

COUNCIL – 20th NOVEMBER 2023

BUSINESS FROM THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 18th SEPTEMBER 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 18th September 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 meeting of the Council held on 18th September 2023, there were 2 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 18th September 2023 are attached as Appendix B.

4. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

COUNCIL 18th SEPTEMBER 2023

UNCONSIDERED MOTIONS

Appendix A

1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Tom Simon and which was seconded by Councillor Linda Chung

The Plant Based Treaty (<https://plantbasedtreaty.org>) aims to put food systems at the heart of combating the climate crisis, to halt the widespread degradation of critical ecosystems caused by animal agriculture, to promote a shift to more healthy, sustainable plant-based diets and to actively reverse damage done to planetary functions, ecosystem services and biodiversity.

It is increasingly recognised that meat and dairy production is a significant contributor to climate breakdown, with the livestock sector accounting for at least 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions, as well as being a major contributor to global deforestation. The catastrophic effects of climate breakdown mean climate and risk experts predict a world with systemic cascading risks related to food insecurity including food shortages, societal tensions, hunger and malnutrition, unrest and conflict (according to a Chatham house report from 2021), which furthermore predicts a 50% chance of synchronous crop failure in the decade of the 2040s. Producing a kilo of beef creates, on average, 12 times more CO₂ than a kilo of tofu or other soya based proteins. Meanwhile, producing a litre of dairy milk uses, on average, at least four times as much land as producing a litre of plant milk. Growing numbers of people are adopting plant-based diets, which do not include meat or dairy.

As well as a smaller carbon footprint, eating more plant-based foods also reduces the land footprint of our diets and would improve UK food security and self-sufficiency, thereby making our diets more local. As a country, we currently import much more food than we export. In 2021 we had a trade deficit for all dairy products of £1.04 billion and a trade deficit for just beef, pork and lamb of £1.7 billion. Only 55% of the world's crop calories feed people directly with 36% going to feed livestock; only a fraction of the calories in feed given to livestock make their way into the meat and milk that we consume which is a huge food waste issue on top of making our food production much more carbon intensive.

The Government-commissioned National Food Strategy concluded that a 30% reduction in meat consumption is necessary for future food security. The National Food Strategy also states that obesity alone accounts for 8% of annual health spend in the UK, or £18bn. Savings to the NHS will come from healthier, plant-based diets. Over 40% of Britons are trying to reduce their meat consumption and 14% already follow a flexitarian diet, but plant-based food options are not consistently available at all events or food venues. Other countries have taken a stance; for example, in Portugal it is a legal requirement for all public catering – including local authority facilities – to provide plant-based food options, and other local authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council and Cambridge City Council have decided to promote plant-based food via

servicing a fully plant-based menu at Council meetings and events, where cost-effective. The University of Cambridge Catering Service reduced food-related greenhouse gas emissions by a third via replacing beef and lamb with plant-based products.

In 2019 Camden Council formally declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, which committed the Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Council can build on its achievements to date and lead by example by promoting and normalising the consumption of plant-based food, recognising that plant-based meals are frequently nutritious and low-cost food options. This is in line with the vision of net zero by 2030.

The Council therefore RESOLVES to:

1. Endorse the Plant Based Treaty.
2. Continue to follow the lead of other councils around the country in transitioning to ensure that food and drink provided at all meetings and events hosted by the Council, including those hosted by the Mayoralty, include appropriate plant-based food, and where possible, is provided by a local caterer paying the Real Living Wage and sourcing sustainable local ingredients.
3. After exploring a wide variety of catering options (including consideration of social enterprises), use Camden Council civic events to promote and showcase appropriately environmentally friendly plant-based food and drink options, alongside displayed information about the climate and health benefits and relative cost of different protein/food sources and informing people about how to achieve a balanced plant-based diet.
4. When events occur on Camden Council open spaces, and where catering is provided, ensure that environmentally friendly plant-based options are included and available (i.e. minimum from at least one caterer), secured through the use of terms and conditions of hire (where reasonably and appropriately possible).
5. Secure through a contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers that environmentally friendly, locally sourced plant-based food and drink options are to be available at providers on Camden Council open spaces (where reasonably possible). Similarly, when possible and reasonable, via future contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers for Council-run cafes, kiosks or leisure centres, specify that vegetable/legume rich plant-based options are available, while respecting individuals' freedom and their right to choose what they eat.
6. Continue to use Council communications channels to promote sustainable (and affordable) food and drink practices throughout the borough, including details of the climate and health benefits of plant-based food and drinks and educating people on the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet, while also appropriately highlighting food poverty and the support available to respond to it.
7. Work with community groups across the borough to promote the establishment of new and appropriate community gardens as part of a biodiversity strategy. Identify sites that have been previously derelict or contaminated, so that these sites can be appropriately assessed and brought back into beneficial use to meet the wider demands posed by the social, economic, and environmental crisis,

including that of supporting the growth of cheap and accessible plant-based food and drinks for all our communities.

8. Work with businesses in Camden to investigate the opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based foods, appropriately and respectfully give people information about the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet, while respecting individuals' right to choose, and improve the availability of plant-based options.
9. Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supporting UK endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty and invite all Group Leaders to sign the letter.

RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN

The Council recognises the impact food has on the climate crisis and has profiled the level of carbon dioxide emissions in Camden deriving from consumer choices to help understand its impact. The analysis found that around 11% of Camden household's consumption-based emissions are attributable to food and drink choices.

The analysis has informed the promoting of campaign materials, including advice on eating more plant-based foods, how to access local food schemes to minimise emissions from transportation and refrigeration, as well as guides to reducing food waste and cost.

The topic of food is a culturally sensitive matter for individuals and crosscuts the spectrum of health, climate, affordability, and culture. Messaging around plant-based alternatives must be carefully pitched. Some plant-based foods or substitutes are defined as "ultra-processed foods" due to their high sodium content, saturated fat and sugars. Furthermore plant-based foods/substitutes can be more expensive than meat/dairy based foods, which is counterproductive to addressing food poverty and the cost of living in Camden.

Reflecting this need for balance, the Council's food strategy is shaped by the We Make Camden Food Mission which states that 'by 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food'. We have taken a number of steps to support this ambition which directly address the suggestions in the Motion.

Catering contracts and events

The 5 Pancras Square café vending contract was tendered with requirements for suppliers to deliver on social value, environmental, Fair Trade and London Living Wage commitments. The 5PS café offers a variety of plant-based meals for staff.

Park café suppliers are asked to demonstrate their product range when tendering for opportunities to ensure adequate choice for customers. There is no current requirement to specify plant based or locally sourced options, but a supplier's approach to reducing their environmental impact is considered as part of their submission evaluation.

Camden's Public Health team are leading the development of food procurement standards to improve the quality of plant-based, seasonal, and locally sourced produce offered on site and at Camden events. Currently, the Camden Events team offers hot and cold catering in all Council venues and locations and are targeting 50% plant-based options from suppliers. All sustainability focused events require vegan/vegetarian food by default.

Action has been taken to improve the uptake of meat-free Monday school meals serviced by the Caterlink contract. In September 2023, Caterlink introduced an opt-out approach to Meat-free Monday, with only one primary school selecting to opt out. This position may still change owing to menu cycle changes which can trigger movement within the schools. Ultimately the choice of menu is determined by the school not the Council.

Local food growing

The Council undertakes extensive work with community organisations to support food growing and community gardening across Camden. Recently this has included the creation of new growing spaces on housing estates in Somers Town as part of the Future Neighbourhoods 2030 programme (in partnership with Global Generation) and new growing beds on Council housing sites at Sidney Boyd Court and Hilgrove Estate.

Food growing projects are active on five Camden-managed parks, and there are 26 leases or agreements with community groups for food growing or gardening on public parks or community gardens. This year the Green Spaces team has supported newly establishing projects at sites such as Kilburn Grange and Elm Village Open Space. As part of Camden's Food Mission, the team continues to explore ways to further support the provision of food growing opportunities within the borough.

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

This Council notes that the ongoing climate emergency requires action to be taken at all levels of government and while it welcomes the report to Cabinet from the advisor on promoting green spaces and biodiversity, it believes it doesn't go far enough as a response from the administration.

More concrete actions is needed at a local government level.

The Council calls on the Cabinet to take action to reduce Scope 3 emissions which result from Camden's services, such as construction work on public highways or by Housing maintenance; to consider embodied carbon in Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP) projects and find ways to reduce it or alleviate it; and that it must hold developers to account through Section 106 agreements on high energy efficiency.

This Council also calls for the Cabinet to propose a consultation in Camden's conservation areas, to discuss whether conservation area statements should be amended to take into account and allow home modifications such as solar panels, air source pumps and UPVC windows, all of which would help reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.

RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Camden's Local Plan supported by Camden Planning Guidance, has a strong focus on embodied carbon reduction by requiring all proposals that involve substantial demolition to demonstrate that it is not possible to retain and improve the existing buildings. This approach has since been adopted in the London Plan and applies to all development, Council or otherwise, including Camden's Community Investment Programme. Developments are therefore assessed through the following process:

- Firstly we require a detailed condition and feasibility study to understand the re-use potential of the existing building. It is important to note we also take into account what is the best use of the site in this study.
- Taking into account the condition of the building(s) and feasibility of re-use, the following hierarchy is used to explore all potential options of an existing site with the aim of optimising resource efficiency
 - Refit
 - Refurbish
 - Substantial refurbishment and extension
 - Reclaim and recycle
- If demolition is accepted then we require a pre-demolition audit. The minimum target is for 95% of construction and demolition waste to be diverted from landfill, with the expectation that as much of that as possible is used within the site or locally.
- If officers agree that the principle of partial demolition, or substantial demolition is acceptable a Whole Life Carbon Assessment is required to demonstrate that carbon emissions (including embodied carbon) has been reduced as far as possible
- Finally we expect any new development to adopt circular economy principles, such as ensuring the new building is adaptable and capable of re-use should circumstances change.

S106 agreements do commit developers to agreed carbon reduction % through energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy measures with all major development required to be net zero carbon, BREEAM targets are also secured in the S106

Camden also requires via condition reporting of Whole Life Carbon Assessment post construction for developments with substantial demolition, and prior to occupation through a Circular Economy Statement setting out the predicted and actual performance against the targets in the original Circular Economy Statement

The 95% target of construction and demolition waste to be diverted from landfill is also secured by condition.

Camden's Community Investment Programme's (CIP) Design Guide provides key reporting requirements at each RIBA stage, to ensure all new homes are built to zero carbon in line with the London Plan requirements. For example, all CIP schemes at RIBA 3 are required to undertake Whole Life Carbon and Embodied Carbon reporting.

All Council services are supported to understand their embodied carbon impact through the core Environmental Stewardship learning module, which was developed in response to changes to Camden's Constitution that require the environmental impact of all Council decisions to be appropriately assessed.

Further information about embodied carbon emissions in Camden and how they are measured can be read in the 1st Annual Review of Camden's Climate Action Plan at www.camden.gov.uk/climate-crisis

This Council also calls for the Cabinet to propose a consultation in Camden's conservation areas, to discuss whether conservation area statements should be amended to take into account and allow home modifications such as solar panels, air source pumps and UPVC windows, all of which would help reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency

GLA-commissioned research on Planning for roof-mounted solar photovoltaics in London found that: "Out of the boroughs interviewed, the London Borough of Camden has the most supportive policies regarding renewable energy and retrofitting historic buildings. The policies specifically state that renewable energy technologies such as solar PV could be installed on listed buildings depending on the form of the building.

Conservation Areas cover over 70% of the built up area of Camden (excluding parks etc) and there are 40 Conservation Area Appraisals. Several have been updated recently including Redington/Frognaal and Fitzjohns/Netherall and we are currently updating Hampstead but this is not a quick task. We intend to clarify in the review of the Local Plan that when assessing the impact of retrofit measures on the significance of a heritage asset, the degree of carbon reduction will be considered as a public benefit and significant weight will be attached to this.

We are also looking at areas where we can be more accommodating for retrofit measures within conservation areas and on listed buildings. We have committed to working with other central London boroughs who also have significant heritage assets within their boundaries to consider how retrofitting can be done sensitively and to guide people to these solutions, this is about positively promoting the fact that owning a historic building does not mean you can't make significant improvements to its energy performance. Indeed it is already possible to do quite a lot of work under PD rights even in conservation areas which is often forgotten.

It is worth noting that in some parts of the borough there are Article 4 directions which remove permitted development rights including front window replacement and solar panels. We intend to remove the elements of these directions that refer to solar panels and window replacement, so they again are permitted development. These directions affect properties in Belsize; Hampstead; Frognal, and Swiss Cottage. In order to amend the directions we would need to notify residents of these properties.

Finally it is open to Neighbourhood Forums to include in their Neighbourhood Plans policies on these issues. The Neighbourhood Plan is part of the Development Plan and so carries the same weight as the Local Plan.

ENDS

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION 1

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR MATTHEW KIRK

Please provide the information indicated below to supplement the Building Safety Act and Regulatory Standards Report [hereafter 'The Report'].

The Regulator of Social Housing noted that the number of outstanding fire safety actions had risen from 6,000 to 9,000 between 2019 and 2022. Strikingly, that is not recorded in the Report. The Regulator was not simply concerned by the absolute numbers but by the fact that the position is getting progressively worse.

The Regulator also noted that 1500 actions (of the 9,000) had been outstanding for two years or longer.

It is of fundamental importance to understand the changing figures over time: whether there is a linear deterioration; circularity created by the three year review cycle (as floated as a possible explanation at a briefing for the Liberal Democrat Group by senior officers); erratic with striking setbacks (as suggested by the particular situation of a repair contractor failing to deliver, raised in the Report but not in the briefing or any previous correspondence); or bursts of activity driven by the intervention of the courts or regulators interspersed with neglect.

It is also of fundamental importance to distinguish between high-risk and non-high-risk actions in order to consider whether there is proper prioritisation.

Can you therefore provide a breakdown of total outstanding fire safety actions by month from November 2017 to date and a breakdown of outstanding high-risk fire safety actions November 2017 to date. Both should please be presented as both tables and graphs.

It should be noted that it was confirmed at the briefing mentioned above that this information was available and indeed officers undertook that it would be contained within the Report.

Can you additionally provide a breakdown of fire-safety actions outstanding for two years or longer over the same period and similarly presented.

REPLY

The Council holds all fire actions on a live central database. Dashboards which provide a snapshot in time were archived in the same format from 2021/22 onwards. To answer this question officers have reviewed the source data to produce the analysis below for the period 2018 to 2023.

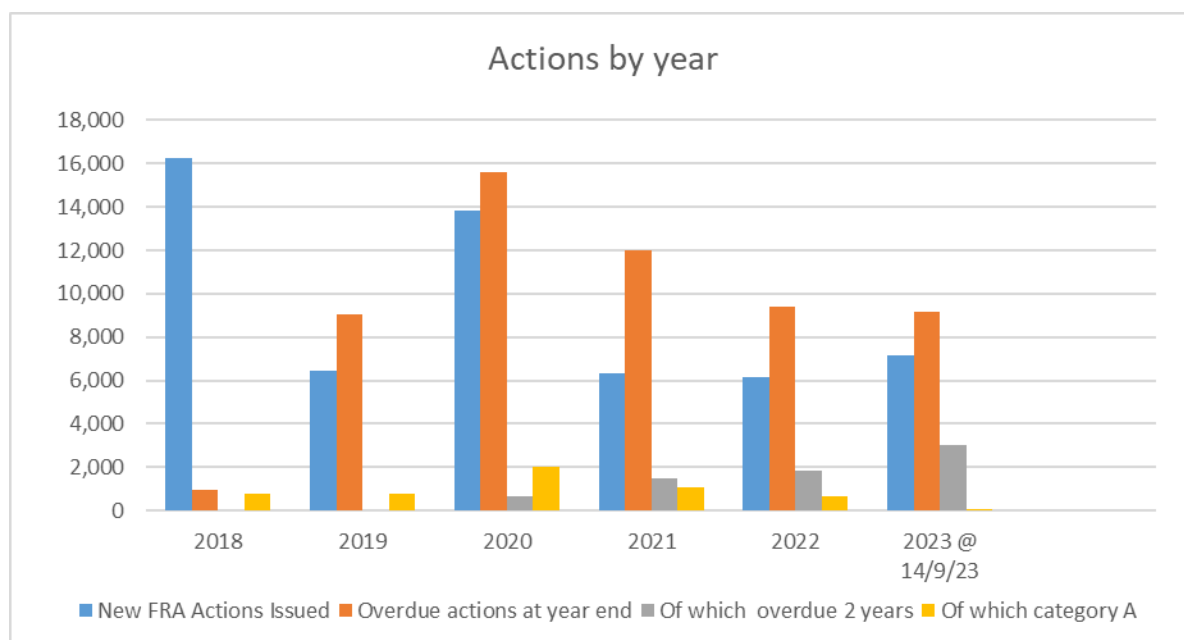
The tables show that the new cycle of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) which commenced 2017/18 generated a large volume of actions. The report to Full Council notes that over the last five years the Council has spent £66m on fire safety works, in addition to the cladding replacement works at the Chalcots and Cromer Estate. The Council is also planning to spend £68m this financial year and next. When Chalcots and the façade work at the Cromer Estate is taken into account the Council will have allocated £296m, of which £208m is from its own resources. Completed works include 10,000 new front entrance doors, 1,200 communal alarms and various works to more than 1,100 blocks including compartmentation, fire retardant paint, signage and emergency lighting.

For long periods of 2020/21, works requiring internal access such as door replacements were not possible, with work packages stopped or amended, or took longer to deliver due to Covid restrictions. More recently in 2022/23, as highlighted in the report to Full Council, the Council had to change its approach to procurement as some contractors did not start work due to inflationary pressures. The Council is also working across teams and with legal services to address the large number of no access cases generated during programme delivery. The table below shows that overdue actions from the new cycle peaked during 2020/21 and have been reducing since, with all remaining actions programmed as outlined in the report to Full Council. In particular the category A, higher risk, actions have steadily reduced and now stand at 85, of which most relate to no access cases.

In terms of FRA volumes, since 2017/18 the Council has carried out assessments on a three-year cycle according to the risk of the block. The cycle is set out below and shows that at present 96 FRAs are carried out annually, 1,434 are carried out every two years and 1,762 carried out every three years. This means that every three years the Council is carrying out just over 4,900 FRAs, with each assessment generating multiple actions.

FRA cycle	Grand Total
1 Year FRA Cycle	96
High Rise	56
Hostels	16
Sheltered FRAs	24
2 Year FRA Cycle	1,434
Purpose Built Blocks	1,434
3 Year FRA Cycle	1,762
Street properties	1,693
TRA halls	69
Grand Total	3,292

Year	New FRA actions issued during year	Cumulative FRA actions issued	Of which overdue at year end	Of which overdue 2 years	Of which category A
2018	16,237	16,237	964	0	766
2019	6,455	22,692	9,054	0	759
2020	13,817	36,509	15,628	635	2,032
2021	6,345	42,854	11,998	1,475	1,078
2022	6,151	49,005	9,428	1,860	673
2023 @ 14/9/23	7,146	56,151	9,136	3,015	85



QUESTION 2

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

BY: COUNCILLOR GIO SPINELLA

Can the cabinet member provide a breakdown by ward of council tax payments, please? Can we also please have a breakdown by ward of numbers of recipients of council tax relief?

REPLY

As at 7 September 2023, the Council has collected just over £84.35m of the £178.5m total Council Tax charged for the 2023/24 financial year after £33.5m of Council Tax Support has been applied to eligible accounts.

Council Tax payments by Ward

Council Tax is one of a number of sources of revenue for the Council and in 2023/24 Council Tax represented 14% of the Council's gross resources.

Each year the Council sets the level of Council Tax based on the resource needs of the whole Council after all other sources of revenue are taken into account. The council tax collected supports the funding for services across the borough.

The table below sets out the total Council Tax payments received per ward for the 2023/24 financial year up to and including 7 September 2023:

Ward Name	Combined 23/24 payments received
Hampstead Town	£5.37m
Highgate	£4.32m
Frognal	£4.7m
Fortune Green	£4.3m
West Hampstead	£4.13m
Kilburn	£3.47m
South Hampstead	£4.97m
Belsize	£6.99m
Gospel Oak	£4.11m
Kentish Town North	£2.74m
Kentish Town South	£3.35m
Haverstock	£3.59m
Camden Town	£2.63m
Regents Park	£4.14m
St Pancras & Somers Town	£2.6m
Kings Cross	£3.72m
Bloomsbury	£4.84m
Holborn & Covent Garden	£5.21m
Camden Square	£2.49m
Primrose Hill	£6.68m

Council Tax Support caseload by Ward

The Council Tax support scheme administered by the Council is one of the most generous schemes in the country. Awards of Council Tax Support are based on households meeting the criteria set out in the scheme that is agreed by Cabinet each year.

The estimated cost of the scheme in 2023/24 is £28m-£30m and will depend on the number of households who are eligible for the scheme through the year. The cost of the scheme to the Council has risen from £23.9m in 2018/19 to £28.9m in 2022/23.

The table below shows the live Council Tax Support caseload figures at 1 September 2023:

Ward Name	Live CTS caseload
Hampstead Town	250
Highgate	974
Frognal	307
Fortune Green	1,122
West Hampstead	1,093
Kilburn	2,148
South Hampstead	903
Belsize	562
Gospel Oak	1,565
Kentish Town North	698
Kentish Town South	1,182
Haverstock	1,677
Camden Town	750
Regents Park	1,589
St Pancras & Somers Town	1,998
Kings Cross	1,267
Bloomsbury	944
Holborn & Covent Garden	1,430
Camden Square	933
Primrose Hill	1,140
	22,532

QUESTION 3

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN

BY: COUNCILLOR JAMES SLATER

What steps is the Council taking to work with Transport for London, Network Rail and local developers to ensure that Kentish Town Station continues to have a northbound bus stop?

REPLY

It is vital for the northbound bus stop to the north of Kentish Town station to remain open. Camden staff are working closely with TfL, Network Rail and other stakeholders for all works in this area to minimise such disruption whilst critical bridge replacement works are undertaken, and whilst the station remains closed for escalator replacement.

The Leader of the Council and Kentish Town South Councillor, Cllr Gould, took the opportunity in June this year to personally raise with the TfL commissioner Andy Lord the importance of retaining this bus stop throughout works. He has since responded that TfL also wish to keep the stop open and will work towards this.

I understand that the development at the 'old carwash site' does not intend to start works until early 2024 at the earliest and this next phase of the development will be managed through a fresh Construction Management Plan. As part of this process, we will review and support any impact of the construction on the northern bus stop. Within any Plan the Council would not allow the bus stop to be removed but may have to consider in consultation with TfL Buses its relocation as close as possible to its existing location.

Ongoing meetings, community communications and engagement will continue throughout the various works on Kentish Town Road, including a Network Rail virtual Q&A session on their railway bridge works for residents and businesses (Monday 25 September 2023 from 6pm to 7pm).

QUESTION 4

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

BY: COUNCILLOR HEATHER JOHNSON

Can an update be provided on the meanwhile uses for areas affected by the pause in HS2 construction works?

REPLY

Officers are working with the Euston Partnership, Department for Transport, HS2 and Lendlease who plan to deliver meanwhile uses across the inactive HS2 worksites. Work initially focused on defining available space and understanding community priorities for spaces. This identified open space as the key priority, with growing spaces, wildflower planting and plant nurseries all identified as desirable. Space for youth and community facilities was also identified as a priority.

A range of potential uses have been identified across five parts of the HS2 construction site which include community use of the Maria Fidelis Annex building, and a new temporary open space at the site of the National Temperance Hospital on Hampstead Road which opened on 28th July. Camden has been working to press for community engagement in the development of plans.

It is anticipated that potential uses for the remaining sites will be selected from Expressions of Interest received by The Euston Partnership and the planning

application process, where required, in the coming months and with delivery on site early next year. This includes delivery of replacement open space on the western part of Euston Square Gardens currently being used as a temporary taxi rank, which is due to relocate to the eastern side of Euston Square Gardens in the coming months.

QUESTION 5

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR LARRAINE REVAH

What are we offering Deaf and Hard of Hearing tenants/residents concerning fire alarms, are we offering them another option, and if so what is it?

REPLY

The alarms we are installing can be adapted for our hard of hearing residents. The adaptations usually consist of strobe lights in the detector heads and a vibrating pad that can go under a pillow.

Where the resident is hard of hearing at the time of installation these adaptations are made at the time. Otherwise, they can be added later as circumstances change.

We encourage residents with disabilities who need fire safety adaptations or hard-of-hearing appropriate fire alarms to get in contact with the Council.

QUESTION 6

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

BY: COUNCILLOR IZZY LENGA

Can you provide an update on the progress of the Combating Drugs Partnership and the involvement work with Families?

REPLY

The Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP) is a requirement of the Drug Strategy [From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#) and accompanying investment.

The borough receives funding via the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant to the value of:

2022/23 £882,907
2023/24 £1,446,634
2024/25 £2,792,326

Future years are subject to annual approval by HM Treasury and eligibility for supplemental funding is dependent on maintaining existing (2020/21) investment in drug and alcohol treatment.

The CDP will bring together partners to oversee and deliver all outcomes in the Drug Strategy and to cease silo working. This is measured through an extensive performance framework which captures data across a range of sources.

In Camden the CDP will host an annual meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board. This meeting is supported by 2 working sub-groups with a focus on: criminal justice/community safety and health.

Camden has been identified as a priority partnership by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) which means that the activity to be commissioned needs to be focussed on:

- Increasing numbers of drugs users in treatment
- Improving the % of drug users engaged in treatment in prison who are picked up by local community services without a break in their care

Work with families is included in the drug strategy – *“Addiction also has a devastating impact on families. Families can support and aid recovery, but they also have their own support needs”* - but it has not been possible to prioritise this for investment due to the requirements placed upon the borough as a priority partnership.

Despite this, the new service (delivered by CGL from April 2023) has a family support element as part of their core contract. This is a new development for Camden and as such this model is evolving. CGL, as a national provider, are working with their colleagues across the country to evaluate what models work best and would best support residents in Camden, and AdFam have recently produced a report on the [State of the Family Support Sector](#) which will also be used to inform this development. This report has estimated that only 21% of the families of people in treatment are getting any help.

Whilst the model is developing, the service offers support to families in their own right, which consists of one-to-one support, individual counselling and support to family groups. Where service users identify family or friends as their carers, CGL will include these individuals in discussions about their loved ones' care (with consent).

The service is involved in the development of the Family Hubs to ensure that families presenting with drug and alcohol as a feature in their own or their loved one's lives are

supported. One of the considerations for CGL's family service is to co-locate with the Family Hubs which again is an area of development.

QUESTION 7

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

BY: COUNCILLOR LLOYD HATTON

Can you outline how the Summer Nights Partnership work between the Police, Voluntary Sector and the Council has worked and whether there is good practice we are now taking forward in the Autumn Nights Partnership?

REPLY

Reducing crime in Camden remains a key priority for the Council and the Camden Community Safety Partnership.

The Summer Nights project forms part of the seasonal programme of community safety partnership activity led by the Metropolitan Police Service. The pan London activity is delivered on a rolling basis, with an intelligence led approach established to tackle seasonal trends with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Camden Council continues to play an active role in liaising with the Metropolitan Police Central/North London Borough Command Unit in order to plan, deliver and evaluate activity. The Council played a central role in the development of the following priorities which underpinned the 2023 Summer Nights programme:

- Reduction in Robbery
- Reduction of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Reduction in Serious Youth Violence
- Reduction of Violence associated with the Night-time Economy (NTE)

The Council is currently working in partnership with the Police Borough Command Unit to complete the evaluation of the Summer Nights programme. However, the initial assessment has indicated that the continued use of knife amnesties has again proved to be successful in removing dangerous weapons from Camden streets and local neighbourhoods. Data suggests that over the last two-year period over 1500 knives have been collected.

Weapons sweeps also form an integral part of the Summer Nights programme as part of a proactive approach towards serious violence reduction. Initial data indicates that once again the number of weapons sweeps carried out in Camden ranks amongst the highest in London during the summer period.

Intelligence led high visibility patrols in areas disproportionately impacted by crime and anti-social behaviour also featured strongly within the Summer Nights programme.

These patrols are increasingly used in response to local concerns with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour and are intended to provide community reassurance and deter and disrupt offending behaviour.

The delivery of Operation Rana serves as an important example of the ongoing partnership approach towards further establishing a best practice-based approach. Operation Rana focuses predominantly on engagement with licensed venues in order to provide further advice and guidance to Camden venues on priority issues such as gender-based offending, particularly in relation to issues such as drink spiking and harassment. This activity aligns with the priorities outlined within the Camden Women's Safety Public Realm action plan which continues to prioritise women's safety across the Camden public realm environment.

Further involvement of the voluntary and community sector remains a key aspiration for the Police/Council partnership. There are positive examples of initiatives being delivered by voluntary community organisations to support community safety and crime reduction related activity. However, there remains a commitment to further increase the level of engagement and co-production with communities and voluntary community organisations, in order to further develop the partnership approach and improve the level of awareness and reassurance with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour reduction related activity.

The Council remains fully engaged in its ongoing partnership with the Metropolitan Police and the Voluntary Sector. Valuable insights and lessons learned from the Summer Nights Operation will be used to shape and inform the delivery of the Autumns Night programme and beyond.

We at Camden Council recognise the importance of engaging consistently with local communities to inform the development of seasonal/targeted crime and anti-social behaviour reduction activity.

QUESTION 8

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER SAFER COMMUNITIES

BY: COUNCILLOR SAGAL ABDI-WALI

What updates are there on Project Vigilant and its progress improving the safety of women when using Camden venues?

REPLY

Reducing Violence against Women and Girls, remains a key priority for Camden Council and the Camden Community Safety Partnership.

The Camden Women's Safety Public Realm action plan outlines a range of measures designed to reduce levels of violence against women and girls. The action plan includes a specific emphasis on challenging gender-based violence and harassment linked to the Camden evening and night-time economy.

Project Vigilant is a pro-active Metropolitan Police led initiative which utilises intelligence data to target perpetrators of violence against women and girls. The initiative uses intelligence data to identify 'at risk' locations (including licensed Camden venues) in order to develop a range of preventative and enforcement focused interventions.

The initiative seeks to identify and challenge predatory behaviour at the earliest opportunity; whilst also providing licensed venues with advice and guidance designed to improve levels of safety, and further establish a zero-tolerance approach towards harassment and gender-based offending. Project Vigilant operations began in March 2023 with further targeted operations delivered during the period between June and August 2023.

To date nine arrests have been made in instances where offending behaviour was proactively identified. A further 51 interventions have also been delivered to address instances where individuals may have been in breach of specific court orders or in instances where data highlighted a risk of re-offending.

The development and ongoing delivery of Project Vigilant serves as an important example of the effective Council and Metropolitan Police partnership which continues to prioritise the safety of women and girls.

As the Camden Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, I welcome the development of the Protection from Sex-based Harassment in Public Bill which is currently working its way through Parliament. This proposed legislation includes a range of important provisions to address issues such as street based harassment. It is important that government continues to provide the required parliamentary support to ensure that the provisions receive Royal Assent at the earliest opportunity.

Project Vigilant serves as an important example of Camden Council's commitment towards prioritising women's safety in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and a wide range of community organisations.

QUESTION 9

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN

BY: COUNCILLOR RISHI MADLANI

Crabtree Fields in Fitzrovia is a valuable green lung in the heart of the city but requires investment to ensure it is a welcoming environment for all. We also need to ensure it does as much as it can to support biodiversity in the borough. Can you share on update

on the Council's plans for investment in Crabtree Fields and what engagement will be done with the local community?

REPLY

Crabtree Fields open space is a former World War II bombsite which became a car park until being compulsorily purchased in 1985. In 1986 the park was laid out and named Crabtree Fields with the last extensive redesign taking place in 1999. More recently the playground was decommissioned in 2021 as the equipment had come to the end of its life. Some of the existing infrastructure in the park has also become an ongoing maintenance liability due to its age. In line with ambitions set out in the We Make Camden, the council has allocated funding through Camden's green space investment programme to deliver improvements to the site based on feedback from the community. I am particularly pleased to see this coming forward given this was a local pledge Bloomsbury ward councillors made prior to the last local election.

Officers are working with engagement specialists Something Collective, who will be undertaking a series of community engagement activities over the coming months. This will be an opportunity to speak to residents, community groups and park users to explore local needs, priorities and ambitions for Crabtree Fields.

Engagement will consist of on-site drop-in sessions, workshops and an online survey hosted on Commonplace. Engagement will commence later this month and run through until the end of October. Once a full programme of engagement activities has been finalised this will be shared with members. Findings from the engagement will inform a design brief for the park which will then be used to develop design options for the site.

No decisions have been made about what improvements or changes are proposed for the site. We recognise the biodiversity value of the site and will work with residents and users to develop plans which address objectives outlined in the biodiversity strategy alongside maximising the benefits of the green space, addressing different pressures and community interests across the site.

QUESTION 10

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

BY: COUNCILLOR SIAN BERRY

Could you provide me with an estimate of the potential business rates revenue lost in Camden for each of the past three years due to the practice of 'box shifting', which some landlords use to exploit a current loophole in law to avoid paying business rates for vacant commercial properties?

REPLY

At present, there is no data to evidence the scale of 'box shifting' in Camden and there is a risk that any estimate would be purely speculative. By its very nature, this is a form of avoidance that is hidden. Whilst the practise of 'box shifting' is unquestionably unethical, there is currently no legal recourse available to Councils to prevent it.

Camden have engaged in multiple government consultations regarding rates avoidance and raised our concerns in other consultations where loopholes such as 'box shifting' have been discussed. To date, central government has not acted on such feedback and no changes have been made to the legislation to close the loopholes. Camden will continue to lobby government on this issue.

The impact of the covid pandemic and associated lockdowns on businesses operating and paying business rates in the borough continues. In 2020/21 the total amount of collectable business rates across Camden was £664m, but by 2022/23 the business rates tax base was approximately £606.7m, a reduction of £57m (9%). From this total amount collected the council retains roughly 30%, with the GLA receiving 37% and Central Government 30%.

The council must then pay a set tariff on its 30% share. This reduces the level of business rates retained by the Council to 12%-14%. This Tariff amount is not reduced in response to any reduction in the Council's Business Rates tax base.

Table One: Estimated Share of Business Rates

Years	Share of Business Rates			Total Business Rates Collectable (including Rate Relief)
	Council	GLA	Government	
	£m	£m	£m	£m
2022/23	84	224	298	606
2021/22	92	239	314	645
2020/21	94	246	324	664

It is difficult to predict if the local tax base for business rates will recover to pre-Covid levels over the medium term or if the reduction represents a permanent reduction that will continue to adversely impact the level of resources available to the Council.

ENDS