

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All wards
REPORT TITLE Draft New Local Plan (SC/2023/38)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet	DATE 20 December 2023
STRATEGIC CONTEXT We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. The Way We Work is the Council’s response to We Make Camden. The Camden Local Plan is a key mechanism for the delivery for the vision set out in We Make Camden. The vision and objectives in the new draft Plan are based on, and align with, the vision and ambitions set out in We Make Camden. The Plan has policies promoting an inclusive economy, which will contribute toward the We Make Camden ambition that <i>Camden’s local economy should be strong, sustainable, and inclusive</i> ; policies to secure more housing and affordable homes, which will help to deliver the ambition that <i>Everyone in Camden should have a place they call home</i> ; and policies on responding to the climate emergency, open space, food growing, biodiversity and prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling, which will contribute towards the ambition that <i>Camden should be a green, clean, vibrant, accessible, and sustainable place with everyone empowered to contribute to tackling the climate emergency</i> . The Plan also contains policies on achieving design excellence, improving health and well-being and the provision and protection of community and cultural facilities, which will help to achieve the ambitions that <i>Camden tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open communities where everyone can contribute</i> and that <i>Camden communities support good health, wellbeing and connection for everyone</i> . The Plan also addresses the four We Make Camden missions.	
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report seeks approval of the draft new Camden Local Plan (as set out in Appendix A) for consultation and engagement. The new Local Plan will be a key delivery mechanism for achieving the Council’s priorities as set out in We Make Camden. It will ensure that Camden continues to have effective, up-to-date planning policies that will allow the Council to make planning decisions that contribute towards addressing the borough’s need for homes, jobs and infrastructure and ensure that development is delivered in a way that is socially and economically inclusive, responds to the climate and ecological emergency and brings benefits to Camden and its residents. Under the Council’s Constitution, development plan documents, such as the Local	

Plan, are reserved for Cabinet decision.

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information

No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet, having due regard to the equality impact assessment in Appendix B, the results of consultation set out in Appendix C, and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

1. Approve the draft Camden Local Plan (set out in Appendix A) for public consultation;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment, to make minor changes to the draft Camden Local Plan prior to consultation as required, including factual updates, corrections and non-material wording changes.

Signed:



David Burns
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment

Date: 5th December 2023

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the draft new Camden Local Plan (as set out in Appendix A) for consultation and engagement.
- 1.2 The Council is reviewing the Camden Local Plan 2017, which provides the current basis for the Council's planning decisions and sets the framework for future development in the borough. The review will ensure the Camden continues to have robust and up-to-date planning policies that align with Council priorities. The Local Plan is a key delivery mechanism for the Council's aspirations set out in We Make Camden.
- 1.3 The Council's Constitution requires development plan documents, such as the Local Plan, to be agreed by Cabinet.

2. PROPOSALS AND REASONS

- 2.1 Planning legislation states that policies in local plans should, at least once every five years, be assessed to consider whether they need updating, and should then be updated as necessary. Any plans that are not submitted for examination by 30 June 2025 will need to be prepared under the proposed new Local Plans system.
- 2.2 Although the current Local Plan is still operating effectively, it is considered beneficial to update the Plan to ensure that future development in Camden most effectively meets Council priorities and secures benefits for the borough and its residents, responding to changed circumstances, in particular:
 - the publication of We Make Camden;
 - the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency;
 - changes to national planning policy, such as revised permitted development rights and changes to use classes;
 - the London Plan 2021;
 - economic and social changes (such as changes in working patterns and shopping habits).
- 2.3 The new draft Local Plan (attached as Appendix A) has been prepared taking into account the comments made during initial consultation and engagement (see section 5), the evidence studies commissioned to support the Plan, national planning policy, the London Plan, as well as We Make Camden and other relevant Council plans and strategies.
- 2.4 Key elements of the proposed policy approach set out in the new draft Local Plan are summarised below.

Overarching Strategy

- Future development needs for Camden have been updated to take into account the latest evidence on the numbers of additional homes and office and retail floorspace that the Council needs to plan for over the Plan period to 2041.

- The Plan looks beyond growth areas and takes a more area-based approach to the delivery of new development in the borough, with sections on South Camden, Central Camden, West Camden and North Camden.

Climate and Ecological Emergency

- The Plan includes updated policies to respond to the climate and ecological emergency, covering the re-purposing, refurbishment and re-use of buildings; energy reduction in existing buildings; delivering zero carbon development; minimising waste and prioritising the re-use of resources; promoting a circular economy; reducing whole life carbon emissions; and managing flood risk.
- The heritage policy has been updated to better enable the retrofitting of heritage assets to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure they are adaptable to a changing climate, while preserving their special interest and ensuring their long-term survival. It makes clear that the wider public benefits of delivering sustainability improvements will be a strong consideration in the determination of applications.
- In recognition of the fact that the Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, there is greater emphasis on the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment in the Plan, with policies setting out our proposed approach to the natural environment, biodiversity, tree planting and protection and water quality.

Housing

- The Plan continues to seek to maximise the supply of housing and permanent self-contained housing continues to be the priority land-use of the Plan.
- The Plan aims to deliver 11,550 additional homes over the period to 2041 (equivalent to 770 homes per year). This takes into account the borough's current housing target in the London Plan (10,380 homes 2019/20 - 2028/29), the borough's capacity for additional housing identified in the most recent Londonwide Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, and the delay to development at Euston which has significantly reduced the number of homes expected to be delivered there by 2041.
- The approach to seeking affordable housing in the Plan is essentially unchanged from that in the current Local Plan. It is proposed to update the approach to estate regeneration to align with the London Plan.
- The approach to seeking housing as part of mixed-use schemes in Central London and large town centres has been expanded to cover a wider area and now provides more flexibility for off-site delivery so payments in lieu from sites south of Euston Road can be spent within Regents Park and Somers Town.
- The Plan proposes a more family-friendly approach to home alterations, in particular roof extensions, to support residents and families to expand and improve their homes to meet their needs.

Inclusive Economy

- Reflecting Camden's emerging affordable workspace strategy, the Plan proposes a new approach to the provision of affordable workspace that will enable the pooling of financial contributions (secured in lieu of on-site provision) to provide affordable workspace in areas where it is particularly

needed when that would deliver a better outcome. This will generate funding to help make best use of under-used vacant spaces, in our estates, neighbourhoods and high streets.

- In response to changing demand for offices and difficult to attain environmental standards, the new Plan proposes to give more flexibility in considering the future use of vacant offices so alternative uses including housing can be considered.
- The retail and town centres policy has been updated to reflect recent changes in national policy. A wider range of use are encouraged in centres, including childcare, affordable workspace, the sharing economy etc.. The approach has also been updated to support the Council's emerging Evening and Night-time Strategy.

Other key policy areas

- The Plan's design policy has been updated to emphasise the importance of celebrating and reflecting the diversity of the borough in the design of spaces and places, the importance of involving young people in the design of buildings, and applicants' design teams being diverse. This reflects Camden's Diversity in the Public Realm Strategy and the Diversity and Young People's missions.
- To support the delivery of the Council's food mission, the Plan has a policy supporting community food growing.
- The policy approach to tall buildings has been updated, based on the evidence provided by a building heights study, to ensure it is in general conformity with the tall buildings policy in the London Plan.
- The transport chapter has been updated to reflect the priorities set out in the Council's current transport strategy and associated action plans. The Plan also now makes reference to 'walking, cycling and wheeling', to ensure that development is designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users.
- The Local Plan Policies Map, which shows the areas where the various policies in the Plan apply, is also being updated as part of the review.

2.5 The Council previously consulted on a draft Site Allocations Local Plan, which set out the Council's preferred approach to sites identified as locations for significant future development (see section 5 of this report). Site allocations are now being incorporated into the draft new Local Plan, rather than being taken forward in a separate allocations plan.

2.6 The recommendations of this report seek approval for the Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment, to make further minor changes to the draft new Local Plan, if required, between the approval of the Cabinet report and publication of the draft plan for consultation. Such changes may be necessary, for example, to make factual updates, respond to requests from Members, or reflect changes to national policy.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1 As mentioned above, planning legislation requires councils to review, at least every five years, whether their local plan needs updating and then to update the plan as necessary. For the reasons set out in section 2, it is considered that the

Camden Local Plan should be updated, and this report seeks approval for a draft new Local Plan.

- 3.2 The Council could, as an alternative option, decide to delay the review of the Local Plan to a later time. However, the Council needs to have up-to-date planning policies in the Local Plan to ensure that its planning decisions are based on a locally-based approach focussed on delivering current Council priorities. Without an up-to-date local plan, policies contained in the more general and permissive National Planning Policy Framework would increasingly be the basis for planning decisions in the borough rather than the Council's own local policies. This would limit the Council's ability to ensure development contributes to meeting its priorities. Without an updated local plan the Council could also increasingly face difficulties in defending its decisions at planning appeals and an increase in permissions granted by a Planning Inspector contrary to the Council's own decisions.
- 3.3 The government is introducing a new, more prescribed system for preparing local plans through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. For the review of the Camden Local Plan to be progressed under the current system rather than the proposed new system, the review needs to be progressed now. If it is not, it would not meet the deadline to be set by transitional arrangements and would therefore need to be progressed under the new system, which increases central government control over the local plan process and reduces councils' autonomy in preparing their plans. (See also section 4 below.)
- 3.4 The Council has the option of whether to allocate particular sites or not and the content of the site allocations. The draft Local Plan incorporates the site allocations from the draft Site Allocations Local Plan, which was subject to consultation in 2020 and late 2021 / early 2022. A summary of the representations received during that consultation and engagement and responses to them are included in Appendix C.
- 3.5 To inform the development of the draft new Local Plan, a Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out. As part of the Sustainability Appraisal process there is a legal requirement to examine reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the Plan. The consideration of reasonable alternatives undertaken as part of the Appraisal of the draft Plan has focussed on the delivery of different growth scenarios, in relation to both the quantum of growth proposed and the broad spatial approach to the delivery of growth, with the aim of demonstrating that the approach taken within the Plan is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives considered. The Sustainability Appraisal is set out as Appendix D to this report and will be made available for comment during consultation on the draft new Local Plan.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

- 4.1 Local Plans need to be prepared in accordance with a statutory process and are at risk of legal challenge if procedures are not followed. The local plan review is being project managed to ensure that the review fully takes into account the relevant regulations, guidance in the National Planning Policy

Framework and Camden's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how the Council will involve the community in making planning decisions and policy.

- 4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment of the draft new Local Plan has been carried out, meeting the general equality duty under the Equalities Act 2010. This is attached as Appendix B to this report. The assessment considered the impact of the Plan on groups that are protected in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Impact on the following other groups was also assessed: foster carers, looked after children / care leavers, low income households, refugees and asylum seekers, parents (of any gender, with children aged under 18), people who are homeless, private rental tenants in deprived areas, single parent households, and social housing tenants. The assessment concluded that on balance the proposed policies in the draft new Local Plan would have a positive impact on the above groups particularly in relation to the provision of affordable housing; meeting housing needs for specific groups; jobs and training; provision of open space; design of public spaces; accessibility of buildings and spaces; safety and security; health and well-being; and the provision and protection of community and cultural facilities. Overall, it was therefore viewed that the Plan will have a positive impact on our duty to promote equality of opportunity and will help foster good relations between different groups in the community.
- 3.3 As noted in section 2 of this report, a sustainability appraisal (including a strategic environmental assessment) of the Plan has been carried out to meet the legal requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This is attached as Appendix D to this report. The appraisal assessed the environmental, social and economic impacts of the draft plan's policies and site allocations, allowing any potential harmful impacts to be identified and minimised and beneficial impacts to be maximised. The appraisal indicates that overall the draft new Local Plan will deliver a number of benefits in relation to meeting housing and economic need, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, providing social infrastructure and promoting sustainable development.
- 4.4 The Council has also been actively engaging with neighbouring local authorities and other bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure that the "duty to co-operate" introduced by the Localism Act 2011 is met.

Potential impact of government planning reforms

- 4.5 The government are introducing reforms to the planning system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. This includes a new system for preparing local plans. Under transitional arrangements, councils have until 30 June 2025 to submit local plans for examination under the current legal framework. If this deadline is missed, the Council would have to restart Local Plan preparation and progress the review under the new system, which would cause a substantial delay in the adoption of updated planning policies for the borough. The timetable for the production of the new Local Plan seeks to ensure that the Plan is submitted for examination in early 2025, prior to the transitional deadline.

4.6 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act also provides for the introduction of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs). These are to be prepared by the government and be given the same weight in planning decisions as policies in local plans and neighbourhood plans. Local plans would be precluded from including policies that duplicate or are inconsistent with National Development Management Policies. The topic coverage and wording of NDMPs are not yet known but may limit what can be included in the new Local Plan. The content of the new draft Camden Local Plan will be reviewed to respond to the introduction of any NDMPs in due course.

5. CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT

5.1 An initial 'call for views' on the Local Plan review was carried out in late 2022 / early 2023 to enable residents, community groups, businesses and other interested parties to share their views on the current Local Plan and priorities for the future.

5.2 This initial engagement primarily used the commonplace website, with paper copies of the commonplace material also made available in all libraries. The engagement was widely advertised through emails, newspaper advertisements, the Council's website, social media, and articles in newsletters. Officers also contacted groups who do not normally get involved in planning to raise awareness of the consultation and held a workshop with students from Regent High School to find out what is important for young people in Camden in relation to their local environment, both now and in the future. Initial engagement also included a series of Member meetings in December 2022 and three member briefings in Autumn 2023.

5.3 Over the consultation period, there were over 3,200 visitors to Local Plan commonplace site and over 1,500 comments were received from almost 250 respondents (either online, by email or on the paper form). A summary of the comments received and the Council's response are set out in Appendix C.

5.3 Some of the key messages from the engagement exercise are summarised below.

- The issue of the natural environment and climate change attracted the most comments, with respondents wanting greater emphasis on responding to the ecological and climate emergency. Key priorities for respondents included the retention and refurbishment of buildings over demolition; greater flexibilities to encourage the retrofitting of heritage assets; minimising waste and promoting a circular economy; and enhancing biodiversity.
- There was support for the Council's strategy to direct significant new development to growth areas and highly accessible town centre locations, and to promote sustainable developments in accessible locations.
- A number of respondents wanted a greater focus on supporting affordable family housing.
- There was support for measures to restrict short-term lets.
- The development industry requested greater flexibility in local plan policies relating to offices and economic development.
- There was support for a policy to deliver affordable workspace.

- A number of respondents were keen to encourage a greater mix of uses in town centres and there was support for measures to improve the quality of the environment in Camden's centres.
- There were calls for the Plan to identify locations where tall buildings would be considered a potentially appropriate form of development, with some suggesting tall buildings should be restricted elsewhere.
- A number of respondents commented that health and wellbeing should be a key consideration.
- There was support for the current approach to prioritising walking and cycling in the borough and calls for this to be broadened out to include wheelchair users.

5.4 The Council carried out consultation and engagement on a draft Site Allocations Local Plan in early 2020 and again winter 2021/22. Key issues raised as part of these consultations relate to the proposed allocation of the O2 centre in West Hampstead, in addition to site specific comments about other proposed allocations. (Planning Committee has since resolved to grant planning permission for the development of the O2 site subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement.) As noted in paragraph 2.3 above, site allocations are now being incorporated into the new draft Local Plan, rather than being progressed as a separate plan. Initial engagement on the Local Plan review included a 'call for sites' to provide a further opportunity for potential sites for housing, employment and gypsy and traveller accommodation to be proposed for allocation. The comments received during all stages of engagement on the site allocations have informed the allocations contained in the draft Local Plan. A summary of the responses received during engagement on site allocations and the Council's response is included within Appendix C to this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In considering the recommendations the Cabinet must have due regard to the impact those decisions will have upon the Council's statutory duty with regard to equalities as set out in Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010. In summary these legal obligations require the Council and Cabinet, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to: 1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; 2) to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; 3) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Under the Duty the relevant protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion, Sex, Sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim only - i.e. reducing discrimination, etc. - the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant.

6.2 Other legal comments are incorporated in this report.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Draft New Local Plan updates future development needs for Camden on the numbers of additional homes and office and retail floorspace that the Council needs over the Plan period. These should have a positive impact on both council tax and business rates.
- 7.2 As set out in section 4.5 of the report government planning reforms introduced under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act means that there is a risk if the New Local Plan is not produced under transitional arrangements there could be substantial delay in adopting and updating planning policies under the new system which will have financial implications for the Council.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Responding to the climate and ecological emergency and delivering the actions identified in the Council's Climate Action Plan is a key focus of the new draft Local Plan. The draft Plan sets out the measures we will expect development to take to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 8.2 Policies seek to achieve energy reduction and carbon emissions reduction in new buildings and the retrofitting of existing buildings to make them more energy efficient and reduce energy needs. They promote the repurposing and re-use of existing buildings over demolition; designing buildings to respond to a changing climate in terms of overheating and cooling; and the circular economy and the reduction of waste. Draft Plan policies also expect development to minimise the risk of flooding; maximise water efficiency; protect and enhance existing green spaces; provide additional green infrastructure; enhance biodiversity; strengthen nature recovery; and prioritise sustainable transport.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 The review of the Local Plan has to follow statutory procedures. Subject to Cabinet approval the draft new Local Plan set out in Appendix A will be made available for consultation and engagement in early 2024. Following this, all representations will be considered and amendments proposed to the Plan where necessary. The revised version of the Plan, along with a summary of the representations received and the Council's response, will then be reported to Cabinet / Council in late 2024, prior to a further round of consultation and then submission of the Plan to the government for public examination by a Planning Inspector, envisaged in early 2025.
- 9.2 An emerging plan is a relevant matter ('material consideration') in planning decisions with the weight given to it depending on the stage of preparation on the draft plan (with weight increasing as the plan progresses) and the extent particular elements have attracted objections. At this early stage in the preparation process the draft new Local Plan will have limited weight in planning decisions but as a statement of the Council's emerging approach it will begin to be used to influence planning proposals.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft Camden Local Plan

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment of the Draft Camden Local Plan

Appendix C - Summary of responses to initial engagement

Appendix D - Sustainability appraisal of the Draft Camden Local Plan

REPORT ENDS