

## **COUNCIL – 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **BUSINESS FROM THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023**

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

This report relates to the unconsidered motions and the responses to written Council questions from the Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

#### **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 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023, there were 3 motions that were not considered due to lack of time. 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 meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 are attached as Appendix B.

#### **4. Recommendation**

That the report be noted.

## **COUNCIL 26<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

### **UNCONSIDERED MOTIONS**

### **Appendix A**

#### **1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Gio Spinella and which was seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkinson**

This Council believes that local council and mayoral decisions about transport and travel have a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods;

This Council believes that bodies must consult local residents and businesses fully and conscientiously, to empower them to stop decisions that will adversely affect them;

This Council believes that different parts of Camden and London have different needs, and require different solutions to solve different problems;

This Council recalls previous decisions regarding CS11 and the Haverstock Hill cycle lanes: decisions of the Mayor and this council which were unlawful due to a failure to consult and to consider material considerations;

This Council notes the legal challenge to the Mayor of London's expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) scheme from five councils, who have challenged the lawfulness of the decision on similar grounds to CS11 and Haverstock Hill;

This Council notes the strong opposition to ULEZ expansion in the areas to which it is being applied;

This Council therefore supports the five councils' challenge to ULEZ expansion.

### **RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN**

#### **Camden's consultation approach**

Camden's approach to consulting on transport and Healthy Streets schemes is set out in a report approved by Cabinet in November 2021, which includes how we have responded to changing government statutory guidance from the Department for Transport.

We undertake proportionate consultation depending on the size of our schemes – from highly localised consultations on small interventions through to detailed pre-consultation engagement, consultation and further feedback for major schemes such as area-wide traffic reduction, public realm and cycle corridor measures. We have also committed to expanding the reach and diversity of voices we hear from across our communities in our consultations, and have recently engaged consultants to help us understand where and

how we can improve in this regard. Recommendations from that work will be introduced in the autumn of this year.

### **Impact of air pollution on health**

Road transport is a major source of air pollution, which is regarded as the largest environmental risk for health and which affects everyone at every stage of life.

Vehicles contribute 31% of NO<sub>x</sub>, 20% of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and 19% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Camden (43%, 31% and 27% across the whole of the GLA area). Exposure to air pollution causes up to 4,100 premature deaths each year in London, and as many as 36,000 throughout the UK, as well as many incidences of asthma and other respiratory, cardiovascular and other health conditions.

As a result, air pollution is believed to cost the health and social care system at least £200m annually (although some estimates are much higher) whilst also damaging the economy through reduced worker productivity and absenteeism.

Air pollution is particularly damaging for children, older people, and people with existing health conditions. Poor air quality contributes to health inequalities because lower-income households and minority ethnic communities are typically exposed to higher levels of air pollution and experience higher prevalence of health conditions associated with air pollution exposure.

The highest number of deaths in London attributed to air pollution occurs in outer London, due to the higher proportion of older people. In outer London, road transport is responsible for 44% of NO<sub>x</sub> and 33% of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, so vehicle emissions represent a larger health burden.

### **Impact of ULEZ on air pollution**

GLA / TfL air quality analysis finds that the expansion of the ULEZ to the North Circular and South Circular led to a 21% reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations compared to the counterfactual scenario, while NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are modelled as being 46% lower in the Central London ULEZ area than would have occurred without the introduction of the scheme. This is due to an accelerated shift towards more modern vehicles with lower exhaust emissions.

Camden NO<sub>2</sub> air quality monitoring data shows that 100% of monitoring locations installed before (or during) 2019 measured a reduction in air pollution from 2019 to 2022. The data indicate that the launch of the Central London ULEZ in April 2019 and the subsequent expansion to encompass the whole of Camden in October 2021 helped to accelerate the reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> air pollution.

**2. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Awale Olad and which was seconded by Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali**

This Council notes:

- The damning findings of the March 2023 Casey Review, which showed a persistent and endemic culture of racism, misogyny, homophobia and violence against women within London's Metropolitan Police force.
- That whilst the Casey Review was shocking, it will not be surprising to many in our communities who have been failed by the Metropolitan Police. Rather, the report further exposed an institution that has been known for systemic failures since before the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993.
- The persistent failure of leadership at all levels of the Metropolitan Police to act decisively and remove dangerous officers from their posts, despite multiple reports showing their propensity for serious harm prior to the violence and destruction they subsequently caused to dozens of lives.
- That the murder of Sarah Everard by Wayne Couzens, the dehumanising treatment of Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, the Stephen Port murders, and the 48 rape offenses committed by David Carrick might have been prevented if swift and effective action had been taken at the time.

This Council further notes:

- Camden Council's efforts to address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through the establishment of a new VAWG board, a series of public awareness campaigns demonstrating solidarity against VAWG, and an improved joint-up strategy across the Council to address VAWG.
- Camden Council's work to address systemic racial injustice through our Building Equal Foundations work including training for staff in anti-racist practice, and work with schools and other partner institutions to diversify leadership in our borough as part of our equalities mission.
- The Council's investment in approaches to address perpetrators, provide trauma informed support to victims of crime and investment in early intervention and prevention of community violence and harm - local government across London has approaches and best practice that is of value to the Metropolitan Police in its transformation.
- The introduction of a new LGBT+ Community Liaison Officer (CLO) for Camden and Islington to improve relationships and trust between the LGBTQ+ Community and the Police.
- Whilst it recognises the good work done by many local police officers, including our own here in Camden, it is clear that there is significant work still to be done to change a culture that has enabled these horrifying injustices to take place.

- As highlighted by Baroness Casey, it is not enough for the Metropolitan Police to “reflect” on what needs to change, but that it needs a complete overhaul in order to take firm and decisive action against racism, misogyny and homophobia.
- The work of the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board, which has highlighted the reluctance of the Metropolitan Police so far to make any significant change.

This Council resolves:

- That the Metropolitan Police should make concrete efforts to rebuild the trust lost by adopting and implementing all of the 16 recommendations of the Casey Review. This includes:
  - Adopting a new, independent, multidisciplinary team of police officers and staff who will reform how the Metropolitan Police deals with misconduct cases, with a particular focus on how it handles sexual misconduct, domestic abuse and discrimination.
  - Overhauling the recruitment and vetting system to ensure that new recruits are not drawn to the job for the wrong reasons; and revoking special qualifications where officers’ standards fall short of public expectations.
  - Providing the Police Commissioner new powers that ensure that they can take strong and decisive action when the sanctions and consequences for misconduct are inadequate.
  - A dedicated Women’s Protection Service which specialist units who focus on rape and serious and sexual offences and the creation of a children's strategy to focus resources on safeguarding and child protection.
- To build an improved borough-based approach that will rebuild trust in policing across communities by investing in frontline policing - including safer communities and public protection - and ensuring victims of crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assault have appropriate, compassionate, and effective support and resources.
- That the Metropolitan Police commit to an overhaul of stop and search powers and accountability for the use of force in our communities.
- That the Metropolitan Police work closely with London local government as part of boosting local accountability and scrutiny of police powers, including working closely with those communities most impacted by police activity and communities and individuals subject to the disproportionality highlighted in the Casey report.

## **RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES**

The Council Leadership accepts and fully endorses this extremely important motion, which reflects the level of concern held amongst citizens and communities across Camden.

The Policing by consent model demands an open and transparent approach which reflects the importance of the Metropolitan Police Service's ability to engage with local communities in order to build levels of public trust and confidence.

We recognise the vital importance of the work delivered by the Metropolitan Police in ensuring that those who live, work, study and visit Camden feel safe and secure. However, it remains abundantly clear that the failings and cultural issues outlined within the Casey Review require a radical approach towards systemic organisational change across the Metropolitan Police Service.

It is imperative that the Casey Review serves as a watershed moment in the history of the Metropolitan Police Service. Communities have been raising concerns for many years, we've seen a number commissioned reviews, initiatives and action plans over the years, none of which have addressed the systemic and cultural issues that remain prevalent within the Metropolitan Police service today.

I know that all Members will be acutely aware of the significant challenge that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley now faces in establishing and fully embedding a new set of organisational values. It is vital that he provides the strong leadership required to oversee the response to the broad ranging findings and recommendations outlined within the Casey Review.

The change process must be open, transparent and community led, the process must in my view also focus on the views and concerns of communities which have for so long felt marginalised by the Metropolitan Police.

As Baroness Casey states, "this is a Police Force that needs not just a series of changes that have been called for numerous times in the past, or even a set of reforms to meet its responsibilities to Londoners, but a complete overhaul to restore trust and confidence and earn back consent from women, black communities, and the rest of Londoners".

I understand Sir Mark Rowley's intention to highlight the importance of recognising the positive work delivered by Metropolitan Police Officers. However, I remain concerned that the inability to publicly acknowledge the Casey Review's findings with regard to the institutional nature of the challenges may well have had a further adverse impact on levels of public confidence.

It is imperative that the Metropolitan Police Service takes on board all of the findings within the Casey Review and takes urgent action to drive widespread and sustained cultural and organisational change.

The Council supports Baroness Casey's extremely important view that a piecemeal approach to these issues is unlikely to work. Radical and wholesale reform of the service needs to be at the heart of the 'New Met for London' strategy.

The policing by consent model is built on the premise of transparency, integrity and accountability of police officers when exercising their powers. The concept of policing by consent refers to the power of the police coming from the common consent of the public, as opposed to the power of the state.

The Casey Review and the development of the 'New Met for London' strategy provides an extremely important opportunity for the Police service to demonstrate a commitment towards re-engaging and connecting with our communities across Camden.

Camden Council will continue to engage with the Borough Commander Chief Supt Andy Carter in order to re-emphasize the need for the Metropolitan Police Service to develop a community led approach which fully recognises the vital importance of the citizen voice in shaping and informing the future delivery of policing in Camden and across London as a whole.

**3. 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:

- (i) that since 2002, people seeking asylum have only been able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List;
- (ii) that people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.39 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation;
- (iii) the potential foregone economic gain of millions of pounds to the UK via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation and subsistence support.

This Council believes that:

- (i) people seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families;
- (ii) restrictions on the right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills for the economy;
- (ii) allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for the local and national economy.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (i) join the Lift the Ban Coalition, which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim; and
- (ii) call on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission.

## **RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Camden has a proud history of welcoming refugee communities into the borough and supporting displaced people as they seek to settle, flourish and contribute as citizens and community members. Over the last 30 years and beyond Camden has welcomed refugee communities into the borough– whether they have chosen to settle here permanently or chosen to spend time here on their way to finding a longer-term home. As refugee and displaced people settle here, they become part of the Camden story, adding to the vibrancy and strength of Camden’s communities.

There are currently 444 asylum seekers living in 4 contingency hotels in the borough. Individuals are placed in hotels by the Home Office with basic levels of support provided by Clear Springs LTD, the commissioned provider. Camden has a strong and resilient set of services to support refugees arriving in the borough. We have deployed these services at short notice to support unfunded wrap around initiatives. We work closely with community and national partners through our Afghan coalition, including the Government, to support refugees with immediate needs but also to help them develop the skills and networks needed to thrive in the long-term. This also includes working with partners in the NHS and the voluntary sector to support their delivery to improve outcomes.

The Council recognises the trauma and hardships being experienced by asylum seekers placed in interim accommodation, while they wait for a decision on their claim for asylum in the UK. For this reason, the Council delivers a multi-agency support offer for asylum seekers, with an emphasis on safeguarding the most vulnerable families and referring them into specialist support options. This effort is being led by our Council based social services, working with our VCS Partners. In addition, asylum seekers are referred to charities which offer places of sanctuary across our communities, providing food and clothing, and support for their mental well-being. There is a full programme of activities including ESOL classes, social, sports and community activities.

Camden is committed in ensuring that refugee and asylum seekers do not spend longer in short stay hotels in Camden than they need to, while pushing the Home Office to ensure they are safe and able to make informed choices about their future. Providing all those seeking asylum with the right to work is a Council lobbying position and pushing for this is part of our borough of sanctuary action plan. The Council is fully committed to improving the outcomes and well-being of this community in our borough and as Leader I have raised our wider concerns, including the need for asylum seekers to be given the right to work, with Government Ministers directly.



The Council is committed to actively supporting the Lift the Ban coalition, adding our voice to these efforts to help vulnerable asylum seekers to improve their lives and provide for their future needs and to ensure that the use of contingency hotels in Camden and London are resourced sufficiently, are time limited and operate to the parameters published by the Home Office, including the need for greater collaboration with Local Authorities.

I therefore welcome the support provided by the motion to the Council's position and lobbying work, raised by Councillor Tom Simon and seconded by Councillor Nancy Jirira, on the 17th of July 2023.

**ENDS**

## **APPENDIX B**

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

#### **QUESTION 1**

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

**BY: COUNCILLOR EDDIE HANSON**

Unfortunately, there have been 3 stabbings recently in my ward of Kilburn. Can the Cabinet Member outline what reassurances she can give our community following the recent stabbings on Kilburn High Road? And, despite cuts to local government funding from national government, what resources can be directed towards my ward to combat crime locally and reassure our residents?

#### **REPLY**

Knife Crime with Injury offences in Camden have seen a 12.6% reduction in the last year, which compares favourably to a 4.9% increase across London. Despite this, we recognise recent offences in Kilburn would cause significant alarm to the community.

The Council's Community Safety service are working closely with colleagues in Neighbourhood Policing to deliver joint patrols in the area and provide a visible reassurance to the community and prevent further violence from occurring. Where these offences involve young people the Council's Community Safety, Integrated Youth Support and Child Safeguarding services work with the police gangs team to support vulnerable young people and tackle serious violence offences. As Kilburn sits on the border the Council's Community Safety service also share's information as well as work closely with colleagues in Brent Council and the North West Borough Command Unit for policing that covers Brent, to identify known offenders and hotspot locations.

#### **QUESTION 2**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**BY: COUNCILLOR JUDY DIXEY**

The Council has just arranged a successful series of visual impairment awareness sessions.

What provision is now being made to build on that for awareness training in other disabilities, both physical and non-physical; such as hearing loss, mobility, dementia,

learning difficulties, autism, to ensure that Council staff and members know how best to meet related issues with confidence, understanding and appropriate sensitivity?

## REPLY

We have been running our Disability Inclusion Learning Offer for managers and HR staff since October 2022, with the intention of giving managers the specific knowledge required to support disabled staff and ensure that there is a consistent understanding and level of knowledge across the organisation. It is also important that our HR colleagues have this knowledge and expertise to advise managers and staff around disability.

We work with [Inclusion London](#) who have a lot of experience delivering similar offers to other public sector organisations and are London's only pan-disability organisation that is led by Deaf and Disabled people to deliver the training.

Based on the successful model of our Anti-Racism Learning Offer, the Disability Learning Offer consists of two sessions: an education session, followed up by a reflection session.

The Education session content includes:

- Understanding what it means to be disabled, including visible and non-visible disabilities.
- The social model of disability.
- Legal and ethical context, including understanding rights and privileges under the Equality Act 2010.
- How to effectively identify, reduce and remove barriers, and increase access and inclusion.
- Camden specific knowledge including: our reasonable adjustment process, our Wellbeing Passport, Camden's Disability Charter and utilising Occupational Health.
- Support with common issues – including guidance on appropriate language.

Reflection sessions provide attendees with an opportunity to reflect on the content of the Education Session, how the information impacts on their role and will support them to think about what practical actions they can take to positively support Disabled staff in the workplace.

We have targeted this training at HR and Managers as a primary audience because:

1. Our disabled staff have told us [through in-depth interviews](#) and through our [Pulse Surveys](#) that the biggest influence on them being able to bring their best selves to work is the support and understanding they received from Managers and HR.
2. This allows us to tailor the content of the sessions to ensure that practical actions are taken by those who attend to positively support Disabled staff in the workplace, thereby creating lasting change for disabled staff. The content of the sessions would not be relevant to all staff.

Alongside this offer we continue to do lots of other work to ensure all staff are educated around disability and challenge stigma, including awareness raising during Disability History Month and Neurodiversity Awareness Week.

### **Other learning around Disability**

- We regularly run [Wellbeing Passport sessions](#) where we present Camden's Wellbeing passport. It is a tool, enabling our disabled staff and our staff with caring responsibilities to make their line manager aware of anything that is going on in their lives that they might require specific adjustments for. It reduces the need for conversations to be repeated and arrangements to be re-arranged if the individual changes role or gets a new line manager. It supports the employee balance the needs of the service and helps them to thrive at work.
- We have a range of [Neurodiversity Learning resources](#) which include education and awareness raising trainings around Neurodiversity in the workplace, as well as support for Neurodiverse staff and their managers in having open conversations about workplace adjustments, removing or minimising any disadvantages to them. Our resources provide examples of common adjustments, tips for working with Neurodiverse people and guidance on how to run engaging and accessible virtual sessions. There are also opportunities for staff to meet, support each other and share common experiences and tips on coping strategies via regular Neurodiverse meet-ups sessions or through the [Neurodiverse yammer group](#).
- Camden has a staff [Camden Disability Network](#). This is a place for disabled staff and their allies to share experiences, support each other, and help shape work around disability inclusion in the wider organisation. They have created our [Disability Charter](#), which sets out commitments and actions to protect our disabled staff, create a more inclusive work environment and provide disabled people with the same opportunities as our non-disabled staff.
- We also have a [Camden Carers Staff Network](#) who support staff who are carers outside of work. At Camden, we recognise that many members of staff work hard to care for Disabled loved ones, and many of our carers are themselves Disabled staff members. The Camden Carers Network therefore offers a supportive and confidential space for carers to ask questions, share experiences, run wellbeing sessions and find resources to balance their work and their caring role.

### **QUESTION 3**

**TO THE: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**BY: COUNCILLOR STEPHEN STARK**

In light of the changes in engagement between the Council and residents since the pandemic, can the Council provide figures on how many in-person meetings have taken place between officers and residents since the pandemic compared to before, and how those averages compare? Does the Council also take note of how many meetings have been moved to online calls over requests from residents that they be held in person? And many contact points and services which were provided in person before the pandemic have now been moved to online only?

### **REPLY**

Camden Council is committed to ensuring that residents, businesses, and partners can get the right information and the right support from our services at the right time. We know from our wide ranging 'We Make Camden' community engagement and other engagement that Camden citizens want their needs to be heard, acknowledged, and answered and we are responding by working hard to ensure that residents can approach the Council face-to-face, on the phone and online, depending on their preferences and the service they require. Given the diversity of services and contact across the Council, the Council does not keep statistics on individual contacts as in-person or on the phone or by email.

Camden is committed to coming together with residents and partners in new and inspiring ways so that we can tackle some of the most pressing issues facing the borough. When Covid lockdowns happened we were forced to move our engagement and participation opportunities online. However, since lockdowns have ended we have resumed face to face participation with renewed enthusiasm. A few examples of some of the face to face participation opportunities that have happened over the last year include:

- Our Evening and Night time Economy Citizens Assembly which brought together a diverse group of Camden residents, businesses and workers to discuss ways to improve the borough at night. Participants worked together over three Saturdays to develop a set of recommendations which, alongside the results of an online survey, will go towards shaping Camden's new evening and night-time strategy. Residents have also gathered in person over multiple weekends to develop Camden's data charter and to develop our citizen led borough wide wellbeing framework 'Good Life Camden'.
- Launching 'One Kilburn' last year – Camden was one of two areas in London that successfully secured funding and support from Power to Change and the Greater London Authority to test new ways of getting local people involved in shaping and improving their town centre. Since One Kilburn launched local

people are shaping local projects and participating in walkabouts across Kilburn to network and share knowledge, ideas and reflections on where the partnership could go and what its priorities should be.

- The Camden Community Champions project, which supports residents to volunteer in their local community to improve health and wellbeing. The Regents Park project now has over 80 community champions who run a range of face-to-face activities on their housing estate, including a weekly community kitchen, which gives residents the chance to cook and eat together, sharing stories and making new friends.

Contact Camden is the largest front door into council services, with over eighty staff being responsible for handling almost 1 million contacts in 2022. Since the pandemic we have seen an increase in complexity of need from citizens, leading to longer call times which our staff have responded to by finding new ways of working including a wider knowledge of services. Demand for face-to-face services remains low in Contact Camden in comparison to pre-pandemic levels, with the team's time repurposed to manage an increasing demand via telephone. The team is currently working with officers from libraries and facilities to look at how the public area at 5 Pancras Square can be reconfigured to provide a more useful space for its users.

The Council is continuing to invest in capacity for contact – by increasing our capacity in telephony for Contact Camden, improving our website and by investing in our spaces for resident engagement, like the Camden Town Hall where the Council holds its formal decision-making meetings as well as Scrutiny. As soon as the temporary regulations permitting fully remote meetings expired in May 2022, all meetings which the Council is legally required to hold in person have reverted back to in person meetings. At in-person meetings committee members and most officers attend in person. Others, such as deputies and members of the public, now have the choice to attend in person or remotely, allowing much greater flexibility than pre-Covid and opening meetings up to those who might not be able to attend in person.

The Council has continued to prioritise face-to-face contact particularly where this is important for safety. During the pandemic, child protection visits continued in person and the Council visited families at home to have “eyes on” children where there were concerns about safety. Since the government lifted lock-down restrictions, social workers are continuing to conduct visits in family homes. In-person meetings are also offered for all significant engagements. Hybrid and remote meetings enable wider groups to come together and prove useful to delivering services – such as holding a hybrid meeting with families in which social care staff are in the room and other professionals joining remotely.

Camden is undertaking research and engagement work to understand citizens' experience navigating the entry points to the council and finding the services they need. We want to ensure we provide the right range of channels for accessing council information or support, that these channels meet the needs of our citizens and the tasks they are trying to do. We recognise that for most transactional issues, an excellent

online journey is the preferred solution for many citizens but even those who are 'digitally able' may still want to talk to a person about some issues. The outcome of the research will guide how the Council will structure its channels going forward and include a priority list of next steps.

We will continue to invest in contact services through a range of mediums to ensure that residents can easily and effectively access support from the Council as and when they need it.

#### **QUESTION 4**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING**

**BY: COUNCILLOR LLOYD HATTON**

Can the Cabinet Member outline what impact the refurbishment of the Town Hall will have on its future running costs and carbon emissions?

#### **REPLY**

We estimate the running cost to the Council to be reduced by approximately £1.4m per annum by 2025/26. This is a result of a combination of a more efficient building with lower repair, maintenance and utility costs and the better design and use of space to allow the leasing of parts of the building, with the tenant picking up the running costs for those parts of the Town Hall.

The savings of £1.4m are part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to allow the Council to produce a balanced budget.

The £1.4m savings do not include the lease payments from the renting of parts of the Town Hall or the income from services which have increased due to improved facilities. The lease income will be used to finance the borrowing incurred to fund the refurbishment of the Town Hall, meaning there is no need for the council tax-payer to foot the bill.

In terms of sustainability, the refurbished Town Hall has been rated as BREEAM excellent, which is a great achievement for a Grade II listed building making it as sustainable as many new buildings.

It now uses Air Source Heat Pumps for all heating and cooling instead of gas. This, along with a more efficient electrical installation has reduced Carbon emissions from 570 to 235 tons per year, a reduction of 59%.

More detailed work is being undertaken to confirm all running costs, agree service costs with proposed tenants, and to confirm actual energy use and maintenance for a full year.

## **QUESTION 5**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING**

**BY: COUNCILLOR IZZY LENGA**

Can the Cabinet Member outline how much provision for inflation had to be made in Camden Council's budget for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23 and what extra funding was made available by national government to help Camden Council cope with the spike in inflation?

## **REPLY**

The Council provided £21.2m for inflation in its General Fund budget for 2023/24. This included a provision for the 2023/24 pay award, which is subject to ongoing discussions and a contingency to meet expected increases in energy costs.

This is a significant increase on the level of inflation provided for within the budget 2022/23 of £9.4m.

In addition to the budgeted £9.4m, the Council had to react in-year to the significant rise in inflation and allocated a further £11m from general resources during 2022/23, meaning an overall inflation provision of £20.4m.

There has been no explicit funding support from Government to help councils in this high inflationary environment. Instead, the Government has sought to increase the Council's core spending power in 2023-24 by 8.2%, which equates to £23.7m. This compares with an average 9.2% increase across England and has meant that Camden received the fourth lowest increase in London.

The Government expects councils to use its core spending power to cover inflationary pressures, demographic pressures, increased service delivery to respond to the needs of the borough during the Cost-of-Living crisis, and to address the permanent scarring to the Council's budgets from the economic impact of the Covid pandemic. This has not been possible and as such, the Council has been forced to find compensating savings elsewhere within its budget to fund these unavoidable cost pressures. This year, the Council has budgeted to save £10.1m and a further £30m over the 3 year period to 2025/26.

It is also worth stressing that within the projected 8.2% increase in spending power, the Government has assumed council tax will rise by the maximum amount of 4.99%. In



Camden in 2023/24, approximately 28% of the increase in 'Core Spending Power' relates to an assumed increase in Council Tax rather than direct government support.

The exact level of savings we will need to remain financially resilient is uncertain due to lack of information about future government funding and the uncertain economic environment that the Council is operating in.

It is important to note that the Housing Revenue Account is also impacted by inflationary pressures, which must be managed through rents and service charges. Therefore, a critical challenge is maintaining a balance between affordable rents and ensuring our ability to fund the cost of all necessary works.

## **QUESTION 6**

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

**BY: COUNCILLOR REBECCA FILER**

Following the good news that Camden Council has installed solar panels on Talacre Community Sports Centre, working with GLL and the local community energy organisation Power Up North London, can the Cabinet Member outline whether Haverstock School can now be considered for solar panels?

## **REPLY**

The Council has worked closely with Power Up North London to support and deliver several solar energy systems across Camden including at Hampstead School, Talacre Leisure Centre, St Anne's Church, Caversham Group practice and Kentish Town primary school.

After the success of Talacre, the Council partnership with Power Up North London is now focusing on two new school solar projects at Regent High School and Parliament Hill School. Structural feasibility work is complete and planning consent has been granted at Regent High School. Parliament Hill has agreed for the Council and Power Up North London to progress with structural surveys and a planning application for a new solar array at the school.

In 2020, Power Up North London received £13,800 funding through the London Community Energy Fund to explore the feasibility of solar at Haverstock school. Unfortunately, legal complexities compromised the project's financial viability and Power Up North London decided not to proceed. Once Regent High and Parliament Hill have progressed to installation, the Council will do all it can to support solar at Haverstock.

## **QUESTION 7**

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

**BY: COUNCILLOR RISHI MADLANI**

Last month saw the highest average UK June temperatures on record. Can the Cabinet Member set out what Camden Council is doing to consider climate adaptation, in particular for our tenants and some of our more vulnerable residents?

## **REPLY**

Camden faces two key climate hazards: increased summer temperatures and surface water flood risk. The Council recognises the importance of building the resilience of our most vulnerable residents and infrastructure to a changing climate. Camden's Climate Action Plan therefore committed the Council to produce a new Climate Resilience Plan during 2023.

Camden's Climate Resilience Plan is underway and will be published alongside the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Review of our Climate Action Plan in late 2023. To inform the development of the plan, Camden commissioned Arup to carry out a Climate risk and vulnerability assessment review to identify the communities and infrastructure most vulnerable to climate change, with a view to this shaping appropriate and targeted resilience and adaptation strategies. The work shows that the elderly, the young and those with existing health conditions are most vulnerable to heat risk, while vulnerability to flood risk is largely a function of geography. The work has also demonstrated that the impacts of climate change are felt unevenly across the borough. Supporting those most at risk will be a priority focus.

Camden's Flood Risk Management Strategy, published in late 2022, defines our approach to managing and reducing flood risk in Camden; however, building the community's resilience to heat risk requires significant collaboration across Camden services including; Adult Social Care, Children and Young People, Housing Services, alongside the NHS and Public Health England.

Considerable work is already underway across a variety of services. The Safe and Healthy Streets programme now incorporates sustainable drainage and tree planting into all viable schemes, and further sustainable drainage projects are at design stage for Belsize Road, South Hampstead and Parliament Hill. Other Council services are reviewing ways of working to improve resilience, including Adult Social Care who are updating their practitioner guidance with seasonal advice to ensure service users are aware of heat and flood risk.

A Climate Resilient Schools project led by the Greater London Authority, has also recently been completed involving three Camden schools. The Council is also working with the South Hampstead Flood Action Group to develop a community flood action

plan, preparing and protecting residents, in particular, vulnerable residents living in basement flats.

## **QUESTION 8**

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

**BY: COUNCILLOR MATT COOPER**

Can the Cabinet Member set out how much additional fire safety works are costing Camden Council and whether national government is helping to cover these additional costs?

## **REPLY**

It is estimated that the requirements of the fire safety and building safety legislation will cost the Council £4.5m a year from its revenue budgets. No new burdens funding has been provided by Government for these revenue costs.

Capital expenditure up to March 2023 has been £121m including 5 Chalcots blocks. The Council has budgeted another £175m for future years including Chalcots. This makes a total of £296m.

The Council has received or expects to receive £89m in grants towards this total (of which £81m is for Chalcots) and £7.183m for 3 blocks on the Cromer Estate so the Council will fund £208m from its own resources.

## **QUESTION 9**

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR, EQUALITIES AND COHESION**

**BY: COUNCILLOR RISHI MADLANI**

We recently celebrated Pride here in London, and I was delighted to see many Camden colleagues joining the march. What plans does Camden Council have for marking and celebrating Black and Trans Pride later this summer? And how can councillors best show allyship and support?

## **REPLY**

Saturday 8 July was [London Trans+ Pride](#) and Saturday 15 July was [Trans Pride Brighton](#). These events aim to inspire and celebrate trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people and to continue the call for true equality and freedom.

For London Pride, we marched as an organisation, and we also had a number of family friendly activities in Camden itself. This included a face painter and saxophonist outside Kings Cross station and a family fun day at St Giles Fields with many families in attendance.

We wholeheartedly support London Trans+ Pride and Trans Pride Brighton and donated to Mosaic Young Person Trust to support Camden's young people attending Trans pride.

We are currently working with our community groups and key partners in Camden to explore our options around celebrating Black Pride.

Councillors can show their support and allyship by promoting and attending any of the local events taking place.

Should any residents want to be involved or put on their own events in line with Camden's Inclusion Calendar they can email the Equalities Service at [equalities@camden.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@camden.gov.uk)

## **QUESTION 10**

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

**BY: COUNCILLOR SIAN BERRY**

Excluding the new homes for Afghan families, could you tell me how many additional council homes have been created through acquisitions since the start of 2021, including which tenures they are being let at, and will you be evaluating and publishing an estimate of the costs and wider benefits of this method of creating new social housing?

## **REPLY**

Since the beginning of 2021/22 the Council has invested £43,049,433 in acquiring 104 family sized homes, these homes are ex-Right to Buy properties (with the exception of a conversion of an existing council owned house in to 3 x 2 bed properties).

The Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme (TAPP) only acquires properties for temporary accommodation, which while critical to addressing the symptoms of the housing crisis, do not address its root causes.

To address the root causes of the housing crisis the Council is building new affordable homes through the Community Investment Programme. Camden has completed 71 social rent homes at Central Somers Town and Maitland Park during that same period and recently approved schemes, which are now either in construction or about to start

construction, will deliver a further 400 affordable homes. These include 325 social rent homes, 89 hostel places and 55 Camden Living homes.

We understand the importance of good quality, affordable homes to the wellbeing of our residents and schemes such as Agar Grove, which sees household energy use reduce by 70%, help families during difficult times like the cost of living crisis.

The Council will report performance of the Temporary Accommodation Programme through the CIP Annual Report which is presented to scrutiny committee and published on the CIP website.

**ENDS**