory-removal plans scuppered by Westminster Council would have partially addressed), which seriously inhibits residents in NW3 and NW6 areas from taking up cycling and moving towards zero-carbon forms of travel.
- lack of greenery along the road's length.

I hope the councillors for the numerous wards adjoining Finchley Road will join the Council in calling for these to be addressed, including the need for a proper and fair financial settlement for TfL which would enable it to address these problems.

In addition, Finchley Road receives twice-daily waste collections (morning and evening), with residents and businesses using these collections to maintain cleanliness, alongside daily street cleaning. The Council also supports TfL on the clearance of bulk refuse and helps to tackle issues related to rough sleeping through its Community Safety team.

The area's cleanliness and waste collections are monitored by the Council's local Senior Area Monitoring Officer and enforcement action taken against those caught illegally fly tipping waste. On 14 February, 6 new enforcement officers started working with the Council to target known littering and fly tipping hot spots and also provide a new night-time enforcement service to catch those abusing Camden's environment under cover of darkness. Ward councillors can also flag transport issues through the email address [safetravel@camden.gov.uk](mailto:safetravel@camden.gov.uk).

### **QUESTION 3**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES**

**BY: COUNCILLOR NANCY JIRIRA**

In November 2018 this Council heard of the great work of Camden charity the New Horizon Youth Centre in supporting young people who are homeless, and of the need for dedicated space for homeless young people to stay in this area.

Camden Liberal Democrats welcome the fact that, in March 2021, New Horizon were able to open the first and only emergency accommodation service in London designed and run specifically for young Londoners experiencing homelessness, as we called for in our annual Budget amendments.

However the space and funding for that accommodation is time limited. What has the Council been doing, and what more could be done, to ensure that any young person in

Camden experiencing homelessness has a safe place to stay, and support to help them move on in their lives?

## **REPLY**

In 2021, New Horizon Youth Centre, a London-wide youth homelessness charity based in Camden, partnered with Depaul UK, the GLA and London Councils to create Hotel 1824, a London-wide project providing emergency accommodation for younger people. Hotel 1824 provides 40 en-suite rooms in Ealing for 18–24-year-olds at risk of sleeping rough. It is nine months into its pilot phase and preparing to turn into a permanent rough sleeping provision.

Although it is rare for the Council's rough sleeping outreach team, Routes off The Street (RTS), to find anyone under 25 sleeping rough, they do occasionally get calls from young people stating they can no longer stay where they are and are going to have to sleep rough. If they are under 25, RTS will often refer them to New Horizon for support.

In addition to the work of RTS, the Council's Homelessness Prevention Service (HPS) provides advice and support to young people aged 18-25. This includes support to remain at home, income maximisation by increasing access to benefits and employment, and referrals to support organisations such as debts advice to reduce expenditure. If they are unable to remain at home, HPS will support them to move on through a range of options, including into supported housing, private rented schemes (with floating support for up to 12 months to sustain the tenancy), refuges, joint schemes with the North London Housing Partnership such as Hope World Wide, women's respite rooms, intermediate affordable housing within Camden, and social housing schemes outside Camden.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team seeks to ensure that young people renting privately in Camden, who commonly can only afford to rent a room in a shared house, are secure in their homes and that their homes are of a high standard through our mandatory and additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing schemes.

In addition to the above, the Council commissions housing support services for young people aged 16-25 in a range of accommodation-based pathway services. In the Young People's Pathway (YPP), services respond to the needs of children in care, care leavers, unaccompanied children seeking asylum and young people who are homeless and have support needs as assessed under the Children's Act 1989, and Homelessness legislation. The YPP comprises 230 beds in services across the borough and provides young people with a seamless journey through supported housing towards living independently.

The Adult Pathway also provides housing support services for young single homeless people with support needs in a range of hostels and supported housing schemes across the borough. The Adult Pathway comprises 643 beds and, at any one time, around 10% of residents are aged under 25. Adult Pathway services assist residents to address their support needs and move on into independent accommodation.

Finally, Camden also commissions a Mediation Service for young people aged 13 to 15 and their families and for those that are 16 and 17 who present as homeless. Provided by Catch22, the aim of the service is to resolve conflict and build relationships in order to prevent family breakdown, which so often leads to homelessness. The service provides One to One Family Mediation Work with young people and family members to prevent homelessness and breakdown in relationships and to support the building of positive communication within the family environment.

#### QUESTION 4

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR PETER TAHERI**

Camden's Council Tax Support scheme is a vital means of supporting people on low-incomes. Can the Cabinet Member set out the total number of working age people and pensioners who receive 100% and partial relief from their Council Tax, and if he can show these figures for each ward?

#### REPLY

The Council's Council Tax Support Scheme is one of the most generous in London and has been critical to supporting families and individuals impacted by the economic downturn associated with Covid. In February 2022, more than 22,000 households received support with Council Tax and 77% received 100% support at a cost of more than £28 million.

	Working age			Pensioners			Total
	100%	Partial	Total	100%	Partial	Total	
Belsize	412	137	<b>549</b>	219	57	276	<b>825</b>
Bloomsbury	360	91	<b>451</b>	221	54	275	<b>726</b>
Camden Town	676	183	<b>859</b>	357	105	462	<b>1,321</b>
Cantelowes	772	210	<b>982</b>	305	78	383	<b>1,365</b>
Fortune Green	588	210	<b>798</b>	240	64	304	<b>1,102</b>
Frognaal	249	82	<b>331</b>	125	25	150	<b>481</b>
Gospel Oak	765	229	<b>994</b>	318	97	415	<b>1,409</b>
Hampstead	184	43	<b>227</b>	178	48	226	<b>453</b>
Haverstock	894	289	<b>1,183</b>	430	102	532	<b>1,715</b>
Highgate	587	133	<b>720</b>	255	75	330	<b>1,050</b>
Holborn	816	231	<b>1,047</b>	361	104	465	<b>1,512</b>
Kentish Town	745	205	<b>950</b>	290	69	359	<b>1,309</b>
Kilburn	1,086	484	<b>1,570</b>	597	111	708	<b>2,278</b>
King's Cross	630	188	<b>818</b>	263	66	329	<b>1,147</b>



Regent's Park	874	282	<b>1,156</b>	342	90	432	<b>1,588</b>
St Pancras	1,271	449	<b>1,720</b>	463	132	595	<b>2,315</b>
Swiss Cottage	407	164	<b>571</b>	203	48	251	<b>822</b>
West Hampstead	674	195	<b>869</b>	285	65	350	<b>1,219</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,990</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>5,452</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>6,842</b>	<b>22,637</b>

## QUESTION 5

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY**

**BY: COUNCILLOR NASIM ALI**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's work to support local people from all backgrounds to start their own business or social enterprise?

## REPLY

Camden Council invests in a number of accessible, resident-facing business support activities across all of our neighbourhoods.

In January 2022 we launched the Future Camden Fund, a half a million-pound fund to help impactful start-up businesses and social enterprises in Camden. A primary objective of the fund is to support local entrepreneurs from under-represented backgrounds that are often locked out from other sources of finance. Grant recipients will receive a host of free business support to recipients including mentoring, learning courses and peer support to ensure the success of their venture. We are currently in the application stage, with first round announcements to be made in mid-March. Indications are that the diversity in leadership of businesses applying to the fund is very high:

- 74.8% of applicants identified as having leadership from Black, Asian and other ethnic communities, compared to 34% of Camden residents.
- 70.1% of applicants identified as female led, where women make up 49.6% of Camden residents.
- 24.5% of applicants identified as LGBTQ+ led, compared to 8.5% of the Camden population.

Working with the boroughs of Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets, Camden are part of the LIFT project (Leading Inclusive Futures through Technology). A 4-year, multi-million-pound investment in employability and enterprise training to increase participation of local residents in the high-growth knowledge economy – for Camden this is in the Knowledge Quarter area. Enterprise programmes are run in partnership with a OneTech, a business support organisation who specialise in empowering underrepresented people to claim their space in the tech start-up ecosystem. Over the

four years, the programme offers capacity to engage 1,650 Camden residents (age 18+) in opportunities ranging from work placements to enterprise incubators.

Our partnership with Rebel Business School provides free, two-week courses for residents interested in running their own business and started as an in-person course in Gospel Oak. During the pandemic it moved online, and we are doing further work to provide tailored workshops for underrepresented groups including female refugees and people with learning difficulties. So far, 265 residents have attended, almost 40% of whom were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. An estimated 89 businesses have started trading so far.

In 2020 the Inclusive Economy team worked with LABS, a co-working space provider, to offer small businesses led by Camden residents 6 months free co-working space membership in the Triangle building in Camden Market. Up to 10 businesses will be supported per year and eight have been taken up the offer so far. This offer provides an opportunity for further support for business start-ups coming out of our other programmes, such as the Rebel Business School and LIFT. One of the successful applicants stated *"I decided to set up a Race and Diversity Consultancy business after the eruption of Black Lives Matter protests. I felt I had to do something about it to educate our community. This business was my response, with my target audience being schools, pupils and parents. The opportunity to work in the LABS space and take advantage of everything that is being offered is huge for my business. I'm a starter business just starting out, finding my feet, with very little money. So, to be given the space and support to work in LABS will be very beneficial for my business"*.

We are also exploring how we can enable local institutions and organisations to support entrepreneurship in the borough. Recently this saw us work with the London School of Economics' Entrepreneurship Department (LSE Generate), within our pilot neighbourhood space in Kentish Town. They offered support to local groups and individuals, shared their extensive networks with us and offered their space for free for a number of events, which included hosting the Camden Black Workers Entrepreneurs Event.

Working with the Camden Markets team, Central Saint Martins and Our Little Markets, Camden is running a Market Enterprise Project in Gospel Oak. Helping residents to test their entrepreneurial spirit by providing stalls, stock and on-the-ground training to run their own market stall business. This work is tied into the wider regeneration programme in Gospel Oak and Queens Crescent.

Initiated through the planning system when they first moved to Camden, our partnership with Hult School of Business provides scholarship opportunities for Camden school leavers to access a world-class higher education in business studies. Hult offer's full tuition for a full time, undergraduate Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree and one fully funded Master of International Business degree for a Camden resident to carry out Postgraduate study with any undergraduate degree. Priority given to residents experiencing financial hardship. A 2020 scholarship recipient said *"Being the first*

*person in my family to attend and graduate university meant the world for my family. It gave them the peace of mind that their sacrifices and hard work had been able to help me get to where I wanted to be and that it had allowed me to become a proper role model to my younger brother.”*

## QUESTION 6

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, EQUALITIES AND COHESION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR RISHI MADLANI**

February saw LGBT+ History Month, what did Camden do to mark LGBT+ history month and how do we measure our progress on LGBT+ inclusion?

## REPLY

In Camden we welcome everyone, we challenge inequality and discrimination, and we are proud to be open and diverse. We're committed to being a truly inclusive organisation and we want to make sure that we are creating an inclusive environment where staff and residents feel valued, safe and respected. LGBT+ History Month is an opportunity to mark our progress towards LGBTQ+ inclusion and reaffirm our commitment.

This year in particular we are able to celebrate significant progress in our work through reaching number 47 in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. This puts us in the top 100 employers and the highest ranked Council, an achievement that we are very proud of. Details on that and other activity are set out below.

### Staff focused activity

- This LGBT+ History Month we are celebrating our **success in Stonewalls Workplace Equality Index (WEI)**, jumping 202 places – in just two years to be ranked 47<sup>th</sup> (from 249<sup>th</sup> two years ago) out of around 450 organisations. This makes Camden the highest ranked Council in the country in the Index. In so doing we have achieved the Stonewall 'Gold Award'.
- **Made our HR policies LGBTQ+ inclusive** – including enhancing our Family Support Leave policy to represent all types of families, and updated our Dignity at Work policy to be clear about what homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and harassment looks like.
- **Adding non-binary gender options to our HR system** - recognising that not everyone's gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth, and that this may not be recognised by formal documentation. We have also added the option for staff to tell us if they identify as trans.

- **Providing staff with the option to add gender pronouns to email signatures** – to help remove another barrier for our trans and non-binary communities, and to normalise the conversation around gender pronouns and prevent mis-gendering (which can be very upsetting for those concerned).
- **Continuing to share a diverse range of staff stories and celebrating important days for our LGBTQ+ communities** – including Pride month; Black Pride; Trans Pride; LGBT+ History Month; International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia; Bi Visibility Day and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- **Updated our commitment to trans equality statement** – to help ensure that our trans staff are provided with a positive and supportive working environment. The statement also includes guidance for managers and colleagues whose team member is transitioning and links to resources that trans staff may wish to access in order to receive further support.
- **Building our commitment to LGBTQ+ equality into our procurement processes** – to help us work with businesses whose values align with our own, and to use our position of power to positively influence. We are beginning to ask businesses to demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ+ equality before we procure them.
- **Developing a truly inclusive approach to recruitment** – we have reviewed where we advertise our jobs and have partnered with Stonewall and Proud employers.

**In addition to the Stonewall success and Gold Award Announcement during LGBTQ+ History month we have:**

- Celebrated LGBTQ+ History Month through our internal communications with all staff, including sharing a diverse range of staff stories and LGBTQ+ educational resources, to support all staff in being allies
- Hosted a staff lunchtime session with Dr. Michael Brady, National Advisor for LGBT Health, which covered LGBT health inequalities. This was very well attended with over 150 staff in attendance.
- Financially supported our LGBTQ+ Staff Network (Rainbow Camden) who paid 'Queers tours London' to develop and deliver a LGBTQ+ history walking tour of Camden. This was also very well attended and received positive feedback

How we measure our progress on LGBTQ+ inclusion for staff

- Stonewall Workplace Equality feedback - In March we will get detailed feedback on our submission, including our achievements and where we can do more. We will use this to inform the next stage of our work and actions.
- Externally and internally run staff surveys - As part of the Stonewall WEI employees take part in a Staff Feedback Questionnaire. In addition to this, we run a Diversity and Inclusion staff survey which allows us to see how staff experiences are changing over time. The next internal survey will be in May 2022.

- We have commissioned Stonewall to undertake in-depth interviews with LGBT+ staff to gain a better understanding of their experiences at Camden, and any barriers they may face
- Staff Data analysis – including pay gap data, the distribution of LGBT+ people across all levels of the hierarchy, and the results of our leavers surveys and exit interviews

### Resident focused activity

- We financially support Forum+, who organised a programme of activities and events for residents celebrating Camden & Islington LGBT+ History Month. This included online seminars, book groups, film clubs, poetry events, history talks and more. We publicised and shared information about this programme of events across all our channels.
- We flew the intersex inclusive progress flag over the Crowndale Centre for the whole month, to show a clear visual symbol that all LGBT+ people are welcome in Camden.
- We utilised our resident facing social media presence to celebrate the month, including promoting events and changing our Camden logo to the colours in the Intersex inclusive progress flag across all of our social media accounts.
- The UK's first LGBTQ+ history museum, the Queer Britain Museum, is going to open in Camden in Spring to celebrate LGBTQ+ communities around the world.
- We are doing a large programme of work to promote diversity in the public realm, which includes arts, culture, high streets and business, planning, street names, CIP, CIL, and more. Diversity in the public realm projects are wide-ranging and we are particularly focusing on empowering and celebrating individuals and communities from previously underrepresented groups (including LGBTQ+ people). Current and future projects include:
  - Supporting diverse businesses
  - Supporting diverse creative and voluntary organisations
  - Street and building names e.g. Maitland Park new builds
  - Camden People's Museum
  - Camden Alive
  - Commission of Public Art for Kilburn Town Centre
  - Parks for Health programme
  - Increasing diversity of events in our public spaces
  - Increasing diversity in CIL projects
  - Future High Streets and Spacehive funds
  - + many more
- We are doing ongoing work with Black Pride, including partnering on various events and talks.

### How we measure our progress on LGBTQ+ inclusion for residents and the community

- We plan to work with the LGBTQ+ community and in partnership with VCS organisations in Camden to listen and learn about what we can do better, to shape Camden's offer to the LGBTQ+ community and stakeholders.
- We have been working with UCL Public Policy on new ways of measuring inequalities in Camden and the impact of our equalities work, including on LGBTQ+ residents, and we have been exploring ways of taking a more intersectional approach to data collection and measuring the impact of our equalities work.
- We are embarking on a programme of resident and stakeholder engagement to shape our diversity in the public realm work.
- As part of this engagement we will be listening to community voices and learning what aspects of the work are going well and what we need to do better.

### **QUESTION 7**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR RISHI MADLANI**

At the last full Council, the Leader spoke about Camden's inaugural green municipal bond. Given the nature of the Climate emergency what more are we be doing to accelerate the pace of decarbonisation in our borough and in particular, around helping people to keep homes warm and mitigate the impact of rising energy prices?

### **REPLY**

Camden's Climate Action Plan commits the Council to do everything we can to help decarbonise the borough by 2030. The proposed Camden Climate Investment bond, to be launched as soon as practicable after Full Council on 7 March, will provide important investment towards decarbonising buildings on our estate, while also reducing carbon emissions from our vehicle fleet.

Camden's recently published first Annual review of its Climate Action Plan describes the Council's decarbonisation work, which includes a comprehensive energy efficiency retrofit programme for Council homes, which focuses on the poorest performing homes first and will help protect residents from rising energy prices. This programme has pilot projects underway, including several funded from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Mayor of London's Future Neighbourhood programme and an Energiesprong prototype being developed.

The Council is also decarbonising its non-housing estate. A new Government funded low carbon heating project is underway at Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre and further projects are planned at Talacre, Primrose Hill Primary School, Eleanor Palmer Primary School, Torriano Primary School and Acland Burghley School, subject to national Public

Sector Decarbonisation Fund approval. To date, carbon dioxide emissions across our estate have reduced by 61% since 2010.

For non-council homes in Camden, our Camden Climate Fund provides grants for residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and decarbonise heating systems. February also saw the launch of the latest phase of Solar Together, which provides low-cost solar panels to homes across Camden - 78 zero carbon installations have been installed so far. The Council is also working closely with London Councils on its Retrofit London Housing Action Plan which is developing solutions for all homes across the capital.

As our decarbonisation programme progresses, we continue to protect residents against rising fuel costs through our Affordable Warmth services. These services include our freephone Green Camden Helpline and the provision of free Well and Warm home energy advice visits. The Helpline has helped residents secure over £35,000 in energy bill savings this winter through the Warm Home Discount. The Council has also secured more than £1.8 million to fund energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation works to low-income households living in energy inefficient properties.

## **QUESTION 8**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR ABDUL QUADIR**

Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the number of former Right-to-Buy properties that have been brought back into public ownership under the Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme, along with a breakdown of these figures for each ward and how many families have been provided with homes under this initiative so far?

## **REPLY**

### **Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme**

Our original Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme (TAPP1) was approved by Cabinet in July 2019, to buy-back 59 homes that had previously been sold under the Right to Buy (RTB). Once bought back, the homes provide high quality temporary accommodation for homeless families in Camden.

This scheme provides better accommodation to homeless families and TAPP1 will save the Council more than £2 million over the life of the scheme, this through rent levels lower than those secured in the private rented sector. In addition, the programme is self-funded from the rental savings.

TAPP1 was completed on time and within its budget of around £28 million. We over-achieved on the number of homes secured for homeless families, as we were able to purchase 62 properties. This is made up of 14 one bed, 35 two bed, 11 three bed and 2 four bed properties.

Due to the success of TAPP1, Cabinet has approved a second programme, TAPP2, in July 2021 and by March 2023, the Council will have invested £35 million in purchasing another 80 homes. 6 properties (1 one bed and 5 two beds) have been purchased to date, with another 18 purchases (3 one bed and 15 two beds) undergoing the conveyancing process.

To summarise, we have bought 68 properties so far as shown in the table below, these are spread out across a number of wards. To date 47 families have moved in and 3 more are ready to let. The remaining properties are undergoing refurbishment works and will be let as soon as possible.

### **Purchases made so far through the TAPP programme by Ward**

<b>Purchases by Ward (as of 1 March 2022)</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	
Belsize	7
Camden Town with Primrose Hill	3
Cantelowes	5
Gospel Oak	8
Haverstock	5
Highgate	1
Kentish Town	7
Kilburn	11
Kings Cross	1
Regent's Park	7
St Pancras & Somers Town	6
Swiss Cottage	5
Barnet (On Camden-owned Westcroft estate)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>

The TAPP is part of a wider programme to increase the availability of good quality temporary accommodation for homeless families in Camden. The Council handed back the lease on Englands Lane Residence, a family hostel with very small studio rooms. All the families were rehoused, and we are replacing this huge hostel of 140 studios with a higher number of better quality, larger homes:

TAPP should net around 140 self-contained flats in total by March 2023. TAPP has created 23 higher standard studios at the Greenwood Annexe.



The conversions of the Council's two single persons hostels at Camden Road and Chester Road into family hostels will create 89 flats

By the end of the programme, we will have created around 250 units, achieving a net increase of 90 units since handing back the Englands Lane hostel.

## QUESTION 9

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES**

**BY: COUNCILLOR JULIAN FULBROOK**

Can the Cabinet Member give the latest figures for the number of people on the Council's housing waiting list, showing how many of them are currently in over-crowded accommodation and if he can show these figures on a ward-by-ward basis?

## REPLY

The total number of households on the Council's housing register is 6,674 (at 21 February 2022).

The following table shows on a ward-by-ward basis the number of households who have been given any of the three available points awards (50 or 100 or 250), under the terms of the Council's housing allocations scheme because overcrowding is their sole rehousing need or one of several rehousing needs they are experiencing. The higher the points the more severely overcrowded the household is:

Ward name	Households with OC points			Total
	50	100	250	
Belsize	56	45	14	115
Bloomsbury	47	38	9	94
Camden Town with Primrose Hill	92	96	18	206
Cantelowes	149	101	26	276
Fortune Green	75	57	13	145
Frognal and Fitzjohns	19	23	5	47
Gospel Oak	145	108	28	281
Hampstead Town	23	22	3	48
Haverstock	229	151	23	403
Highgate	68	74	12	154
Holborn and Covent Garden	174	141	25	340
Kentish Town	110	111	16	237
Kilburn	272	154	26	452

King's Cross	153	124	25	302
Regent's Park	200	179	23	402
St Pancras and Somers Town	341	229	34	604
Swiss Cottage	78	61	22	161
West Hampstead	102	83	17	202
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>1,797</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>4,469</b>

The table shows that 4,469 of the 6,674 households on our housing register, or 67% have overcrowding as their rehousing need, or as one of a range of rehousing needs.

## **QUESTION 10**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES**

**BY: COUNCILLOR SIAN BERRY**

Residents living across several Camden estates purchase their heat and hot water directly from the Council. With gas prices significantly rising, does the Council have a policy to protect Council tenants and leaseholders from this price increase, or should they expect to pay more? How and when will this be communicated to residents?

## **REPLY**

Camden buys energy through "LASER" which is a specialist energy procurement service to the public sector. LASER allows Camden to secure competitive prices by bulk purchasing energy in advance.

Through this approach, the Council has been able to shield those tenants connected to communal heating systems or the bulk gas network from price volatility, and the heating charges applied to tenants did not increase between 2014 and 2021.

The recent significant increases (at around 45%) in gas prices has meant however that the Council managed to cap increases tenants' heating charges to 15% for 2022/23, this decision was based on data provided by LASER on projected price increases. The Council also used its heating pool reserves to limit the increase applied.

With the events in Europe and volatility in the gas market worsening, it seems very unlikely that the Council will be able to rule out future price increases. We review our cost projections each October ahead of the rent setting process and share details through our reports to the District Management Committees.

Leaseholders in blocks connected to communal heating or the bulk gas network are also being kept up to date in newsletters which are sent out twice a year. The next newsletter will come out in March 2022 and will provide an update on energy pricing.

Leaseholders are charged the actual energy costs for the previous financial year and these are detailed in the service charge invoices that are issued each September.

As noted above, by purchasing gas in bulk from LASER the Council secures energy prices that are lower than those obtained on the open market. LASER usually secures prices at approximately 50% of retail rates and in 2021 it secured a price of 2p per kw/h compared to the average retail price of 3.7p per kw/h.

## **COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022**

### **RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION 1**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR SIAN BERRY**

What was the outcome from the consultation on the 50 per cent diesel surcharge for parking charges, and why the policy has not yet been introduced?

#### **REPLY**

A consultation seeking comments on this proposal was undertaken from 24 November 2020 to 18 December 2020. Forty-seven respondents stated that they supported the proposal and 75 stated that they objected or had concerns.

Currently the Council applies a diesel surcharge of 21.5% on resident permits, and 10.8% on business permits. However, the substance of the consulted-on proposal still forms a key part of our Transport Strategy and wider climate goals and we are reviewing how best to take this forward.

#### **QUESTION 2**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR GIO SPINELLA**

While 5% of electric vehicle charge points nationally are broken at any one time, it is much higher in Camden, with reports of dozens of charge points not working for several months at a time from Kentish Town to Frognal to South Hampstead. Given the several months of delay, what has Camden done to get faulty charge points back into use? If Camden does not already, will it urgently begin proactive monitoring and maintenance with the suppliers, and oblige suppliers to rapidly repair broken units?

#### **REPLY**

Camden has a network of over 300 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) across the borough and we are installing another 162 'fast' charge points by June 2022, with further charge points planned later in the year. A map of all operational charge points can be found at <https://www.zap-map.com/>

There are three main types of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in Camden: “slow” charging points (through lamp-columns), “fast” (mainly, Source London charge points) and “rapid”. Camden officers work closely with our EVCP supplier’s ensuring that maintenance and issue response times to ‘offline’ points are in accordance with the Service Level Agreements in place with the Council.

Earlier in the year, we found a problem with certain lamp columns and their charge points. At the end of January, for safety reasons, a number of charge points were removed from service while working with the supplier to fix and re-connect these points. We will continue to keep our residents and stakeholders updated while we work with the supplier to resolve the problem in order to restore Camden’s full EVCP network.

### **QUESTION 3**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR NANCY JIRIRA**

The subway under Finchley Road near to Finchley Road tube station has for a long time now been an uninviting, grim and even frightening way to cross the road, due to a combination of poor maintenance and cleaning, as well as unclear arrangements for rubbish collections for flats above shops in the immediate vicinity.

What plans does the Council have to work with TfL to clean up the subway and make it fit for use again, as a safe and pleasant way to cross one of the boroughs busiest roads?

### **REPLY**

The Finchley Road underpass is a Transport for London (TfL) structure, which is maintained and managed by TfL. Camden regularly supports the maintenance of this area through dumped waste removal and supporting any rough sleeping issues. TfL should inspect their public structures on a weekly basis to identify public safety related issues and fix any issues.

I have also personally pressed TfL to keep the underpass better maintained and on occasion in response to this they have undertaken works such as: graffiti removal, fly poster removal, and repairs to broken light panels.

Finchley Road receives 2 waste and recycling collections a day. Throughout the year all flats above shops receive information on how to present their waste for collection when they receive their supply of orange bags to present their waste in. The local Senior Area Monitoring Officers will continue to monitor the area and send letters to flats reminding them further of their collection arrangements, and liaise with the TfL Structures Team about their ongoing underpass inspection regime and maintenance works.

#### **QUESTION 4**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR PROMOTING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES**

**BY: COUNCILLOR RICHARD COTTON**

Swiss Cottage Library and Highgate Library, are magnificent Grade II listed buildings. But Camden's climate action plan recognises that buildings of this kind are not energy efficient. What is being done to reduce carbon emissions from Swiss Cottage Library and Highgate Library?

#### **REPLY**

The Council is committed to reducing the energy use and carbon footprint of our buildings. It is making a significant commitment to a decarbonisation programme for our buildings and Swiss Cottage Library and Highgate Library represent flagship projects in this endeavour. The Council has secured £1.4m from the national Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund towards a £2.9m investment in energy efficiency improvements at Swiss Cottage Library, which will reduce CO2 emissions and running costs at this Grade II listed building. The project will also help to demonstrate how energy and heritage conservation can work hand in hand.

The energy efficiency work involves insulating the roof, upgrading the single glazed aluminium frame windows, upgrading existing mechanical ventilation and replacing lighting across the building. We will also be replacing the existing gas boilers with air source heat pumps which will be connected to the solar photovoltaic array which was installed in 2019. The solar array currently meets approximately 8% of the library's power demands. This work is already well underway with completion due by mid-July.

Highgate Library is also being surveyed with a view to improving the building's energy efficiency. The works are likely to include a new roof and improved insulation across the building and the replacement of the existing boilers with a low carbon air source heat pump. Consideration will also be given to a new solar photovoltaic array in conjunction with replacement LED lighting to help meet residual energy demands after the energy efficiency improvements. The survey work is due to be completed over the summer and the final scope of work will inform a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and a decision on the extent of capital funding required.

#### **QUESTION 5**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR LARRAINE REVAH**

Many residents have called for changes in the parking permit system. Could we have an outline of the recent updates in the new parking permit system and how it has been adapted and improved in response to resident feedback so that people can now book a visitor permit?

## **REPLY**

The Council began developing its own in-house managed parking permit system in October 2021 in phases, when the previous system's supplier advised that the system would no longer be supported from 2022.

We were committed to building the system around user need, using feedback and evidence from usage statistics to develop the approach. We also held workshops with residents and businesses at each stage of the development.

This indicated that some of the functionality in the previous system was not a priority for most users and therefore the new solution went live with the core essential functionality.

Officers were then able to focus on ensuring the feedback we had from users about what was most important to them was at the heart of the development of the next phase. Since the latest phase went live, we have launched further functionality including:

- The ability to book visitor parking sessions in advance (as well at the time of arrival);
- Increased speed and stability of the system;
- Improved language and text;
- Made the stages of the application clearer and easier to navigate; and
- Resolved migration issues with a small number of accounts.

The Council is currently working on functionality to allow residents to store frequently used vehicles in their account, so the details do not need to be re-entered each time. This is due to go-live in May.

The new permit system has been designed with adaptability in mind, so it can be tweaked and improved over time to meet evolving customer needs as well as legislative change.

## **QUESTION 6**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR SHIVA TIWARI**

Transport for London recently ran a consultation on the future of step-free access travel on the Tube, which they said would help "shape step-free access priorities and

improvements on the London Underground network in the years ahead." Local residents have long pressed for the introduction of step free access from West Hampstead Underground station, which is much needed for residents and visitors with more limited mobility. Did Camden Council formally respond to this consultation, and what points did it make if so?

## **REPLY**

Access to all transport infrastructure and services in Camden is vital to helping as many people as possible travel freely and safely around the borough.

We responded to Transport for London's (TfL) consultation on priorities for step-free access (SFA) on London's Underground, doing so in consultation with West Hampstead Amenity and Transport (WHAT). We made the following important points:

- West Hampstead Underground is Camden's priority for this funding. Camden submitted a previous bid in 2016. Initial feasibility commenced on the scheme, and we want to ensure this stays on TfL's programme.
- Our other priority is Kentish Town Underground, partly due to its proximity to the Centre for Independent Living.
- Ensuring that everyone can access the transport network underpins Camden's commitment to reducing inequality and improving the health and well-being of its population.
- Planned large developments in both locations (Murphy's Yard and the O2 centre) will be car free and significantly increase demand for (step-free) public transport. They should help secure funding contributions for step free access.
- We also asked that upgrades to Holborn and Camden Town are brought back onto the TfL Business Plan and investment programme.

We have also submitted a bid to the Department for Transport's Access for All programme for step-free access upgrades at Kentish Town (Thameslink) and Finchley Road & Frognal (Overground) stations. Underground stations were not available to be bid for as part of this fund.

## **QUESTION 7**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BEST START IN LIFE**

**BY: COUNCILLOR MARCUS BOYLAND**

Given the news that GovernorHub (the online resource for school governors in England and Wales: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-60912316>) has followed in Camden's



footsteps and looked at the lack of diversity among our school governors, could the cabinet member update the Council on the action plan put in place to address the issue in the borough's schools?

## **REPLY**

Camden Council together with Camden Learning has been working for over a year on promoting and improving diversity on Camden's governing bodies.

The Diversity Working Group, a group of officers, Camden governors and Camden Learning staff, have produced an action plan to deliver this. They have drawn on the recommendations made in the report. Events to launch the report are planned.

Key activities on the plan are:

- The creation of a new portal hosted by Camden Learning to encourage a wider range of applicants to positions.
- Ongoing promotion of the role to underrepresented groups, through roadshow events, themed video and a poster and local press campaign.
- Training events and materials designed to support the recruitment and retention of diverse governing bodies.
- Ongoing work to refine and improve the data held on the make-up of Camden's governing bodies.
- Working towards each governing body having its own action plan to achieve the 2030 ambitions for representative leadership within the borough.
- Camden Learning will also conduct a yearly survey looking at the diversity and representativeness of governing bodies.

## **QUESTION 8**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

**BY: COUNCILLOR RICHARD OLSZEWSKI**

Can the Cabinet Member raise with Network Rail, the deep anger and concern felt by residents on Westbere Road about the company's recent ecological vandalism on the railway embankment between Mill Lane and Minster Road which has seen the total removal of the trees and vegetation, loss of privacy and exposure to railway noise? And can he press Network Rail to work with residents and local councillors on how this ecological destruction can be mitigated?

## **REPLY**

I will certainly raise this on behalf of local residents and ward councillors. At a time of ecological breakdown, even urban areas such as Camden have a crucial role to play in

preserving and enhancing biodiversity in the borough. Our new [Biodiversity Strategy](#) has at its heart the goal to build out 'corridors' of green space along which wildlife can move easily, making for 'bigger, better and more joined up' space. The contribution that Network Rail land can make to this is huge and I will be urging them to look at this in both this local and national context.

## **QUESTION 9**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR SAMATA KHATOON**

Can the Cabinet member give details of how Camden will support residents struggling to make ends meet through a) its own energy rebate scheme and b) through the £2million cost of living fund announced in his budget at full council on 7 March?

## **REPLY**

Camden recognises the ways in which the current cost of living crisis will impact on many households in Camden this year. Whilst everyone is affected by the increased energy costs, the impact will be felt most by those already on a low income.

The Council has now published how it will implement the Government's Council Tax energy rebate scheme and the discretionary scheme that sits alongside it. This is money that does not need to be repaid and is separate to the £200 off energy bills to come later in the year.

Residents responsible for Council Tax and living in a Band A-D property will receive the £150 through a variety of ways:

- If they pay Council Tax by Direct Debit, they will receive a payment automatically by mid-April – or by early May if they recently set up the Direct Debit and the first instalment is after 2 April.
- If they do not pay by Direct Debit and receive Council Tax Support, they will receive a letter with a code to get the money from the Post Office in mid-April.
- If they do not pay by Direct Debit or receive Council Tax Support, they will receive a letter inviting them to make a claim from mid-April.

Residents who are not eligible for this payment but still responsible for energy costs may still be able to get a one-off discretionary payment from the Council.

The Council's discretionary scheme means that if residents live in council tax bands E to H and receive Council Tax Support they will receive a £150 payment into their bank account automatically if they pay by Direct Debit, otherwise they will receive a letter with a code to get the money from the Post Office in mid-April.

Residents may also be eligible for a discretionary payment and can apply from mid-April if:

- They are living in any banded property and experiencing severe financial hardship
- They live in a house in multiple occupation (HMO) and are responsible for their own energy costs
- They receive a property valuation appeal or decision that predates 3 February but was received after 2 April that means they would have been eligible for the core A-D scheme.

For residents that need to make an application, more information and link to claim online will be published on [camden.gov.uk/energyrebate](https://camden.gov.uk/energyrebate). This will be the quickest way of making an application and providing the necessary evidence. There will be an assisted route for those unable to go online.

For full eligibility criteria and more information, visit [camden.gov.uk/energyrebate](https://camden.gov.uk/energyrebate)

In addition to the energy rebate scheme, the Council has also agreed a £2m cost of living fund for residents facing hardship this year. This will boost the Council's existing local welfare assistance scheme and support residents facing hardship and needing help with food, energy or other essential household costs/debts. It will be delivered in partnership with our partners in the voluntary and community sector, schools and other organisations to ensure the Council reaches those that would otherwise not apply. It will be a flexible scheme providing emergency money to residents in hardship across all housing tenures including those in work and with no recourse to public funds. Payments will be linked to accessing wider support and advice through the Camden Advice network and other partners, including food organisations and co-operatives and employment jobs hubs to support residents to increase their financial resilience.

Lastly, the Government has just announced further funding for the Household Support Fund. This fund needs to be spent by the end of September with at least one third going to families with children and at least one third going to pensioner households. The Council will be developing its scheme over the coming weeks with the details expected to be available by the end of April.

## **QUESTION 10**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR JENNY MULHOLLAND**

Can the Cabinet member give an update on the progress made so far on the Camden Climate Investment fund?

## REPLY

The Camden Climate Investment (CCI) was launched on 8 March. It forms part of the Council's response to the climate emergency, testing new approaches and broadening our access to new funding sources. In addition, through the fundraising programme, it will provide an opportunity for residents to engage and participate in supporting the Council to achieve the renewal mission of sustainable neighbourhoods in the borough and the Council's vision of a net-zero carbon Camden by 2030, as well as offering a competitive and secure investment opportunity.

Camden Climate Investment will provide funding for a series of important projects to increase the scale of work across the borough to encourage lower carbon emissions, including:

- installation of 80 new Electric Vehicle Charging Points,
- additional Healthy School Streets to help improve air quality,
- additional solar panels on council homes,
- low emission vehicles in the Council's own transport fleet.

The target was to raise £1m within a three-month period, from 8 March to 8 June. I was among the first 200 investors and I am pleased to say that, as at 4 April, we have made significant progress, raising £254,364 (25% of target) from 259 investors at an average investment of £982.

Progress on this fundraising campaign is updated on a daily basis and can be found here (hosted by our investment advisors, Abundance Investment Limited): [Camden Climate Investment 2027 - Invest now - Abundance \(abundanceinvestment.com\)](https://abundanceinvestment.com/camden-climate-investment-2027). At present, progress on this fundraising initiative is encouraging and broadly meets our expectation at this point in the process. The trend for this kind of investment, based on the experience of other councils who have launched their own investments, is that progress tends to speed up towards the end of the fundraising period, usually as a result of a communications push from Abundance Investment and the participating councils.

Camden has put together a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that the fundraising target is met within the timeframe. This will include communications with a range of stakeholder organisations across the borough to seek their support for this fundraising activity. It should be noted that the Council will not engage in communications activity during the pre-election purdah period. Following this period, the Council will help to promote Camden Climate Investment in advance of the fundraising deadline of the 8 June.

**ENDS**