

COUNCIL – 22nd JULY 2024

BUSINESS FROM THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 4th MARCH 2024

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 4th March 2024.

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 4th March 2024, 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 4th March 2024 are attached as Appendix B.

4. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

COUNCIL 4th MARCH 2024

UNCONSIDERED MOTIONS

Appendix A

1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Spinella and which was seconded by Councillor Stark

This Council notes that proposals are being presented to change the current licensing policy to extend framework hours to 2am and to remove the automatic presumption to refuse in Special Policy areas such as Camden Town and Seven Dials.

This Council notes that such radical changes in policy will make it difficult to achieve the licensing objectives of prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour, public nuisance and harm to children.

This Council notes that high streets right next to residential areas such as West End Lane, Belsize Village, Heath Street, Hampstead High Street, Kilburn High Street, Kentish Town Road and more will now have venues with licensable activities open until very late at night, with all the potential for anti-social behaviour and public nuisance.

This Council notes that Camden Town and Seven Dials will be subjected to even more cumulative impact of restaurants, bars and clubs.

This Council notes that as of the time of this motion, no evidence, no raw data has been presented to justify these proposed changes, no formal consultation has been undertaken and police and residents' associations have raised numerous objections to the proposed changes.

This Council also notes that a number of residents have claimed they have been excluded from the process of coming up with the new proposed policy and allegedly have been excluded from any Citizens' Assembly. This Council also notes that a Citizens' Assembly cannot be a replacement for a proper statutory consultation.

This Council therefore resolves to reconsider its proposals in light of the objections raised by the numerous responsible authorities and interested parties, to publish its data and to present a new night-time economy strategy that is not raised to the detriment of Camden's residents.

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

The Council recently adopted a new Evening and Night-time Economy strategy with a clear aim to ensure Camden is welcoming, safe and inclusive in the evening and night-time. Our new strategy includes clear actions to promote women's safety, promote family friendly, inclusive and non-alcohol led experiences, diversifying the evening economy, looking at more evening markets and championing the cultural offer at night.

The strategy marks our new approach to ensure better management of the evening economy. This includes the Council's commitment to over £1 million in additional investment for street cleaning and jet washing on high streets, and night-time clean

ups to ensure our high streets are clean in the day. Reinforced by the implementation of a Licensing Charter to influence better stewardship from licensed premises, both inside and outside venues.

The strategy was the subject of a public consultation and engagement exercise where over 1,500 people engaged. This included online engagement, a representative Citizens' Assembly, and face-to-face community meetings - including in evening economy 'hot spots'.

There is ongoing engagement on key aspects of draft Licensing Policy, especially with the Metropolitan Police and we are listening to key stakeholders to understand how it balances interests in delivering the four Licensing Objectives. Should Licensing Committee approve the draft policy it will be subject to 12 weeks statutory consultation. After this consultation takes place and any material changes are made as a result, then Licensing Committee and Full Council will adopt the new Statement of Licensing Policy.

2. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Aref-Adib and which was seconded by Councillor Olszewski

This Council notes that:

Since 2010, Camden Council's core funding from national government has been slashed by 48% in real terms by successive Conservative governments.

Nationally, local authorities are facing a record cash shortfall in the coming year, according to data compiled by Unison. Many local authorities have once again been forced to make extremely difficult funding decisions that will impact frontline services and communities.

Across the country, local authorities have taken a big financial hit, in large part due to the economic incompetence of successive Conservative governments, with numerous local authorities being pushed into bankruptcy and issued 'Section 114' notices.

This Council further notes that:

Camden has taken a responsible approach to managing its finances, meaning the Council is not at risk of a 'Section 114' bankruptcy notice, and is able to provide support for residents and deliver good quality local services.

Despite budget constraints, Camden has supported residents through the cost of living crisis by investing in a Cost of Living Fund, delivering a generous Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and rolling out free school meals for all primary school pupils on a permanent basis.

The final local government finance settlement for 2024-25 is too little, too late for many local authorities. It follows 14 years of drastic cuts to core funding, which has had a devastating impact on the delivery of key local services that all communities rely upon.

This Council resolves to:

Take all necessary steps to ensure the Council continues to operate on a sound financial footing in the medium and long term.

Regularly assess additional ways we can offer financial support to residents throughout the cost of living crisis and deliver good quality local services.

Lobby national government to deliver a sustainable and fairer funding settlement for local government, especially as the demands facing local services grow and become increasingly more complex. Also, lobby national government to urgently deliver a fairer settlement for the Household Support Fund.

RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

The Council has faced significant government funding reductions since 2010 and as a result we have been forced to cut close to £230m from our budgets. The previous government had no sustainable strategy for funding local government, and this is demonstrated by the increasing number of councils issuing section 114 notices – effectively a declaration of bankruptcy.

The election on 4 July 2024 means that there will be a new Labour Government. The national Labour Party manifesto includes a commitment to ‘give councils multi-year funding settlements and end wasteful competitive bidding’ as well as providing ‘capacity and support to councils’. A multi-year settlement will give the Council greater certainty and stability and better support the long-term planning of resources. The details of any multi-year settlement are likely to be available in the coming months and will feed into the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The financial challenges facing the Council should not be underestimated, however it is important to note that the Council is financially stable and resilient and is not in a position where it will need to issue a section 114 notice or need to make short-term reductions in services in order to balance its budget. We will work with the new Labour government towards a fair financial settlement for local authorities that includes long term settlements to allow local authorities to properly plan the use of their resources.

A key element of our approach to financial planning is the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Our MTFS is purpose-led, mobilising our increasingly limited resources to support the aims and ambitions of ‘We Make Camden’, our refreshed vision for the future of Camden.

We Make Camden sets out our commitment to investing in our communities, our organisation and our staff to achieve our ambitions of a fairer, more equal and more sustainable borough. In the absence of a national funding system for local government that reflects the capacity and opportunity of councils in communities, we believe that the Council can and should step forward to plan its spending in a way that is aligned with its values and priorities. A key element of this mission is to continue to support residents throughout the cost-of-living crisis and deliver good quality local services.

Our MTFS also allows us to plan our finances over the medium term and to continue to invest in early intervention and prevention, avoiding costly crisis support. Planning in a purpose-led and intentional way also means that we are able to set a balanced budget

without the use of reserves to fund day-to-day services. When money is drawn down from reserves and not replenished in equal or greater proportion reserves start to deplete increasing the risk to the Council's financial resilience.

While the financial climate is undoubtedly challenging, we have a strong track record and approach to financial management in Camden. We will continue to monitor our financial health to ensure that we can continue to fund services that we know our citizens and communities need.

Household Support Fund

It is disappointing that the Household Support Fund was not included in the previous government's announcement of local authority funding in early 2024. In 2023/24, Camden received £4m and this has been a key feature of the package of support for low-income families during the cost-of-living crisis. With this funding, we have been able to provide school holiday vouchers, financial awards to households ineligible for national schemes and expert advice to support them to maximise their income.

On 6 March 2024, the previous Chancellor announced that the Household Support Fund has been extended for six months to September 2024. While the extension of the fund is welcome, it is disappointing that we had to wait until the very last minute for an extension, and that it is only for a short period. The Council will continue to work with London Councils and the Local Government Association for a long-term solution to support those in most need.

3. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Dixey and which was seconded by Councillor Simon

This Council notes that:

1. More and more councils are struggling to balance their budgets due to the soaring costs of social care with a shortfall of funding across London of nearly £600 million.
2. Despite a 27 per cent real-terms reduction in core spending power for councils since 2010/11, children's social care budgets increased by £1.5 billion in the last year alone as councils fight to ensure children's wellbeing.
3. In his first speech as Prime Minister in 2019, Boris Johnson stated that the Government would "fix the crisis in social care once and for all" but that promise has been broken. Since the General Election in 2019 there have been five Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care, none of whom have kept that promise.
4. The gross spend on nursing care has increased by 29% over the past 18 months and residential care has increased by 17%. Camden spends £2m a week on adult social care.
5. Children's Social Care in Camden is having to spend £6m beyond its budget. This is driven by cost inflation in care placements for looked after children.

6. A recent Carers Trust survey noted that one-in-eight unpaid carers are caring for an extra 50 hours a week or more over the past year.
7. NHS organisations and charities have warned that the Government's newly-announced ban on migrant care workers bringing dependents with them to the UK risks deepening the care sector's recruitment and retention crisis.

This Council believes that:

- The proper provision of social care for children and adults is the hallmark of a civilised society and should be placed on an equal footing with NHS care and funded accordingly.
- The role of unpaid carers should be financially recognised and valued for the work that they do.
- A shift towards preventative social care is essential, ensuring individuals can remain in their homes longer and children and families receive early support tailored to their needs.

This Council calls on the government:

- To properly fund social care via national taxation rather than the regressive council tax which unfairly penalises people on lower incomes.
- To provide additional funding for children's services, reducing demand, stabilising placements, and enhancing outcomes for children and families.
- To urgently reform carers allowance and to provide a package of support for unpaid carers.
- To reject any proposals to restrict visa rules for health and care workers.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet to:

- Work with other London boroughs to lobby for new investment in adult social care to bring down waiting lists for care assessments, address the recruitment and retention challenges within the workforce and provide more stability to the provider sector.

RESPONSE BY THE CABINET MEMBER HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CABINET MEMBER FOR BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Council agrees that both adults' and children's social care budgets are facing significant pressures. This is particularly noticeable in Adult Social Care, where recruitment to key roles such as Social Work and Occupational Therapy remains a challenge both in Camden and across London. We believe that preventative approaches in social care are critical to improving outcomes for people of all ages in Camden, reducing pressures on our services and ensuring value for money. There are

a number of approaches underway to support us in improving outcomes and managing the pressures we are experiencing.

For Children and Young People, these include:

- Camden's well-established system of Early Help in place for CYP, which takes a 'no wrong door' approach to ensure children get support from the right team as early as possible. We are currently piloting a joint point of referral for CAMHS, social care and Early Help, starting with referrals from GPs.
- Our history of investing in early intervention, including our Family Hubs model and mental health prevention, which includes social prescribing, creative therapies and counselling services.
- Undertaking a detailed analysis of our spend on placements for looked after children and care experienced young people, as well as sufficiency of provision; this is to ensure we have value for money placements available to meet children's needs.
- Beginning work on the recommissioning of our Young People's Pathway (supported accommodation for care experienced young people) and working across adults' and children's social care to review accommodation-based support for young adults.
- Launching a new Young Carers Strategy to review support for young people caring for parents/carers or other family members.
- We continue to work within defined forums such as the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to impress upon Government to implement the recommendations of the independent review into Children's social care which called for an end to private providers profiteering from Children's social care (residential and fostering provision). The 'Safeguarding Pressures' report also provides an annual analysis on the financial pressures on Local Authorities providing Children's Social Care detailing the long-term impact of this. We participate in surveys and provide relevant information which assists with the compiling of such reports to realise national solutions.

For Adults, these include:

- Establishing our first Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) in Kentish Town in Summer 2024. This trial project will bring together colleagues across primary care, social services, physical health and mental health, as well as aspects of community services, to ensure people receive holistic, strengths-based support that builds their independence. Health and care professionals will be co-located within the same building at Kentish Town Health Centre and work together in a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to deliver innovative solutions for residents at a 'neighbourhood level'.
- Developing a co-designed Carers Action Plan (for adults over the age of 18 who provide unpaid care for other adults) and a Partnership Board to oversee the implementation of actions. This is due to launch with a themed debate at Full Council in July 2024.
- Significantly extending our Adult Safeguarding training and delivering 28 sessions to up-skill our workforce, including a multi-agency toolkit for self-neglect and rolling out suicide prevention training across the organisation.

- Delivering £40.4m of Better Care Funding for innovative improvements to social care, including a Disabilities Facilities Grant and Home Improvement Service, the Careline Assistive Technology service for home monitoring and emergency alarms, the Autism Hub which supports autistic adults to access services, counselling and peer support, and a 'Minding the Gap' service for 18 to 25-year-olds.
- Developing a Test and Learn pilot for 'Adult Early Help', with recruitment of an AEH Lead and four caseworkers to complete in July 2024, joining the Prevention and Wellbeing team in Adult Social Care. Caseworkers will work closely with smaller cohorts of residents at risk of falling through the gaps or not meeting traditional thresholds for support across Council services. Continuous learning will inform how Camden joins existing pockets of preventative work across adult social care and health into a strategically unified offer. It is envisaged that the second phase of the pilot will take place within a neighbourhood setting.

The Council agrees that joint working with other London boroughs and influencing national government policy is key to providing greater stability in the sector.

ENDS

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION 1

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN

BY: COUNCILLOR JAMES SLATER

Montpelier Gardens and Leighton Crescent Gardens are extremely valuable parks in my ward for recreation and relaxation. However, residents are keen to see investment in these vital green spaces to ensure they are as useable, accessible, and wildlife-friendly as possible. Can the cabinet member commit to investing in these parks in the coming year?

REPLY

Thank you to Cllr Slater and Cllr McNamara for championing the parks and green spaces of Kentish Town North.

I am pleased to say that we will allocate £120,000 to a combined project this year covering Leighton Crescent Gardens and Montpelier Gardens together: they share geography and local community, and it is clear there are improvements we can make in each location. We will designate a green space project officer to work on this. They will embark on an initial engagement phase with ward councillors and members of the community, who have also made clear how much they value these gardens and want to see them improved. Following this, we will draw up plans for investment and changes to these much-valued parks.

QUESTION 2

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

BY: COUNCILLOR TOM SIMON

Please provide a breakdown of the funding sources for the Council's core spending power compared to all other London boroughs. Please do this in the form of a table showing in percentage terms, for each of the boroughs, the balance between Council Tax Requirement, Settled Funding Assessment, Social Care Grants and other CSP grants.

REPLY

	Core Spending Power 2024/25 £m	Council Tax Requirement £m	Council Tax Requirement %	Settlement Funding Assessment £m	Settlement Funding Assessment %	Social Care Grants £m	Social Care Grants %	Other Grant s £m	Other Grants %
Camden	340.5	143.30	42%	146.4	43%	50.1	15%	0.7	0%
Greenwich	322.8	125.28	39%	139.4	43%	56.5	17%	1.7	1%
Hackney	359.8	110.09	31%	187.2	52%	61.5	17%	1.0	0%
Hammersmith and Fulham	220.3	77.95	35%	101.4	46%	38.9	18%	2.0	1%
Islington	315.7	119.56	38%	140.5	45%	54.3	17%	1.3	0%
Kensington and Chelsea	216.3	103.53	48%	80.8	37%	31.6	15%	0.4	0%
Lambeth	403.2	158.40	39%	183.8	46%	59.0	15%	2.0	0%
Lewisham	354.8	139.38	39%	157.5	44%	55.2	16%	2.7	1%
Southwark	411.3	146.18	36%	194.6	47%	65.3	16%	5.3	1%
Tower Hamlets	390.9	140.79	36%	186.0	48%	61.2	16%	2.9	1%
Wandsworth	264.8	73.17	28%	124.4	47%	60.2	23%	7.0	3%
Westminster	288.3	69.01	24%	153.9	53%	62.3	22%	3.1	1%

City of London	40.4	9.24	23%	29.2	72%	1.5	4%	0.1	0%
Barking and Dagenham	221.3	82.99	38%	96.8	44%	38.9	18%	2.5	1%
Barnet	360.8	228.20	63%	84.2	23%	45.5	13%	2.9	1%
Bexley	223.3	140.47	63%	51.7	23%	30.0	13%	1.2	1%
Brent	361.5	160.17	44%	145.0	40%	51.5	14%	3.5	1%
Bromley	286.4	199.73	70%	50.0	17%	35.7	12%	0.7	0%
Croydon	424.2	264.24	62%	113.5	27%	43.5	10%	3.0	1%
Ealing	360.6	181.97	50%	121.4	34%	51.4	14%	5.8	2%
Enfield	320.6	154.20	48%	117.9	37%	47.9	15%	0.6	0%
Haringey	309.5	131.45	42%	133.3	43%	42.3	14%	2.4	1%
Harrow	248.6	163.01	66%	53.5	22%	29.4	12%	0.4	0%
Havering	236.4	157.18	66%	46.7	20%	31.6	13%	1.0	0%
Hillingdon	250.3	145.43	58%	69.6	28%	34.3	14%	0.9	0%
Hounslow	250.9	137.34	55%	75.8	30%	34.7	14%	3.0	1%

Kingston	169.3	123.80	73%	28.7	17%	14.7	9%	0.7	0%
Merton	196.6	119.78	61%	53.0	27%	23.2	12%	0.4	0%
Newham	367.1	109.77	30%	189.4	52%	64.3	18%	3.6	1%
Redbridge	269.1	146.48	54%	82.1	31%	40.1	15%	0.4	0%
Richmond	208.1	160.42	77%	29.4	14%	15.5	7%	0.2	0%
Sutton	203.3	125.66	62%	55.5	27%	20.9	10%	0.5	0%
Waltham Forest	293.9	138.18	47%	113.9	39%	40.0	14%	1.9	1%
London	9,490.61	4,486.32	47%	3536.5	37%	1393.2	15%	65.6	1%

Council Tax Requirement

The numbers in the Core Spending power figures are the Government's estimate of the amount of Council Tax that each Council will be able to raise if it charged the maximal allowable Council Tax. The actual amount raised is likely to be different (even if the full charge is levied) as the Government make an estimate of each Council's tax base when they issue the core spending power figures.

Settlement Funding Assessment

This is a combination of the Revenue Support Grant and Retained Business Rates, plus business rates multiplier grant. The multiplier grant is shown separately in the core spending power but I have included it in the Settlement Funding assessment figures as it relates to retained business rates. Again this is an estimate and the exact level of retained business rates may be different. There is a level of risk and reward built into the business rates system. In practice Camden's retained business rates could be up to c£9m lower than the figure in the Core Spending Power. It may also be higher.

QUESTION 3

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

BY: COUNCILLOR ANDREW PARKINSON

Please can you set out:

- (a) how many breaches of planning control were reported to the Council in the last 18 months
- (b) the average length of time to investigate those breaches
- (c) following investigation, what is the number of cases where the Council has concluded that there has been a breach of planning control.
- (d) as a percentage of this figure, on how many occasions did the Council take enforcement action.

REPLY

The data set out below is taken from the 1st September 2022 to date, which means cases we have only just received are included.

- a) how many breaches of planning control were reported to the Council in the last 18 months

1056 (158 still active and 898 closed)

b) the average length of time to investigate those breaches

The total time from opening a case, to a conclusion of the case and closure, is on average 11.8 weeks

c) following investigation, what is the number of cases where the Council has concluded that there has been a breach of planning control.

669

d) as a percentage of this figure, on how many occasions did the Council take enforcement action.

- Formal action (notice issued) 15%
- Informal action (threat of formal action to secure resolution of the breach) 49%
- Planning permission granted (retrospectively) 11%
- Not expedient (5%)

The information set out above includes formal and informal enforcement action and where cases are closed without action. Most cases are closed because a resolution has been secured through informal and formal action, but we do also a good number of retrospective applications (to regularise a breach) and only a small amount are closed because it is not considered expedient to take action against a breach.

QUESTION 4

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER START FOR BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

BY: COUNCILLOR CAMERON AREF-ADIB

Could the cabinet member describe how it measures free school meal uptake, why it uses the measures it does, and what is the latest uptake figure?

REPLY

The measurement of Free School Meals (FSM) and its take up is measured during the national School Census undertaken by all state maintained schools, and is therefore a figure that can be compared nationally across all reporting authorities. As a result the measurement relates to a snapshot on a single day of the school year of the amount of pupils that are eligible and registered for FSM at each school, and the amount of FSMs that are taken up on census day. The Spring 2023 School Census data shows that the uptake of FSM from eligible pupils was 86.2% in state-funded primaries, 62.3% in state funded secondaries, and 78% in state funded special schools. As a proportion of all Camden Pupils 74.5% of eligible pupils took up their FSM entitlement.

The measurement and tracking of FSM data is important for the Council and Schools. FSM proportionality within schools has a direct relationship to the level of Pupil Premium funding that is received by any school.

As a result of GLA funding, free school meals are currently available for all Camden primary school pupils and the Council is also completing an in-depth Test and Learn review, in partnership with schools, to look at ways to increase the take-up of the national FSM entitlement among eligible secondary school pupils.

QUESTION 5

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

BY: COUNCILLOR IZZY LENGA

Can the cabinet member give an update on the work being undertaken by the Council concerning a public health campaign to reduce vaping amongst young people?

REPLY

Vaping can be an effective way for adults to quit smoking, and smokers switching to vaping will reduce risks to their health. But the rise of vaping amongst young people is very concerning. Vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, nicotine cravings can affect your wellbeing, concentration and sleep, and long-term effects on health are uncertain. Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) reported a significant increase in vaping among teenagers nationally in 2023, and local data in Camden shows that one in four 12–17-year-olds have tried vaping in 2022. Camden's Director of Health and Wellbeing hosted a series of London-wide webinars on youth vaping with clinical and VCS partners to give further focus to this issue this year.

National action has been needed to ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing teen vaping, using all available levers. In December 2023 Camden Council responded to the Government consultation, calling for plain packaging, restriction of flavours, ban of single use vapes and new measures to tackle illegal products. Camden's local action plan has focused on:

1. **School engagement:** Lesson/workshop materials for students, schools and parents have been updated by the Council, and will start to be rolled out from this month, using the new Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE) resources (campaignresources.phe.gov.uk), tailored to Camden's population. Camden's longstanding Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire distributed through schools will also be updated this year to enable better understanding of vaping behaviour by young people in Camden.

2. **Communications:** A new vaping leaflet tailored for young people and for discussion with parents has been developed by the Health and Wellbeing Department, with information on health effects, environmental concerns and safety considerations of legal products. This has been distributed widely since 8 January 2024.
3. **Retailer enforcement:** Trading Standards undertake ongoing intelligence gathering to inform enforcement action regarding age-restricted sales and illicit vapes. Enforcement action has become more focused following greater understanding of the concentration of retailers selling vapes near to secondary schools. Since September 2023 Trading Standards conducted 98 visits, issuing advice and guidance on the legal responsible sale of vapes including recycling information, tobacco notices and refusal logs. 20 visits have been carried out to test for sale of age restricted sales of vapes, with 7 of the premises tested selling vapes underage. 2,530 vapes have been seized from 7 out of 18 seizure visits.
4. **Responsible retailer support:** Trading Standards have developed the Responsible Retailer pack in support of legal sales, including information about keeping recycling bins. A pilot programme of interviewing and testing is underway with the Health & Wellbeing Behavioural Insights lead to assess effectiveness of the pack, including retailer response and attitudes to the pack. This will inform wider roll out across Camden.
5. **Understanding promising behaviour change interventions, for action in Camden and across London:** The Health & Wellbeing Department are leading work for London's Behavioural Science Public Health Network to understand the barriers and enablers to youth vaping using a whole systems approach. A rapid evidence assessment and a research proposal are underway to inform planning for the second year of Camden's action plan, as well as action across London.

QUESTION 6

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

BY: COUNCILLOR LLOYD HATTON

What is Camden Council doing to address the growing epidemic of preventable disease and poorer quality of life that is linked to rising rates of obesity?

REPLY

We are in a health and wellbeing crisis linked to population levels of overweight and obesity that keeps intensifying. This crisis has major and sustained impact on residents,

communities, health & care services, workplaces, and the economy. Reducing and reversing this impact requires concerted and ongoing local/national action on a range of factors, drawing together the collective action of a broad range of organisations/sectors.

Camden had the first meeting of a Healthy Weight Driving Group in January attended by key leads from different organisations/departments. Camden is committed to drawing on all available resources and levers to support residents to have and maintain a healthy weight. This will include enhancing the local environment to support healthy behaviours (addressing the “obesogenic” environment), and continuing to address the wider determinants of health, including poverty experienced across our communities. A plan is being developed to build on recent preventative progress made in the early years, and through joint work with Camden’s family of schools on a whole school approach to food including free school meals and healthier food choices. This plan will also include support for adults motivated to move towards a healthier weight, often at key stages of life. Work is closely aligned with the Food Mission’s ambition for Camden residents to eat well every day, with good quality food that is good for them and for the planet.

The Council works closely with the NHS to support a range of programmes that can help individuals living with obesity to lose significant weight, and potentially reverse the impact and incidence of linked long-term conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Residents are encouraged by the NHS to visit their GP for advice around losing weight safely, and to consider programme(s) or treatment that would work best for them. This could include joining the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme for those on the cusp of being diagnosed with diabetes, the NHS’s diabetes path to remission programme (low calorie treatment for those with diabetes), or the NHS Digital Weight Management programme (12 weeks digital behavioural support for those with diabetes or high blood pressure). There is also a drive across the NHS locally to assess individual’s height and weight in relevant patient appointments, and offer brief advice and signposting to those who could benefit. Support at hospital has been a specific focus, for example within outpatient appointments, to then link to ongoing support through community services.

Residents living with obesity can also self-refer to the More Life weight management service commissioned by the Health & Wellbeing Department, which offers face to face or virtual support over 12 weeks in venues across the borough. As women are more likely than men to access these programmes, the Department is working closely with Arsenal in the Community to run their Shape Up programme delivered by men for men, and which achieves similar results. The Department also commissions the local NHS Health Checks programme in primary care which is another opportunity to support people in midlife at greater risk of preventable health conditions. The Council promotes these services through a range of channels and amplifies national campaigns that connect well with our residents.

QUESTION 7

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

BY: COUNCILLOR LOTIS BAUTISTA

The NHS is currently consulting on proposals for changes to maternity, neonatal and children's surgical services. This includes proposals for additional investment in maternity services at the Whittington Hospital but may result in the closure of the maternity unit at the Royal Free Hospital. Has Camden responded to the consultation and what assurances have been sought around the potential impact this may?

REPLY

Yes, Camden Council is drafting a response to the consultation. The response highlights that we recognise the clinical rationale behind the proposed changes, but we are seeking assurances around certain concerns that are summarised below:

With respect to the changes to maternity and neonatal services, we have asked for assurance

- that the potential closure of the maternity unit at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) does not risk a reduction in the quality and availability of specialist care for women and mothers;
- that the closure of the stand-alone midwifery led birthing unit at Edgware will be offset, not only by the availability of midwifery-led units alongside the retained maternity units, but that there will be increased investment in home birth and related midwifery led options;
- that mitigations devised to address greater travel times and costs to residents due to the need for some to travel further for maternity and neonatal care are implemented in a co-designed way with local residents;
- that the case for change that proposed closure of the Royal Free unit is not based on a shortage of staff and skills at the Royal Free but by the nature of the provision at that site, and the demand and flow of cases which make it impossible to maintain skill levels and retain staff;
- that the current unique offer and added value provided by the RFH site in terms of the culturally appropriateness of services in particular for our Somali and Jewish Orthodox residents that is highly valued, will be replicated at any alternative site that these patients need;
- that adequate time is allocated to planning implementation of proposed changes engaging with service leads for maternity and neonatal community services across Camden Council, NHS, VCS

With respect to the changes to children's surgical services, we have asked for assurance

- that strong equity-based mitigation measures need to be put in place to mitigate the impact of increased travel times for some residents, particularly those with protected characteristics and from lower income households;
- that there will be greater join up of hospital pathways with borough-based services due to the wider catchment of patients that will be seen in the centres of expertise proposed, and that changes do not unintentionally disadvantage any population groups over others.

QUESTION 8

TO THE: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BY: COUNCILLOR MATT COOPER

What outreach work has the Council undertaken to improve voter registration in the borough and improve voter awareness of the upcoming mayoral and GLA elections?

REPLY

There is a range of work happening to improve voter registration across Camden and to improve voter awareness of the upcoming mayoral and GLA elections, as well as increase understanding of new rules and processes – such as the requirement to present voter ID to vote.

Currently this work has a particular focus on supporting and increasing voter registration and raising awareness of voter ID. As we move closer to the election date we will also be sharing across all of our channels practical information about voting – e.g. where and when to vote – with a focus on ensuring high turnout on the day.

Some of the ways we have reached out to residents so far to raise awareness of the election include:

- A letter to all Camden residents, sent in October
- Bus stops (up around borough since October)
- Household Enquiry Letters sent in February checking who should be registered to vote and encouraging outstanding applications to be completed
- Leaflet included with forms sent out during Annual Canvass, and Household Enquiry Letters
- An insert in the cost of living crisis booklet (November)
- A feature in the Camden winter magazine (December) and a feature in the upcoming spring issue too
- Ongoing social media
- Ongoing e-newsletter features
- Ongoing internal communications

- Ongoing sharing in members' updates
- An insert in the upcoming Council Tax letter and Housing Benefit mail-out sent to all Camden residents
- Posters to be shared in libraries
- A leaflet is being prepared which sets out the requirements for voter ID and this will be shared across the borough in public spaces such as libraries
- Working with Rainbow Camden regarding Voter ID.

As mentioned above there will be continued and increased communications as we move closer to the election date. In addition, all people who have failed the application process for a Voter Authentication Certificate have been written to with a paper application and offered support to complete it.

As well as this the Elections Team are working with the Accessible Information Team to create a package for people with disabilities.

We continue to explore all the 'touchpoints' we have at our disposal to get our messaging further – such as our libraries, community centres and through our residents – and are working with other boroughs to ensure joined-up messaging where possible and necessary.

QUESTION 9

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

BY: COUNCILLOR REBECCA FILER

Camden Council has set out a bold mission that everyone in the borough should have access to three healthy and sustainable meals per day, what action towards delivering this mission has been undertaken and what progress has been made to date?

REPLY

We Make Camden sets out a clear mission that by 2030, every person in Camden will eat well every day, with good-quality, affordable food that is good for them and the planet. The importance of good nutrition in ensuring that children are ready to start school is also a key part of Camden's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Our Food Mission makes clear that we will work across partners and systems to respond to the issue of food poverty and food insecurity - taking a public health approach that recognises the social and economic conditions that prevent people from accessing good food every day.

Our Food Mission approach as a long-term approach to addressing the systemic conditions of unsustainable or insecure food access - is strongly connected to our

immediate crisis response work as part of our cost-of-living response - and our work through our strategic partners to create a strong and resilient community partnership around the issue of food poverty. Over the past three years including as part of our cost-of-living response, Camden has invested approximately £2.3m into food support including working with our voluntary and community sector partners. There are now over forty food providers in Camden working to support people to access food, to address cost barriers to affordable food access and working to change the wider system of food access in the borough.

As part of the budget this year we are proposing further additional funding to support the Camden Food Mission in its systemic work. This funding will strengthen and widen the Camden Food Partnership and to enable the establishment of the infrastructure that would support initiatives such as collective buying power among residents and organisations, and support local efforts to establish community kitchens and other food pantries including co-ops. Additionally, it will support the development of community-based advice services, providing residents with comprehensive casework support from start to finish, helping them reduce expenses and maximise benefits. We are working with our Camden Food Partnership to steer our focus and shared resources toward areas that will make the most difference. As part of the Strategic Partners Fund, we will be measuring the impact through our grant funding around how our investment in the food mission is:

- Supporting a sustainable and thriving voluntary and community sector;
- Tackling and preventing poverty;
- Empowering communities and supporting social action;
- Strengthening the Camden food partnership.

Over the last two years, approximately twenty resident-led food initiatives have been set up via Camden Giving and the We Make Camden kit focusing on work to support our Food Mission – a few examples are:

- The Sherriff Centre Set up a Growth Project which aims to reduce food poverty and food waste;
- Bengali Men's Project Lunch Club – Provided freshly cooked meals once a week;
- Holly Lodge Estate - Start-up funding for Food Co-op: Inc. transport storage shelves, publicity and community events promoting and for group co-operative food purchases;
- Somali Community Centre - Teaching and encouraging single-family households in managing income efficiently: Inc. training on how to develop systems to support households in managing budget, minimising waste maximising/income. Also hosted a Community Eid al-Adha celebration;
- Healthy Beginnings - Set up a community kitchen to educate and inform – budgeting, batch cooking; and

- A resident on Bourne Estate secured start-up funding for a project focused on Food for the homeless – Distribution and preparing hot meals, working in partnership with Bourne Estate TRA.

This work sits alongside the wider work occurring with Camden schools to address child hunger during the school day and during school holidays. Camden is taking a whole school approach to addressing hunger aligned with our public health approach across the Food Mission – investing in breakfast clubs, holiday vouchers, and new approaches to increasing free school meal uptake and awareness.

Our priority across our Food Mission work is to move beyond providing people with crisis food, and toward dignified and choice-based options where our local food system is affordable and sustainable for everyone and where the health and wellbeing of our citizens can be supported through healthy diet.

QUESTION 10

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR LORNA JANE RUSSELL

To ask the Cabinet Member for Better Homes to detail the last major works programme carried out across each Camden Council estate (year and explanation on what this was for), and to provide details on all future planned major work programmes across all estates in the borough (estimated date and explanation on what this will cover).

REPLY

The Council has a rolling five year Better Homes programme and schemes are reviewed each year as part of the programme setting process. An overview was taken to Cabinet in July 2021 as part of the resident safety report:

[Resident Safety Programme report.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

The programme is kept up to date and refreshed on Camden Open Data, link below:

[External Better Homes Programme | Open Data Portal \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

Please note that the 2023 stock condition survey was recently completed and we will be fully refreshing our asset management strategy and programme during the Spring and Summer. A report to the March DMCs details this:

[Discussion Report - Works Planning.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

ENDS