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| LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN | WARDS: All Wards |
| REPORT TITLE Insight, Learning and Impact Report – Quarter 2 2024/25 | |
| REPORT OF Executive Directors of Adults and Health, Children and Learning, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services | |
| FOR SUBMISSION TO Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee Resources & Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee Housing Scrutiny Committee Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee | DATE 9 December 2024 9 December 2024 10 December 2024 10 December 2024 16 December 2024 |
| SUMMARY OF REPORT This report focusses on the second quarter of the year (Q2) 2024/25 using a broad range of measures from each directorate and division across the organisation. In this report, Camden Directors have been asked to provide a narrative covering key areas of challenge, opportunity, and learning. This report is divided into two main sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary which highlights key responses from directorates and highlights particular cross-cutting themes; • A detailed summary of individual service responses for Q2 2024/25 across each of our three Directorates. Appendix A contains the data dashboard. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report. Contact Officer: James Coumbe – Insight, Learning and Impact Lead | |

London Borough of Camden
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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Committees are asked to note the report, including the most recent data and trends and the emerging challenges identified, that relate to the services that fall within their respective remits.

SIGNED

Jon Rowney
Executive Director Corporate Services

21 November 2024

1. INSIGHT, LEARNING AND IMPACT REPORT

- 1.1. This report focusses on the second quarter of the year (Q2) 2024/25 using a broad range of measures from each directorate and division across the organisation. In this report, Camden Directors have been asked to provide a narrative covering key areas of challenge, opportunity, and learning:
- **what were the biggest challenges to your service delivery** i.e. what challenges are going to require the organisation's attention and focus
 - **What are the biggest opportunities** i.e. where could you most benefit from support to deliver improvement?
 - **What have your services learned and what do you need to learn in the future** e.g. from data or evaluation, regional or national research etc.
- 1.2. The quarterly corporate data dashboard is at Appendix A, which provides the latest performance data for Q2 for the key measures from all the services across the council, and which accompanies this report.

2. Overview of key themes

2.1. Corporate Services response summary

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|--|---|--|---|
| Finance and Audit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund & Housing Revenue Account (HRA) overspend • Inflationary pressures • Ongoing Chalcots costs • Pressures across children’s social care and homelessness services • Uncertain long-term funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource and Oversight Panels established to discuss key financial pressures • New government indication that they will agree a multi-year settlement in 2026. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-London collaboration for financial challenges • Developing a deep understanding of the cost drivers to drive efficiencies |
| People and Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment levels high • Expansion of our trauma support with ongoing Middle-East conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Employee Experience Survey • Quarterly review of key workforce metrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms of turnover are starting to reduce which indicates the early signs of an improving jobs market |
| Digital Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the infrastructure upheld for the elections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing technology to deepen citizen engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration |
| Law and Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of experienced lawyers • Housing Ombudsman continues to increase the severity of their findings • London Mayoral/General election | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Legal (Deputy Borough Solicitor) position was appointed • Improve accessibility to council meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand for enforcement requiring legal support • Collaboration with Housing has improved responsiveness to Ombudsman cases |
| Strategy, Design, and Insight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention • Risk on delivery of strategic work • Maintaining pace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting service transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection and review of the Council’s Missions |
| Equality and Community Strength | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum seekers facing rough sleeping • High number of financially vulnerable adults in Camden • Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) staff facing violence, racism and islamophobia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough of Sanctuary • Tackling Poverty team evolving into Money Advice Camden • Work with Interculture Cities programme • Re-designing Community Impact Fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in homelessness among asylum seekers • Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) data on poverty/cost of living • Evaluation of the 2023/24 Resilience programme |
| Participation, Partnerships, and Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-election period campaigns/comms • Mayoral and General Elections • We Make Camden partner networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of Leadership • Community Wealth Fund • Camden Missions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working University College London (UCL) & Central St Martins • Number of member enquiries remains high |

2.2 Children and Learning response summary

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|--|--|---|--|
| Children's Family Help and Safeguarding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased volume of work coming in at Front door • Increase in numbers of children coming into care aged 14+ • Rate of Section 47's are high • Number and complexity of children with Special Education Needs and disabilities (SEND) who require on-going support • Sufficiency of local short breaks provision • Disproportional Black and Asian children in care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edge of Care team established • The implementation of "named workers" model for disabled children with complex needs • Guidance developed for social care professionals related to disability rights • A family therapy offer as an alternative pathway through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in the timeliness of completion of Child and family assessments and visits to children and families • Internships and employment opportunities for disabled young adults continue to present a challenge • School non-attendance for children with disabilities and complex needs remains a risk |
| Early Years and Family Hubs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Education (DfE) funding for Family Hubs ends in March 2025. • Sustaining the First 1001 days programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood-based services benefit more families • Social care reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong appetite among partners to work together in neighbourhood model. |
| Integrated Youth Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in referrals into Youth Early Help • Housing vulnerable families being exploited/at risk of violence • Normalisation of knife carrying and use in conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Accommodation and Resettlement Plan (LARP) • To develop a more inclusive voluntary offer support to children who are arrested for serious offences • Better information sharing, training, development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing numbers of children engaging with Turnaround initiatives • Return to pre-pandemic numbers of first time entrants to the youth justice system |
| Education, Commissioning and Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reduction in demand for school places in Camden/London • School closures • Applications for Reception and Year 7 places for entry in Sept 2025 during Q2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual School Capacity (SCAP) return has provided the opportunity to integrate the work of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) • Reorganisation of SEND & Inclusion out for consultation during Q2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Community Learning - Improved accredited learning in ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). • The SEND area Self-Evaluation identified areas of strength and focus |

2.3 Adults and Health response summary

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|--|--|--|---|
| Adult Social Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service pressures - waiting times for assessments and reviews remain high • Safeguarding referrals continue to be a priority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Integrated Neighbourhood Team • Safeguarding of adults/transitional • Mental Health Social Work • Care Quality Commission (CQC) Local Authority Inspection • Adult Early Help • Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard • Carers Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Conversations and Listening Box exercise with staff • National Data Sets • Monthly Oversight Board set up |
| Adult's Public Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden has been identified as an "enhanced support" area for Drugs and alcohol by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) meaning greater scrutiny and financial penalties for unmet targets • Cost pressures identified by the service provider of the North Central London (NCL) Integrated Sexual Health service • London resource for the real time suicide surveillance system has reduced impacting the responsiveness and accuracy of reporting and follow up action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service development of a drug and alcohol digital tool for Camden residents • <i>HealthWatch Camden</i> report on Young People Sexual Health resulted in an action plan developed with local service • National funding to extend the reach of stop smoking services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the effectiveness of Substance Misuse grant funded interventions • Hosted the London's Behavioural Science Public Health Network at the Crowndale Centre |
| Children and young people's Public Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in the increase for immunisation rates has stalled. • Department for Education (DfE) Short Breaks Innovation Fund income for Rebuilding Bridges will end in March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND JSNA signed off by inclusion board and disseminated to partners • University College Hospital London A&E follow up clinic in Family Hub has gone live | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted the ADPH (Association of Directors of Public Health) London Children and Young People Network away day, focussing on child health equity |

2.4 Supporting Communities response summary

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|--|---|---|--|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness and Rough Sleeping • Temporary Accommodation • Rising rents/arrears • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial challenge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Housing and Repairs Transformation Programme • Developing Temporary Accommodation options at Chester and Camden Road • RentSense pilot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on data and performance for service delivery • Efforts to reduce rent arrears showing results |
| Property management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of disrepair cases and costs associated • HRA pressure means resources cannot be expanded to meet repair demands • Market tough for key skills • Investment gap and stock profile placing pressure on revenue repairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has responded strongly to the Building Safety Act and has placed itself in a good regulatory position • The new stock condition data will shape a new asset strategy for Camden to assess and produce options for the challenges faced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong focus on productivity in the repairs service through the application of new reporting tools • Our work to review Ombudsman case outcomes has led to operational changes and service improvement workshops • Continued analysis of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) performance, making sure the Council sustains a strong, compliant, position |
| Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial constraints on housebuilding. • Continued pressure on the HRA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying delivery models. • Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme (TAPP) homes used for refugees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction market updates via Arcadis and Beacon • Ongoing sales market advice and commentary via Jones Lang LaSalle |
| Planning and Area Regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Management income targets from pre-application and applications due to London slow-down • Housing delivery remains challenging due to market conditions for residential. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for significant planning reform with the new government • Support from the Policy Design team in changing 'The Way We Work' • Government funded digital projects to be testing this year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With housing delivery challenging nationally, the Council is using powers to help bring forward new homes |
| Inclusive Economy/ Good Work Camden | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties when residents are presenting with long-term, chronic mental health conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering the Good Work Camden portal • Maximising the opportunity of the new Euston Skills Centre • Council's Business Survey in 2024/25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest rate of young people out of education or employment in a decade • Research with University College London (UCL) and Health and Life Science Coalition |

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| HS2 and Euston | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty around HS2 at Euston and associated uncertainty around budget and resources • Euston Housing Delivery Group announced by Government to work with Camden to deliver regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the development of the Council approach to become a Development Corporation • Opportunities to deliver more housing at Euston working alongside central government and Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of a Euston Economic Impact Assessment • Developing a 'Meanwhile Use' Strategy |
| Environment and Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in graffiti and fly-posting • Appropriate resourcing and organisational focus on the climate risk agenda • Increase transport demand for SEND children • Recruitment and retention – Parking Services, Building Control & Transport Strategy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next iteration of Camden's Climate Action Plan (2026-30) • Lane Rental Strategy Group aims to improve road congestion and air quality • Co-ordination of area-based service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality improvements • Healthy Streets scorecard analysis shows Camden performing well • Camden Transport Strategy Delivery Plan to Cabinet in November |
| Public Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention – Public Protection & Environmental Health • Sustained high demand for environmental health services • High demand for community safety and cohesion related activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to utilise artificial intelligence (AI) and upgraded IT systems. • Develop Licensing Charter • Risk based Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) case management procedures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Taskforce pilot program. • Licensing Policy review • Contingency & Emergency Planning Review |
| Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) impacting our teams and the enjoyment of the wider public • Restructure of senior library roles led to some inconsistency in service. • Unveiling of Purchase street open space and family response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The auto-enrolment of Primary School children at Camden libraries to become members • A newly formed Leisure Service (Sports and Physical Activity and Green Spaces Teams) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the library catchments and population completed |

3 CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1 Finance and Audit

3.1.1 *Challenges*

In the General Fund the Council agreed a new Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in January 2023 which will help to strengthen financial resilience over the medium term. The Council has set balanced budgets for 2024/25, however, the financial and operating context for the Council remains challenging and forecast overspends at Quarter 2 (Q2) of £19.3m are a challenge to the Council's financial stability. The General Fund forecast includes the use of £12m of short-term corporate provisions funded by an increase in interest received from higher cash balances and interest rates from which the Council is currently benefiting. An expected reduction in cash balances and interest rates over the medium term means that the actual structural overspend facing the Council in the General Fund is c£30m.

The Council's financial position means that it is vital that officers work to reduce expenditure over the next two years to ensure the Council is able to remain financially stable through this MTFS period. A number of resource oversight panels have already been established to develop a response to service areas with particularly high budget pressures such as homelessness services and Children's Social Care. It is important that these resource panels continue to report back on their agreed mitigation work to Camden Management Team (CMT) on a regular basis. The Council will need to match its resources to the needs of existing services and so it is vital that there is a clear picture of the level of expenditure expected in these services over the next two years before the Council agrees its next Medium Term Finance Strategy.

One of the biggest immediate risks facing the financial position of the Council is the financial stability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is forecasting to overspend by £3.5m in 2024/25. The overspend is being driven by high interest rates on debt and significant inflationary pressures on repair costs along with emergency action to tackle damp and mould. In January 2023 the Council agreed MTFS savings for the HRA but the ongoing inflationary pressures mean that the HRA will need to identify further savings or cost control measures over the medium term to protect its financial stability. The relatively low reserves held by the HRA mean that overspends are a challenge to its financial sustainability. The current MTFS is looking to address this by delivering cost savings and increasing the level of reserves held by the HRA.

In addition to the current inflationary pressures, the HRA has faced a number of challenges in recent years that have significantly impacted its financial resilience including the impact of the pandemic that saw no specific government support for the

HRA, government legislation that resulted in reduced rents for four years and more recently capped rent increases below the rate of inflation. It has been estimated that the HRA has lost £168m of rental income since 2016 and rental income is £32m lower in 2024/25 compared with what it would have received if inflation had been kept consistent at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of + 1%. In addition, the Council has had to find capital funding for fire and building safety works most notably for the Chalcots estate.

While the Council has received some funding from the government to address capital costs for the Chalcots and a financial settlement from the contractor, this does not fully cover all the costs associated with the Chalcots evacuation and subsequent capital expenditure required on the Chalcots estate.

The Council's financial position is stable but characterised by high degrees of uncertainty about the long-term rates of inflation, future demand for services and a long-term funding settlement for Local Government. The position is further challenged by those in year forecast for overspends of £19.3m in the General Fund and £3.5m in the HRA. It is key for the Council to bring the current forecast overspend down and to ensure it has a clear view of genuine unavoidable budget pressures in order to shape the Council's future budget setting and Medium-Term Financial Strategies.

3.1.2 *Looking Forward*

In both the HRA and General Fund there is a continued challenge to forecast the medium-term financial position to ensure the Council can take early action to address financial pressures. Increasing demographic and service demands across the Council as well as uncertainty regarding the wider economic situation are going to continue to drive cost pressures for the Council. The Council is starting to see significant additional costs in children's social care and homelessness services. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis will mean continue to impact residents and businesses in the borough and influence the level of support the Council will need to provide.

It is important that services continue to work to deliver services within budget and continue to identify emerging cost pressures as early as possible.

The local government financial settlement is likely to be delivered in December 2025 setting out central government funding and Council Tax setting rules for local authorities. The Council will need to develop its budget for 2025/26 and its MTFS in reaction to the financial settlement.

3.1.3 *Opportunities*

The Council needs to take action to bring overspends under control across the HRA and General Fund to support the Council's financial stability. Directors need to continue to work with finance colleagues to understand and forecast medium term pressures facing their services including pressures caused by changes in demographics, national and local legislative and policy changes and inflationary pressures. Doing this and continuing to develop a deep understanding of the long-term financial pressures facing the Council will allow us to make sound decisions to invest in early intervention in the right services to control and avoid costs on future service delivery.

To support the understanding of the financial pressures facing the Council officers have established a number of Resource and Oversight Panels to review and discuss key financial pressures. The panels have met to discuss financial pressures in Children and Learning and Adults, with further sessions planned for Housing and Public Health.

London boroughs are seeing significant cost pressures in a number of services especially across social care and homelessness. Developing a deep understanding of what is driving these costs in Camden will support the Council to make informed investment decisions in early intervention and prevention. Through our established approach to long term financial planning ongoing financial resilience and stability will allow the Council to continue to invest in support and early intervention across the borough, however overspending on existing services may limit the level of investment that the Council is able to make in future years.

The new Labour government have indicated that they will agree a multi-year settlement from 2026 which should allow the Council to better plan the medium-term use of its resources.

3.1.4 *Learning*

Officers have been working with peers cross London has help to identify common financial challenges across London boroughs, this will help to support lobbying efforts to government for a fair financial settlement for the Council and show the true level of funding required to deliver Council services. This work has included the sharing of forecasts and assumptions about future funding and cost pressures as a sense check to ensure the Council's financial planning assumptions are reasonable and broadly in line with our peers. This helps to further support sound medium term financial forecasting. Learning from across the local government sector and from key national indicators have helped officers with the budget setting, summarising the work the Council is carrying out to ensure it remains financial resilient. There is an opportunity

to continue and expand this work to test the Council's medium term financial forecast assumptions and to learn from best practice across the sector.

Officers will also work to learn from the service overspends to ensure that the Council fully understands the cost drivers in services and is able where possible to address them to reduce costs and to ensure the Council has robust medium-term forecasts. Developing a deep understanding of the cost drivers that services are facing represents an opportunity to drive efficiencies across the Council.

3.2 People and Inclusion

3.2.1 *Challenges*

All forms of turnover are starting to reduce, which indicates the early signs of an improving jobs market. The Council's recruitment levels remain high, but expect them to start to reduce over the next quarter.

Additional support has been provided to staff in light of the escalation of conflict in the middle east. This has included expansion of our trauma support alongside a series of safe space sessions.

3.2.2 *Opportunities*

As a management team, Corporate Services DMT has recognised the importance of workforce leadership, planning and performance management. They have now implemented a quarterly review of key workforce metrics across the directorate with a view to challenging emerging issues and trends. The focus of the last discussion was on reducing the reliance on agency staff, exploring the increase in critical staff turnover and ensuring a consistent approach to sickness absence management. Follow up actions will be carried out in the coming weeks and months with a review of impact at the next quarterly review session.

3.2.3 *Learning*

This quarter will see the launch of the Council's new Employee Experience Survey which will provide the Council with valuable insights into progress on Inclusion work and how staff experience working for Camden.

3.3 Digital & Data Services

3.3.1 *Challenges*

The team's expertise and support are in increasingly high demand across the organization. To meet this challenge, they are partnering with stakeholders and senior leadership to strategically prioritize our technology and data capabilities, ensuring our efforts are directed toward initiatives that drive the organization's core objectives.

Furthermore, the continued suboptimal performance of third-party technology providers in local government adds further strain, making it particularly challenging to deliver effectively and meet growing expectations.

3.3.2 *Opportunities*

Camden Council's forward-thinking approach to building robust technology and data foundations continues to attract significant interest from the national government. Senior figures with Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) are actively engaging in discussions with Camden, focusing particularly on the ethical implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) and Camden's Data Charter. At the national level, the UK government's commitment to responsible AI development is reflected in initiatives like the AI Safety Summit and the Bletchley Declaration, which emphasize global collaboration on AI safety. Thus Camden's efforts align closely with these national and international priorities, positioning the borough as a leader in ethical technology and AI practices.

3.3.3 *Learning*

In Camden, the Housing Transformation Programme has begun to significantly enhance the work of Digital and Data Services (DDS), enabling more seamless collaboration across departments. This has led to greater knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices, fostering a culture of shared learning. The resulting collaborative framework is strengthening our collective approach to addressing challenges and improving our capacity to deliver meaningful solutions for the community. This progress highlights the value of cross-departmental cooperation as a key driver of continuous improvement and organizational growth.

3.4 **Law and Governance**

3.4.1 *Challenges*

Legal services are mobilising an internal offer and then an external offer with the aim of establishing more permanent roles and moving away from its reliance on agency staff. The service has externalised part of the housing disrepair cases to external lawyers, freeing up capacity of internal staff to focus on corporate priorities. A wider review of the structure of the service is taking place and will set out options for addressing ongoing challenges.

The number of stage 1 complaints has increased very slightly (5%) since Q1. Complaints relating to Property Management account for 49% of complaints. Despite the volume, performance in responding within 10 working days continues to improve each quarter. In Q2 there were an additional 508 cases dealt with as Business As Usual (BAU). The Corporate Complaints team continued to work closely with the Property Management Service to develop an approach for learning from complaints.

Acting on behalf of the Acting Returning Officer the two parliamentary constituencies elections were successfully delivered on 4th July 2024, with the Counts taking place at 5 Pancras Square. The election was held using the new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries, which meant that the Council were taking in electors from Haringey Council instead of Brent. The partnership with Haringey Council went well. This was an opportunity to fully test out the plans which had been put in place for using the council offices to hold the count which worked extremely well, despite an unprecedented media presence and interest in the results.

The short timetable to hold the election put additional pressure on Electoral Services and the Election project team so quickly after holding a mayoral election, however the plans worked well and the experience will help towards planning for the local elections in 2026. As a result of three Councillors being elected to Parliament the Electoral Service delivered three by-elections on 5th September 2024 with the counts for these by-elections being held in the Crowndale Centre.

The start of the Annual Canvass, which would normally commence in July, has been delayed and the re-publication of the Register of Electors has been delayed from December to February 2025 to allow sufficient time to complete the process. This remains however within the appropriate statutory window.

Over this period significant resource and effort continued to be deployed by Committee Services to address the ongoing challenges of managing Council and committee meetings given protests.

3.4.2 *Opportunities*

A Head of Legal (Deputy Borough Solicitor) position was appointed to, and they joined the Council in July 2024.

The Central Complaints team worked closely with service areas to ensure ongoing improvement and will be part of the group that leads the response to the Housing Ombudsman.

There is an opportunity to improve accessibility of Council meetings to those who need support or adjustments in order to engage with the democratic process. The Committee Services Manager is feeding into the review of the Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Service with a view to developing an accessibility offer around Council meetings.

3.4.3 *Learning*

Legal services have seen fluctuating demand. There has been an increase in demand for enforcement in certain areas which has required significant input from the Legal teams.

The Central Complaints team continued to see a significant increase in the number of complaints submitted at all levels albeit after the expected seasonal drop. The focus from the Housing Ombudsman is in-line with their focus on other London Local Authorities.

3.5 **Strategy, Design and Insight**

3.5.1 *Challenges*

Recruitment and retention: The service is maintaining a focus on retention of staff across roles recognising the delivery of key organisational activities over the coming six months including supporting Housing transformation and the State of the Borough. This reflects equitable recruitment and staff development practices as part of the service's wider retention strategy.

Delivery risk: There remains a high and growing level of demand on the skills and support of the team across the organisation. They are working closely with stakeholders and senior leadership to prioritise discovery and design resource, as well as insight and analysis capacity, to focus on work that is contributing to organisational priorities as defined in We Make Camden, the Council's Missions and in tackling complex and urgent issues for services.

Maintaining pace: In the context of a new national government, there is increased value for the organisation in Strategy, Design, and Insight engaging with policy announcements and working across services and with members to understand their implications and respond where this supports our organisational priorities. There are often short timeframes for engagement and the team is ensuring that they have sufficient capacity working to leaders and services to respond.

3.5.2 *Opportunities*

Supporting service transformation: Increasingly engaged with services around the Council in supporting transformation and change – during this quarter this has included:

- Money Advice Camden is starting to shape up with a comprehensive recruitment campaign to get the pilot team into post (from front-line officers to senior management team), with confirmed start dates ranging from first week of October to January. Additionally, the team finalising procurement of the

digital systems (including case management system) needed for case management, and configuring systems for the pilot go-live.

- Supporting Housing Transformation activity – further developing a proposal for consolidation of all the queries / initial contacts related to housing and how to respond appropriately as one Council.
- Further development of the Adults' Early help pilot team (AEH) – Strategy and Design team worked in partnership with Adult Social Care to recruit the pilot team and onboard them effectively. The focus has now been on conducting training for the AEH Pilot Team, as well as planning the selection of the first cohort of people to receive AEH support and starting the evaluation, which is being delivered by the Insight, Learning and Impact team.

3.5.3 *Learning*

Following the Camden Missions Summit in April 2024, we have engaged in a programme of reflection and learning across Missions – ahead of the State of the Borough preparation for 2025 – focusing on how they are progressing (in terms of short-term outputs and long-term changes that can address complex systemic issues) and how are we enabling them as an organisation. We intend to build this learning cycle into our ongoing Missions process.

3.6 **Equalities and Community Strength**

3.6.1 *Challenges*

Refugee Response

The Home Office provide accommodation to around 300 asylum seekers living in contingency hotels in Camden. The new government have said that they will “clear the backlog and end asylum hotels” without fast tracking in such a way as to overwhelm Local Authorities with homelessness claims or cause rough sleeping. However, there is no evidence as yet of the resources being in place to manage this throughput and support those with positive decisions in finding suitable move on accommodation.

Community Partnerships

Tensions have been high following the riots and violence in the UK over the summer and the ongoing conflicts in the Middle-East. The Community Partnerships team remains focussed on building interfaith and community dialogue. Young Camden Foundation hosted a member check-in in August 2024, providing an opportunity for the community to come together and address our community's response.

Equalities

The governance around Equalities and the focus on intersectionality is set to continue. There is a statutory requirement to ensure the Council continues to improve

on its quality assurance particularly around our Equality Impact Assessments and this remains a key priority focus. The team is working across the organisation and across all services to assist them in more rigorous equalities thinking.

Tackling Poverty

Challenges remain over the impact of the managed migration to Universal Credit for around 7,000 households in Camden – Housing will need additional capacity in supporting these households to avoid a significant increase in rent arrears.

3.6.2 Opportunities

Refugee Response

Camden has recently been awarded full accreditation as a Borough of Sanctuary, demonstrating our commitment to helping refugees living in or transient in the borough to rebuild their lives. A revised Borough of Sanctuary forum is being launched, to strengthen our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) response and dovetail with our Council based delivery. As part of a borough of Sanctuary network Camden will be a leading voice for change, influencing the new Government to establish safe and legal routes and viable housing solutions for incoming refugees.

Community Partnerships

Aligning with Camden's We Make Camden mission the We Make Camden Project Fund will begin from June 2025. There is an opportunity to pool funding across the system (e.g., the council and the Integrated Care Board), creating a clear, consistent approach to grant funding for the sector, with two rounds per year. This will help align resources and reduce the complexity for VCS organisations when applying for funding. The total project Fund budget for 2025/26 has increased thanks to a £500,000 contribution from the Emmanuel Vincent Fund and further contributions are expected for future rounds of the We Make Camden Project Fund.

An evaluation approach for our new seven-year "We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme" is being co-designed with VCS community partners. This provides a great opportunity to ensure that learning and impact stories from our funded organisations feed into the broader data and insights collected for Camden – the team are working closely with the Insight, Learning and Impact team for their State of the Borough Report and the Good Life Camden initiative.

Tackling Poverty/Money Advice Camden

The Tackling Poverty team evolved into Money Advice Camden at the beginning of October 2024. The new service will incorporate a wider debt and welfare rights offer, ensuring better outcomes for residents than standalone awards. This new capacity **will not** be a universal open access service – instead the team will use council data sets to proactively contact those who are at risk.

The hardship funds extension has provided an additional buffer, this will allow us to work closely with partners to help support policy reforms in welfare.

The national and local Pension Credit campaigns could mean over 400 Camden pensioners increase their annual income improving their financial wellbeing. The campaign will include Money Advice Camden offering wider benefit checks and budgeting advice to further improve their quality of life.

Equalities

Our *Brave Café* sessions, funded through the Intercultural Cities Network, have become more established and are showcasing opportunities to redesign how to deliver civic engagement and activities.

3.6.3 Learning

Tackling poverty/Money Advice Camden

National average percentage figures show around 45% of children in large families (3+ dependants) are in poverty after housing costs, compared to around 25% of children in smaller families.

Equalities

The data is showing us both nationally and across Europe that accessibility and disability continues to be severely lacking across provision. Camden officers are also improving their knowledge through attending Equalities related workstreams, and being more aware thanks to Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) training that is being rolled out in the next few months.

3.7 Participation, Partnerships and Communications

3.7.1 Challenges

A key challenge was to deliver a media management service to host and manage around 100 members of the media at the Camden Count for the General Election on 4 July 2024. Major national broadcasters were able to give live reports without issues and journalists and photographers had access to all key aspects of the count and information they needed.

Ahead of the General Election and September by-elections, and on election days, our campaigning reiterated the need to take ID to vote, shared information about postal votes, and helped residents find their polling stations. After polls closed, results were shared across social media. The team has also been supporting the new Leader and his Cabinet following a change in leadership after the election.

Our Summer in Camden campaign ran from July to September, signposting residents of all ages to free and low-cost events and activities. A new campaign “In Camden

we call it out!' was launched, calling out inappropriate behaviour on our streets, encouraging people to safely intervene when they witness sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour to help keep women and girls safe. Following the Southport incident and subsequent violence and intimidation across the country, the 'Safe and Strong, Together' campaign was stepped up. Our cost of living campaign continues, with a focus on Universal Credit migration, and Pension Credit.

3.7.2 *Opportunities*

The change of leadership and the change of government is inevitably generating new considerations for communications and campaigning. The team is working with colleagues across the council to respond to developments and opportunities to influence decision-making in a way that benefits the Council and consequently our residents.

There is significant appetite and energy across the Council, communities, partner organisations and nationally to continue to innovate within the We Make Camden participation and partnerships space and to share best practice.

The Participation Team has continued to lead on the design and implementation of the Community Wealth Fund Participation model – which is central to the social investment fund design. Two strands of the participation model have been developed – one focussing on the Youth Mission and the other on the Diversity Mission. Embedding a participatory approach is central to achieving the ambitions of the fund and working towards our We Make Camden missions.

The Partnerships Team has continued to develop Mission Ambassador conversations with borough wide institutions and businesses in the borough – further developing opportunities for partner contributions within our We Make Camden Missions.

3.7.3 *Learning*

The service intends to begin process of commissioning our latest channel research, which will provide an updated picture of our residents' communication preferences.

The development and testing of the Community Wealth Fund (CWF) branding and messaging and will soon launch a recruitment campaign for CWF's young people panel. Through this, the team expects to expand our insights into resident views towards the Fund.

This quarter, seven of Camden's Citizen Scientists graduated from UCL's Citizen Science Academy, finishing their work placements at the Council where they focussed their research/work on ensuring Community Wealth Fund accessibility and

our Intensive Tenant Participation and Engagement programme. Evaluation of our Citizen Science programme and of our We Make Camden Kit will be completed within the next month – which will be used to inform and develop the next phase of these projects.

The number of Member Enquiries (MEs) remains high as residents often use their councillor as a first point of contact with the council as this is a means of face-to-face interaction. Member support continues to work with colleagues across the council in a bid to improve turnaround times. Many teams have seen an increase in the turnaround times generally despite the continuing high volume of enquiries received.

Supporting Communities traditionally receive nearly 90% of all MEs and this trend continues with Housing and Property Management remaining the largest recipients of all enquiries raised by members. Supporting People continues to have a relatively small but challenging caseload often requiring a multi-agency approach, making it particularly challenging for them to resolve issues within the 10-day desired turnaround window. Corporate Services have achieved the highest response rate of all directorates, achieving 83 per cent overall.

4 CHILDREN AND LEARNING

4.1 Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding

4.1.1 *Challenges*

The increased volume of work coming in at Front door via contact and conversation to Referral which, in turn recognises the need to ensure all basic Social Work functions are progressed in a timely way and recorded, including assessments, visits, Child Protection conferences and Child in Need reviews.

There is an ongoing challenge around the sufficiency of placements for Camden's children in care. A transformation programme is underway to future proof our sufficiency duties. The lack of suitable placements has led to spot purchasing of residential provision which is an area of focus for us.

Section 47 refers to a provision within the Children Act 1989. It empowers local authorities and the police to investigate and take action when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm. Camden's rate of Section 47 enquiries was high at the end of Q2, at 257 per 10,000 compared to National (192) and Inner London (210) averages. The team are carrying out a deep dive analysis to consider thresholds around risk.

There is a recognition that black and brown families are disproportionality represented in children in care in Camden. Work to mitigate this includes newly established Edge of Care service, a programme to keep children and young people on the edge of care, within education and from being unnecessarily placed into care. The team will go live mid-November 2024.

Ongoing increase in complexity of need and referrals in relation to assessment of severely disabled children and complex medical needs.

The sufficiency of local short breaks provision that represent value for money.

4.1.2 *Opportunities*

Engagement in the codesign sessions that are set up to consider the implementation of the Social Care reforms and progress planning about the model and service deliver design that brings together Early help and Social Work in one Family Help Service. The second phase will consider the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.

Guidance developed for social care professionals across the spectrum of need related to disability about the right to an assessment for disabled children and young people, and their parent carers. This means that requests for assessment of need are now more widely responded to, and Early Help services are also involved in assessing disabled children and young people, if there are no safeguarding concerns, about their parent carer.

The implementation of “named workers” model for disabled children with complex needs is ongoing and the feedback is positive.

The Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) now have a family link carer who can provide a small number of overnight respite days for disabled children with complex needs, which will make a difference for our children and their families.

There is an alternative pathway in our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) service, offering family therapy for families at the outset of their contact with the department.

4.1.3 *Learning*

Children with disabilities and complex needs remain at risk of school non-attendance, and a coordinated joined up approach between Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and social care teams would be beneficial to support children return to school

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Rigorous attention to tracking and monitoring Social Work performance highlights the improvement in the timeliness of completion of Child and family assessments and visits to children and families,

Internship and employment opportunities for disabled young adults continue to present a challenge in Camden and in achieving higher rates of employment for disabled young adults.

Support for unpaid carers needs better definition in law, policy and guidance for a more coordinated response by local services and to prevent crisis and increase in need. In the absence of that there is an opportunity to deliver our Camden offer.

4.2 Integrated Early Years and Family Hubs

4.2.1 *Challenges*

Children's Centres and Family Hubs –The development of the Family Hub network is progressing and the proposed move of early help for older children to the family hubs as part of the wider neighbourhood work will further cement the Hubs as providers of services for families with children of all ages.

However, the grant funding for Family Hubs provided by Department for Education (DfE) ends in March 2025 and, although some of the work, and certainly the approach, can be maintained, some of the projects which could potentially deliver significantly better outcomes for children and families may not be sustainable without future funding. This involves complex change management to bring multidisciplinary teams into the Family Hub buildings and creating multiple 'touch points' for families that include venues run by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and partner organisations.

While focus moves to the Family Hub provision for older children the importance of the first 1001 days and engaging families in services at this critical stage must be sustained and embedded.

4.2.2 *Opportunities*

The development of Family Help, delivered through a neighbourhood model, is a significant opportunity to improve our offer to residents. Providing help across the continuum of need, close to home may remove some barriers to the identification of need and the offer of support. The 'single point of access' described in the Family Hub programme guide encourages signposting and referral to local teams who can respond outside of the MASH. An opportunity to trial this approach could lead to earlier help for some families and prevent the escalation of need.

The opportunity that social care reform provides is to simplify and further integrate support for families. The development of Family Help, described in 'Stable Homes; Built on Love', will bring early help and children in need services together in an integrated service meeting the needs of families across the continuum. This will mean better continuity for families who will be able to sustain a relationship with their Family Help practitioner even if their needs change.

Families have told us that they find it difficult to find out about the services that are available. The Family Hubs provide an opportunity to connect services together to provide a more joined up and accessible offer for families. This will be achieved by encouraging families to contact their local Hub for information or to use the new *Families* website <https://families.camden.gov.uk>

4.2.3 *Learning*

There is a strong appetite among partners to work together more closely. Our work with midwifery services and health visiting to try and increase the number of ante-natal contacts has shown the importance of persistence in partnership working. The number of ante-natal contacts is increasing and there is a commitment from midwifery services to offer more clinics from Family Hubs.

4.3 **Integrated Youth Services**

4.3.1 *Challenges*

There has been an increase in referrals into our Youth Early Help service with concerns for young people experiencing bullying and fighting, both in and outside of school. Online bullying has also been a frequent presenting problem for children referred. Youth Early Help will continue to work closely with schools to monitor this and responding to the issue. Accumulatively, these presenting issues are having a detrimental impact on their attendance, safety and mental health.

Housing vulnerable families being exploited/at risk of violence continues to be a real challenge. There have been several families across both our statutory and voluntary services moved into temporary accommodation due to risks in the community. This requires families moving into hotels, moving frequently and destabilising families, leading to children being NEET (not in education, employment or training). It has profound impact on family dynamics, feelings of stability, our ability to offer support/monitoring and networks to wrap around them. Due to the ineffectiveness of this intervention some families have chosen to move back home even though the risk remains. There needs to be a clear trauma informed plan with housing colleagues in how they support these families and work in partnership.

There have been 8 youth victims of knife crime with injury in Camden in Q2. This is the same total as Q1 and lower than for the same period in the last financial year (15). The causes of youth violence remain varied, and prevention and disruption action is taken where possible.

Concerns remain around the identified group formerly based on Belmont Street NW1, including anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. Analysis has shown that the make-up and dynamics of the group have changed in recent months, and work will continue to understand this evolving risk. Further work has been completed by the Evolve Team and the Detached Youth Team to divert young people at risk of involvement in criminality.

4.3.2 *Opportunities*

The London Accommodation Resettlement Pathfinder (LARP) provides an alternative to youth detention accommodation and supports the children to avoid custody and disproportionate outcomes.

Work through the Prevent and Identify strand of the Youth Safety Taskforce with the steering group to develop a more inclusive voluntary offer of support to children who are arrested for serious offences. This could build on the turnaround initiative to support them before potential charges, offering confidence to courts on potential for bail support packages. This could reduce potential future remands.

Better joined up working between council services, including between children's and youth services, to develop the response for children and young people at risk of youth violence, based on the understanding that youth violence, gangs and child criminal exploitation (CCE) can overlap, but need to be explored individually too.

4.3.3 *Learning*

The *Turnaround* initiative has provided a learning platform to engage children voluntarily at the point of arrest. Following analysis of arrest and *Turnaround* data, the Youth Justice System (YJS) will be offering a wider voluntary support programme to children who fall outside of the *Turnaround* criteria.

Numbers of first time entrants into the YJS have decreased to 9 in Q2, a reduction on Q1 (15). This reflects a return to pre-pandemic rates. 3 children received a custodial sentence in Q2. Two of these children had been remanded since November 2023, and received custodial sentences.

4.4 Education, Commissioning and inclusion

4.4.1 *Challenges*

Over the last 5 years there has been a significant reduction in demand for school places within Camden and the wider London area. Forecasts of pupil demand have also been created in times of unprecedented change and challenge for families in Camden. Specifically, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have fundamentally altered people's lives and changed patterns of migration within central London and Camden Borough specifically. The impacts of these have reduced the anticipated level of demand for school places. These factors also created a significant degree of uncertainty, and a less stable environment in which to plan ahead as well as challenging the viability of the pattern of school provision across the borough.

In response to these changing local demographics the Council has taken a proactive approach to school place planning. Since 2018 the Council, in partnership with its family of schools, has removed 10 forms of entry from the reception intake, responding to a 24% reduction in birth rates across the borough. These difficult decisions including four school closures, the most recent being the closure of St Dominic's Catholic Primary School, ensure that our family schools remain both sustainable and responsive to the needs of their communities.

In Q2 2024/25, the service have continued to support the School Place Planning Group. This group of school leaders and wider stakeholders interrogate the data and proposals for school organisation, propose further lines for enquiry and highlight direct challenges facing education providers. As part of this work, and alongside the implementation of our education strategy 'Building Back Stronger' an education provision strategy document has been agreed. In November Council officers presented the latest round of demographic information to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee, which indicated a continued decrease in demand for school places and therefore a continued importance for our schools in this area of work.

Operationally Q2 and Q3 are our busiest time for school admissions colleagues, as the team processes the applications for Reception and Year 7 places for entry in September 2025. Through this process the team will also consider the implications for potential changes to entry numbers for that year to support schools in reducing overall surplus levels.

There have been a range of workshops with parents, schools and partners across the partnership to embed a relational approach that leads to improved outcomes for our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The number of children and young people in receipt of an Exceptional Needs

Grant (ENG) or an Educational, Care and Health Plan (EHCP) continue to increase, resulting in additional pressures on the system across the local area partnership, particularly our mainstream schools.

There has been additional investment in the SEND Team who are reviewing processes and policies to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to service delivery that will be available on the refreshed Local Offer Website. Policies under development include a SEND Admissions Policy and the Moderation of Schools Notional SEND Budgets.

Challenges for the Virtual School, who coordinate educational services for children in care, include a reduced school attendance of Children Looked After (CLA). There is also an issue around highly complex CLA cases where appropriate specialist education is not always available.

4.4.2 *Opportunities*

Our annual School Capacity (SCAP) return has provided the opportunity to integrate the work of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) alongside mainstream demographic forecasting to map future sufficiency statements relating to provision of specialist places and resources. This work will continue in Q3 being held by both the School Place Planning Group and the High Needs Subgroup.

The proposed reorganisation SEND & Inclusion was informally socialised following a scoping exercise during Q1. The proposed full-scale reorganisation has been out for consultation during Q2, with implementation during Q3. The new structure will strengthen the system in a range of ways including stronger partnership working; career progression opportunities; improved financial and data oversight; more proactive engagement with families; clearer commissioning arrangements; and a strong quality assurance model with a focus on impact and outcomes. Additionally, the work of the service will be underpinned by a strong collaborative and relational approach.

4.4.3 *Learning*

Our new directorate affords colleagues a greater opportunity to integrate our understanding of the data requirements of our respective teams in order to support higher quality decision making.

Adult Community Learning - New structure to improve Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) based on a consultation. Improved accredited learning in ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). Removal of hybrid learning at low levels in digital inclusion courses.

The SEND area Self-Evaluation identified areas of strength and focus which are being further developed and encompassed in the SEND Strategy Implementation Plan. Performance oversight needs to be strengthened and the development of a SEND Local Area Performance Dashboard is ongoing. This will provide an overview of the impact of activity across the SEND Local Area and a more cohesive approach to service improvement.

5 ADULTS AND HEALTH

5.1 Adult Social Care

5.1.1 Challenges

Service Pressures

There was a slight decrease in the number people approaching Adult Social Care (ASC) for support in Quarter 2, however pressures on teams and services continue with waiting times for assessments and reviews remaining higher than expected. There has however been an increase in the number of people who have had their annual review within the expected twelve-month period and an overall gradual reduction in the number of people who have been waiting for an Occupational Therapy Assessment. Safeguarding referrals continue to be a priority with waiting times remaining low.

Managers continue to monitor workloads and pressures and will prioritise and allocate work according to risk and urgency. Waiting times are reported weekly to the Executive Director of Adults and Health and monitored through a monthly Oversight Board.

5.1.2 Opportunities

East Integrated Neighbourhood Team

The summer months brought about the culmination of months of planning, with the East Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) turning from concept to reality. Staff from the Council's recently formed East Adult Social Care Neighbourhoods Team and the Central and North-West London (CNWL) NHS Trust's Camden Integrated Community Health (CICH) East team were readied for their respective office moves in late September. This involved multiple open days, tours and team meetings hosted at Kentish Town Health Centre. It also involved a facilitated workshop for INT Change Champions where staff from adult social care, community health, mental health and primary care co-designed a new intervention to be tested once the INT was in place. Staff devised what they called a 'Working Together Session' with the core purpose: (1) to have protected time and space together in the same room, to gain advice and support; (2) to draw on everyone's expertise in a focused way, informing the

caseholders' action planning; and (3) to place the person and our shared hopes for them at the centre of our work. Meanwhile, the office space at Kentish Town Health Centre was prepared for staff, with network, furniture and IT upgrades installed. Finally, service managers and GP partners co-developed a programme of induction activities for their teams to engage in following the go-live date of 30 September.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and neglect remains a priority for Adult Social Care and the teams continue to ensure that people do not experience any delays in our responses to safeguarding concerns. The number of referrals to the Adult Safeguarding MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) in Quarter 2 remains broadly consistent with the previous quarter and with the previous year. There has been a gradual year on year overall increase in activity and this is consistent with regional and national data. The most common abuse type in Quarter 2 was neglect and acts of omission with abuse in the home remaining the most frequent location and the majority of referrals coming from the NHS.

As part of the Homelessness System Transformation, and the work of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, there has been an increased focus on how the social care needs of people experiencing homelessness can be more effectively met as part of an integrated, multiagency approach. ASC and Housing have therefore convened an Adult Social Care and Homelessness Steering Group which brings together a range of professionals and senior managers to oversee an action plan which will seek to improve our multiagency safeguarding responses in circumstances where for example people are self-neglecting or have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs.

It was identified that there would be significant value in expanding the Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) engagement across all hostel pathways with a specific focus on safeguarding. Commissioners and practitioners across Housing, Children and Learning and Adult Social Care coordinated an approach to regular, scheduled visits at all sites where they assessed the quality of the environment and living conditions, speaking with staff and residents (to get their perspectives on areas such as how safe the services are and to understand how incidents are managed), and conducting on-site audits. A programme of visits to all hostels was started in May 2024, building upon the safeguarding framework used in monitoring of all hostel services as above. All hostels will have received a visit by the by the end of 2024, with colleagues identifying any key findings for action, as well as best practice.

Transitional safeguarding

Progress continues in collaborating with colleagues from Children and Learning Services to strengthen pathways for young people at risk of harm during transitions

between services. Together, a range of services for young people aged 18 to 25 is offered. Based on national evidence and research, the focus is on three groups: young people with care experience, young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who have passed through the youth justice system.

Examples of our work include:

- Making care experience a protected characteristic to ensure that additional protections and supports can be implemented for children leaving care, including local policies on housing and access to financial support to promote independence.
- Our Mind the Gap project provides robust, community-based support for young people transitioning from children's to adult mental health services.
- Our Evolve project supports 18 to 25-year-olds at risk from youth violence and exploitation.

The emerging adults early help model is viewed as a key vehicle for change, partnering with established family early help teams to facilitate safe transitions for young people up to age 25, as needed.

Mental Health Social Work

A review of Social Work services to people experiencing mental ill health has led to the development of a proposed new model of mental health social work in Quarter 2. A series of staff workshops were conducted during this time and staff and stakeholder consultation and engagement will continue through quarter 3. The proposals being consulted on would end the secondments into the North London Foundation Trust of our staff and bring their management back into the Council. This will ensure that mental health social work can be embedded and delivered in neighbourhoods in collaboration with NHS partners, other Council services and our wider network of community provision.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Local Authority Inspection

During Quarter 2 the Service have been preparing for our CQC Assurance visit which will be taking place in Quarter 3. CQC will be in Camden in November holding a series of focus groups, a number of staff drop-ins, and will be meeting with the Chief Executive, our Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, the Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny, our health partners, provider partners and residents drawing on care and support. Engagement with colleagues across the directorate and the wider council will continue through a range of communication channels up to and during the on-site inspection itself. It is anticipated that the outcome of our inspection will be shared with us in early 2025.

Adult Early Help

Recruitment interviews for the Adult Early Help Pilot Lead and four Adult Early Help Workers roles were held in July. The Lead and two of the Workers started in September. The remaining two Workers will start in October. Co-design of the ways of working with the Pilot Team and Project Team (that are supporting the Pilot) began in September. Other activities like training and networking sessions with key stakeholders, were organised in July and August, and started to be delivered in September. As the Adult Early Help is a pilot, a test and learn approach is being taken which means adapting and developing approaches as the pilot progresses, and as such the evaluation has begun already. Much research has been done to understand the residents who are underserved by our current system. The pilot is for adults who are facing, or at risk of facing overwhelm, due to competing stresses in their lives and who may be facing multiple disadvantages, at risk of falling through the gaps of support, or not be eligible for statutory support. They are likely to have a range of complex needs. From October, the pilot team will work with services, and selected Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, to identify residents to join the pilot. The residents will be held by the pilot team, focussing on the issues that matter to them to avoid things like the experience of having their voices unheard or being passed from service to service.

Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard

During Quarter 2 the service have joined the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Improvement Programme, which holds up a mirror to reveal inequalities and supports change. In this quarter data was collected across nine indicators which highlight differences in experiences of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic staff. The indicators focus on pay, seniority, recruitment, performance management, continuous professional development, and harassment/bullying. This data was submitted at the end of October. In March 2025 Camden will receive a full report on our submission, including a comparison to national trends. This report will be shared transparently across the service and a plan developed to address any areas where there is evidence of inequality.

Mental Health Supported Accommodation Pathway Redesign

The mental health supported living (MHSL) pathway provides accommodation-based support to people with serious mental illness to develop independent living skills, progress their recovery in a supportive space, and move towards having their own home. The pathway is currently being redesigned, with new contracts in place from April 2026.

Commissioners have been engaging key stakeholders on a new model of support that responds to the increased complexity and prevalence of overlapping and mutually re-enforcing needs, such as mental health, substance use, homelessness,

criminal justice and gender-based violence. A series of engagement events, resident drop-ins and surveys and meetings with key stakeholders will take place in Q3 of 2024/25, with the strategy finalised in Q4.

Carers Action Plan

The Carers Action Plan was launched in July 2024 at the full-Council meeting and has since also been to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny. There was great support from Councillors and positive media coverage. A carers art exhibition accompanied the launch, which ran until the middle of August. There are three roles dedicated to working with services and organisations to embed the Carers Action Plan principles and priorities and to deliver the Borough Partnership Carers Board. One of their roles, the Carers Project Lead, was recruited to in August. Recruitment started on the remaining two roles in September, these are the Carers Project Officer and Carers Project Support Officer. Coproduction activities continued with events at the Bengali Workers Association in July and the British Somali Community Centre in September. Focus groups on communication and the Borough Partnership Carers Board also took place in September. Further events are happening in November. Planning has started for the first meeting of the Borough Partnership Carers Board which will take place by the end of the year. Progress has already been made on some of the priorities in the Carers Action Plan, this includes communication and carer assessments and reviews. The dedicated website for the Carers Action Plan was launched in July: <https://carersactionplan.camden.gov.uk>

5.1.3 Learning

Ongoing conversations with staff – kitchen conversations, all staff event, branding and posters, etc.

The Service introduced Kitchen Conversations earlier this year, with the opportunity for Adult Social Care colleagues to come together over tea and biscuits with members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to discuss anything that they choose. This engagement with staff has allowed us to connect people up across the directorate, to have some excellent discussions about how it can continue to build on team's knowledge of colleagues' work, share best practice and increase our awareness of live issues.

The Service also plan to share the Listening Box feedback from staff at the all-staff event on 8 October 2024, and will continue discussions about how Camden staff can learn from regular feedback opportunities across the directorate. Listening carefully to resident feedback through engagement and coproduction as well as our staff gives the opportunity to regularly review our improvement priorities to ensure that everyone is doing the right thing to minimise risk and maximise opportunities to achieve the best outcomes for residents

National Data Sets

ASCs work to develop an understanding of the factors impacting on Camden's performance in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) has continued during Q2. The new Equalities Data Action Group (EDAG) has conducted a thorough analysis of the 23/24 Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS) results which contribute to the measures, identifying cohorts of people to understand more about their experience of Adult Social Care. Using this intelligence, a series of follow up focus groups and interviews are planned with people who draw on care, to build on the insights that have been made through the surveys. This work will be carried out in Q3 24/25, using the Working Together for Change approach that was utilised earlier this year as part of our 'Fixing the plumbing and wiring' work with Social Care Futures. Through this work a set of recommendations is being developed focussed on improving outcomes for people who draw on care and support.

Monthly oversight Board

The ASC Quality, Insights, and Finance Oversight Board is a new monthly meeting designed to provide thorough operational oversight of Adult Social Care. This Board replaces the former quarterly Quality and Performance Boards. It reviews financial trends, commissioning data, service pressures, activity levels, and key performance metrics. Insights from these areas generate lines of inquiry that guide our Quality Assurance efforts, supported by audit findings and a commitment to enhancing practice.

5.2 Adult's Public Health

5.2.1 Challenges

Meeting the target around numbers of adults who want to enter substance misuse treatment services has been challenging due to a lack of referrals from probation services and Camden has been identified as an "enhanced support" area by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). If the service does not meet the treatment targets they may get a financial penalty from OHID and have a place of action to increase referrals from a variety of sources into our services. Work continues to monitor referrals, engagement and completion rates of the substance misuse services carefully and have enhanced monthly reporting in place with OHID.

5.2.2 Opportunities

The development of national framework for sexually transmitted infections will support local work in the recommissioning of sexual and reproductive health services which have seen increasing demand against financial and workforce challenges.

5.2.3 Learning

A drug and alcohol digital tool has been developed for residents to increase their engagement with services and are looking a new ways to engage all residents with

their health and wellbeing. Camden hosted the London Behavioural Science Network and are looking at ways to invest the smoking cessation grant increase to maximise service effectiveness. The team are working with national colleagues regarding a youth vaping cessation offer and awaiting clinical guidance on the most appropriate model of delivery.

5.3 Children and Young People's Public Health

5.3.1 *Challenges*

Despite significant amounts of work progress in increasing rates of childhood immunisations has stalled. Data is being looked at in more detail to understand the drivers for this. Works continue at both a north central London and regional level to increase vaccination coverage via a variety of improvement activities.

5.3.2 *Opportunities*

The service have published a comprehensive joint strategic needs assessment for special educational needs and disabilities which will support the development of local services.

The introduction of the RSV vaccine into the maternal immunisation offer has begun with the University College Hospital London (UCHL) maternity offer doing particularly well via its onsite midwifery led clinic offer. The RSV vaccine helps protect against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common virus that can make babies and older adults seriously ill. It's recommended during pregnancy and for adults aged 75 to 79.

A young people's health campaign has gone live on social media which will support young people to get better access to appropriate healthcare services.

5.3.3 *Learning*

The service hosted a London children and young people network away day focusing on health equity in which they shared learning to reduce inequalities in child health outcomes.

Work continues with Somali families to co-develop materials about measles mumps and rubella vaccination which is accessible and relevant to them.

6 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

6.1 Housing

6.1.1 *Challenges*

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping:

The Council continues to face challenging policy changes from central government which are increasing homelessness. The Home Office are still fast-tracking decisions (known as the 'Streamlined Application Process' or SAP) for asylum seekers. Those granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK are then required to make their own housing arrangements and can also approach local authorities to apply as homeless – many are leaving Home Office accommodation to sleep rough and the teams out on the street are seeing people rough sleep in Camden after arriving from other areas of the country once they receive their asylum decision.

Rough sleeping rates in Camden are high. Between July and September, 298 people were seen rough sleeping. This represents a 7% increase compared to the same period last year (when 279 people were seen over the three summer months). The number of rough sleepers observed on a single night increased slightly in August 2024 to 126 compared to 90 at the same time last year. This quarter also saw a 33% increase in statutory homelessness presentations compared with the same quarter last year with 809 applications in Q2 2023/24 compared to 1,080 in Q2 2024/25.

Temporary Accommodation:

Camden has a duty to secure temporary and emergency accommodation for certain homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. At the end of September 2024, the Council was providing temporary accommodation to 968 households of which 536 were families. Numbers in temporary accommodation have increased by 45% since the end of September 2023.

Temporary accommodation continues to be a financial challenge for the Council, with current overspend for the year forecasted at around £12.4 million and work continues towards finding new, more financially stable options to meet this statutory duty.

As a result of these continuing pressures the service has launched a Working Group chaired by the Executive Director of Supporting Communities, seeking to reduce costs, increase supply and improve resident experience. Other parts of the Council will be played in as appropriate.

Rent Arrears

Rising rent arrears remains a key challenge. A combination of factors has meant that tenants are increasingly struggling with their finances with the increased cost of living meaning that the teams are seeing tenants less able to make payments.

The Council is clear that whilst it wants to be an empathetic and caring landlord, the level of arrears is not sustainable, and rent recovery needs to be prioritised.

Pressures on the HRA

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) continues to be under significant financial strain, particularly due to risks around power and income heating income volatility, bad debt, loss of rental income through void properties and volatility in leaseholder income. Despite this, specific workstreams are being led to increase rental income, review our leaseholder services, and increase the efficiency of our void turnaround.

6.1.2 Opportunities

The service have recently reviewed the Housing and Repairs Transformation Programme, having identified that the original scope was quite broad, and that Camden's requirements as a social landlord should be the priority for transformation. Whilst other areas of Housing and Property Management are in need of improvement (the major parallel areas of work such as limiting cost and improving resident experience in TA), focussing on Camden's responsibility as a landlord allows the Council to prioritise achieving this specific change – improving the homes and services to tenants and leaseholders in Camden.

Some immediate priorities for the programme include transforming the Housing 'Front Door', the Housing & Property Digital Change Programme, the Asset Management Strategy, a Relational Practice Model, improving data services, and working closely with the corporate Neighbourhoods Programme.

For temporary accommodation, options are being developed or use as family and/or singles hostels at Chester and Camden Road; approval has been provided to utilise empty properties on regeneration sites as short life temporary accommodation; the conversion of up to fifty void general need properties to be used as temporary accommodation; and working with potential partners to secure access to large hotel sites to reduce cost and consolidate our emergency hotel placements.

The Rent Pilot team that has been in place since Sept 2022 has made significant steps toward bringing accounts under control, with income collection meeting target for the first time in several years and a slowed rate of arrears increase.

A new IT system called RentSense went live in July 2024 on a pilot basis, that runs until December 2024. The system helps to prioritise activity to address rent arrears, enabling earlier intervention as well as giving additional reporting and communication options.

6.1.3 *Learning*

There is a focus on data and performance and ensuring Housing has a strong performance culture and improved use of data to drive service delivery and decision making.

The service have reviewed the Rent Team pilot and will be establishing an Income team to manage rent accounts on a permanent basis moving forwards, with closer links to support and enforcement teams.

6.2 **Property Management**

6.2.1 *Challenges*

An asset management strategy is being prepared for consultation later in 2024/25 which will look at the gap between resources available and investment needed in the housing stock. This, along with the nature of the stock and the age of its infrastructure, is placing acute pressure on the repairs service. The strategy will look at the options for reducing investment need and generating resources. Having a funded asset strategy, demonstrating how the Council will maintain homes to the decent homes standard, will be central to the Council fulfilling its landlord responsibilities and also achieving a compliant assessment from the Regulator of Social Housing.

At an operational level, the Council continues to receive a steady volume of disrepair cases, this common across the social housing sector. The service is targeting resources on tackling claims promptly and is also testing proactive communications which encourage residents to contact the Council in the first instance if they are concerned about repairs to their homes. The fees payable to solicitors are placing a significant demand on the HRA, and the overall impact of disrepair claims was £4.9m in the previous financial year (2023/24).

Good progress continues to be made on damp and mould, and the Council is maintaining a separate team within the repairs service to make sure cases are managed in accordance with its service standards. The overall number of live cases ranges between 250 and 300 at present and this is a significant reduction on the caseload generated last year by the proactive communications carried out following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak.

Due to the pressures outlined above, the Council is strictly controlling the type of work undertaken to minimise discretionary work and is focusing on productivity and adjusting timescales to complete non-emergency repairs. This will help to make sure the pressure on the revenue budget is contained as much as possible but is understandably generating casework received by the service. The data shows that this focussed work has reduced the volume of works orders outstanding over the last 12 months and, as part of this, the service has focussed on making sure older works orders are closed out.

6.2.2 *Opportunities*

The Council built a strong team to respond to the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022 and is analysing the findings of the Grenfell Inquiry report phase 2. It has a well-established team which is developing the Building Safety Cases required for 188 of the Council's tall buildings, the first tranche of 39 being due in 2024/25. The safety cases will further improve our approach to managing our tall buildings and keeping residents safe; this through works undertaken, regular inspections and information made available.

The Council works closely with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) on its response to the Regulatory Notice issued July 2023. All high-risk Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions have been addressed and good progress continues on the remaining medium and low-risk actions. A wide range of fire safety capital works projects have been mobilised and our focus is sustaining delivery across the supply chain, securing access to homes and addressing all actions by the end of the calendar year 2025. It is clear however that the new Gateway processes introduced by Government, required for works carried out to tall buildings, will introduce significant delays in the commissioning of certain works. This closely tracked and highlighted with the RSH.

The Council started its additional internal stock condition surveys in 2024/25 to make sure the data it holds meets regulatory requirements, it will also help the Council target investment where it is most needed and identify issues before they escalate. The Council recently surveyed all homes externally and communally, and this additional exercise will make sure the Council has a comprehensive dataset through which it can best inform its asset strategy and programmes.

6.2.3 *Learning*

The repairs service appointed a 'lessons learned' lead officer who started during Q1 to take outcomes from Ombudsman cases and other complaints and work with frontline services to make sure changes are made. Early work has demonstrated how many complaints relate to the lead in time for repairs (a consequence of the work to adjust timescales) but also communication with residents during this period. This is a significant area of focus for the service.

It is also clear some of our most challenging cases relate to complex issues such as structural work, where monitoring is required, and insurance companies may be involved. Such cases may also require residents to be relocated. As well as looking at the process improvements required for such work, the Council needs to reduce its exposure to this risk through the asset management strategy and related work such as the Family Friendly Housing Purchase Programme, where high-cost / high-risk homes have been disposed of and proceeds used to buy suitable purpose-built homes for families.

Work has continued to analyse productivity across the repairs service through the application of new reporting tools and monitoring by managers. Additional controls have been introduced to limit the level of replacement work carried out reactively and make sure investment decisions are being considered alongside other priorities.

The continued emphasis on channel shift has continued and over 80% of repairs are now raised online or through messaging services. This means that phone lines remain free for emergency repairs or for those who need additional support. Efficient management of casework continues with 92% of cases responded to in target times and work continues with the residents panel to review complaint outcomes.

6.3 Development

6.3.1 *Challenges*

In the face of the many factors working against us, this year Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP) has continued to progress schemes where many others have stalled. Having specifically tailored the procurement and contracting approach to individual projects and sites, has successfully attracted competitive bids from contractors and development partners alike.

Continued pressure on the HRA means that any additional borrowing to facilitate direct delivery of new homes beyond what is already in the approved pipeline will be challenging. However, the current delivery programme remains significant with c1,700 homes completed, approximately 277 new homes currently in construction and approval in place to deliver 1,000 more.

6.3.2 *Opportunities*

To increase the overall scale of the CIP programme the Council has diversified delivery models. A development partner has been selected to work with the Council in bringing forward a significant number of homes at Bacton II and both new homes and employment space at Camley Street.

Opportunities to deliver more homes in partnership exist across the borough, including at Central Somers Town, Tybalds and Euston, where the Council could position itself as the delivery arm for offsite affordable contributions.

The Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme (TAPP) has been a success with a further 194 properties acquired through the TAPP programme which will be used for temporary accommodation and housing Ukrainian and Afghan refugee families.

6.3.3 Learning

The team continually receive construction market updates via Arcadis and Beacon which provides useful context with which to assess our own performance over the last 12 months. Part of this includes extensive benchmarking against comparator house building organisations and informs a framework of triggers which support our decision-making processes.

Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) provide the Council with ongoing sales market advice and commentary. The CIP private sales activity has continued to be resilient in the first half of the year. All private sale properties at Maitland Park have now been sold 8 months ahead of target and the sales receipts have exceeded the business plan target. There are currently only private units for sale in Agar Grove 1c, a scheme that completed in Q2 2024.

6.4 Planning and Area Regeneration

6.4.1 Challenges

Development Management income targets from pre-application and applications as remains challenging due to a slow-down in development activity across London over the last 18 months. The service is hopeful of closing the gap this year due to increase in fees, a more active development market and applications expected in 23/24 coming in 24/25.

The delivery of self-contained housing remains challenging due to market conditions for residential. Land-owners and developers are prioritising other uses such as student housing, offices and hotels, but where policy allows the team continues to secure good affordable housing outcomes.

6.4.2 Opportunities

The service is already receiving support from the Policy Design team in changing the way they work within Development Management to increase speed of processing planning applications.

Good progress is being made on the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) funded digital projects which the team will be testing this year, continued support from procurement and IT is welcome

There is the potential for significant planning reform and the new government has recently consulted on changes and at the recent Investment Summit suggested it may go further as it pledged to rip out the bureaucracy that blocks investment. This could lead to significant change in the way planning applications are approached by the Council and planning policy and will have an impact on the draft local plan.

6.4.3 *Learning*

That housing delivery from private sites will remain challenging due to lack of housing proposals coming forward on private sites with other uses such as student housing, offices and hotels favoured. The Council however is considering using its powers, such as land appropriation or compulsory purchase orders (CPO) to help bring forward new homes on the 02 and Regis Road sites where good progress is being made.

6.5 Euston and HS2

6.5.1 *Challenges*

High Speed 2 (HS2) is a controversial high-speed railway which is under construction in England. The line will run between Birmingham and London Euston. Government decision making around HS2 and Euston is still highly uncertain and at times unpredictable. The team are using all available levers through the Euston Partnership and political lobbying to influence decision making. The government has confirmed delivery of HS2 to Euston – however the spatial plan, delivery model and budget remain undetermined.

The Government announced that the Euston Housing Delivery Group will work in partnership with Camden on “an ambitious housing and regeneration initiative for Euston”, Camden is working with MHCLG to help shape this group and its approach, to ensure it works closely with our communities and to influence station designs to ensure place is at the heart of decision making.

6.5.2 *Opportunities*

Support to resource the development of the Council approach to a Development Corporation and how to shape, structure and utilise and financial powers the Council has to deliver benefits to the communities alongside development at Euston. The Council have commissioned studies into Development Corporations and Funding Mechanisms.

Opportunities to deliver more housing at Euston working alongside MHCLG and Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP) – if coordinated and supported by community conversations – support with these conversations is helpful.

Inputting into the upcoming spending review process to support funding for ongoing work at Euston.

6.5.3 *Learning*

Consultants produced a Euston Economic Impact Assessment for Euston which highlighted the significant economic potential and national importance of development at Euston, building on the Knowledge Quarter potential here.

'Meanwhile Uses' happen with interim occupation of vacant or underutilised premises, sites or spaces, in advance of redevelopment, or in a long term vacant space. Delivering 'Meanwhile Uses' around Euston is challenging due to the Government's drive to restart construction and complexities to get sites ready for use. The team are developing a Meanwhile Use Strategy to help with the Council's internal response to meanwhile opportunities to lead by example and a how to guide to demystify the process.

6.6 **Inclusive Economy/Good Work Camden (GWC)**

6.6.1 *Challenges*

Residents presenting with long-term, chronic mental health conditions, coupled with a lack of specialist provision who the team feel they can confidently signpost to.

Developing processes to better secure, monitor and enforce employment and skills obligations through planning and procurement.

6.6.2 *Opportunities*

Delivering the GWC portal – once delivered, this will provide a front door for all three services that come under the GWC umbrella – neighbourhood job hubs, apprenticeships and the construction skills centre. The service is being supported by the digital customer experience team to develop the portal, but progress has been slow, mostly due to capacity issues.

Developing our employer engagement capacity and capability, working more effectively across Good Work Camden and programmes like Lift, and through senior leaders and the emerging partnerships team to make every contact count in terms of securing opportunities for residents and to influence systematic change to recruitment processes.

Developing Good Work Camden's professional development offer – with support from other teams like the family support team who are further along in their journey and organisational development and learning.

Maximising the opportunity of the new Euston Skills Centre - developing a strong, cohesive training offer that responds to need and demand, including for new green skills, and maximises the centre's occupancy including out of hours and weekend provision linked to schools, the community and employers.

The service will be running the Council's Business Survey in 2024/25.

6.6.3 *Learning*

Over the last year: there has been an evolving picture around labour market – latest labour market data nationally shows that unemployment is low, but economic inactivity is high – well above pre-pandemic levels with 700,000 more people economically inactive than 4 years ago. Higher worklessness is partly due to more older and more younger people being out of work. For young people, one in seven are now outside full-time education or employment, the highest rate in nearly a decade. More young people out of work with long-term health conditions, and weaker growth in education participation among young men, appear to be driving this trend.

There is a concern that the nation-wide increase in school non-attendance might feed through into increased NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures in time, though Camden's NEET figures are currently low. School non-attenders have been identified as a priority group for the Youth Mission.

Over the next year, the service is planning to do some research with University College London (UCL) to develop a more granular understanding of the Health and Life Sciences ecosystem in the Knowledge Quarter area and links or interdependencies with other sectors such as tech and AI.

Other planned research, possibly with other boroughs in the Health and Life Sciences Coalition to understand the space needs of the Health and Life Sciences sector, including what affordable/accessible space looks like for Life Sciences.

There is an evaluation of 16 to 18 provision delivered at the Euston Skills Centre, working more closely with construction contractors on developing the offer. An offer for 14 to 16 year olds also needs to be developed in conjunction with Camden schools and contractors looking at how best to engage with this age group and looking at a range of training providers that maybe best fit to run this provision.

6.7 Environment and Sustainability

6.7.1 *Challenges*

An Increase in graffiti and offensive graffiti / fly-posting, which is monitored through Environment Services and Community Safety teams. Prompt removal of reported incidents and focus in hot-spot areas (high streets in the central area of the borough).

Appropriate resourcing and organisational focus on the climate risk agenda and climate adaptation. Work to ensure that there is ongoing cross-Camden focus on the creation of resilient communities and infrastructure across the borough to cater for increasing heat risk and increasing likelihood of surface water flooding, alongside the emergency management response during excess heat and flooding episodes.

The size and ambition of the Camden Transport Strategy delivery plan creates a broad resource ask beyond the Transport Team and Division, requiring ongoing alignment of organisational resources. Developing schemes brings together a range of participation and engagement resources and as schemes develop through their phases an enhanced reputational focus is required.

Increase transport demand for Special Educational Needs children with high needs / EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans). Over the past few years there has been a sharp rise in children requiring costly one to one transport where an average place for this level of transport can cost £25k to £50k. In addition, other costs have increased including vehicle rental which in some cases have seen an increase by 10 to 40%.

Recruitment and retention in some key service areas including Parking Services, Building Control and Transport Strategy. There is high competition for experienced, qualified personnel across the public and private sector with pay rates often out of the realm of public sector pay scales. The recruitment process has proven to be inflexible and lengthy leading to long lead in times to get key roles recruited to.

Staff wellbeing: experienced an uptick in the number of officers that are sharing issues concerning their mental and physical health. This has been challenging as the rising numbers mean that the priority on sustaining that officer support means that the team have seen a rising impact upon service delivery.

6.7.2 *Opportunities*

The next iteration of Camden's Climate Action Plan (2026-30) is the big opportunity that would benefit from cross organisational support, particularly alongside the delivery of the We Make Camden "local economy tackles the climate emergency" Challenge.

Working in London with the Lane Rental Strategy Group, which comprises Transport for London, Enfield, Lambeth, Kensington & Chelsea to develop and deliver a Lane Rental Scheme for borough roads. This scheme will allow boroughs to charge utility companies for 'occupation' on the most traffic sensitive streets at traffic sensitive times. This should improve local road congestion and improve air quality by encouraging utility companies to better plan their works.

The co-ordination of area-based service delivery and public infrastructure development requires strong internal and external partnership working – need to ensure that local opportunities, resources and funding are regularly socialised and reviewed in order to get full value at a local level.

Recruitment continues to be an issue where flexibility is required to capture opportunities. There are a number of vacancies across services and finding it increasingly difficult to offer up a recruitment process / offer that is speedy and flexible enough to meet service needs.

6.7.3 *Learning*

Ongoing engagement of local government with the new Government is essential relating to their implementation of the Waste and Resources Strategy, particularly the impact on local government services from the national Deposit Return Scheme (recyclable materials) and Extended Producer Responsibility funding for local recycling services.

Air quality improvements post Covid have been sustained. Particulate matter (PM) is a mix of tiny solid and liquid particles in the air, some visible and some not. The UK currently focuses on estimating the fractions of PM emissions where particles are less than 10 micrometres in diameter (PM10) and less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (PM2.5).

- Camden have four PM monitoring sites both PM10 and PM2.5. For PM10 all four of the sites achieved our Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) interim target, with two of these already compliant with the World Health Organisation (WHO) 2021 guidelines for this pollutant. For the first time, all four PM2.5 monitoring locations have achieved the interim target (seven years ahead of schedule) but none have yet achieved the WHO 2021 standard for PM2.5

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is a gaseous air pollutant composed of nitrogen and oxygen. It forms when fossil fuels such as coal, oil, gas, or diesel are burned at high temperatures and primarily enters the air from the burning of fuel.

- 245 out of 261 diffusion tube monitoring locations in Camden were legally compliant (16 exceedances) and has achieved the 2026 interim target at 183

of these locations. However, Camden still exceeds the 2034 World Health Organisation (WHO) target.

Continued monitoring of a range of output and outcome metrics relating to Camden's transport and active travel interventions. When benchmarked with other London Boroughs, Camden continues to perform exceptionally well with respect of Healthy Streets delivery as evidenced by our 3rd place position in the latest independent Healthy Streets Scorecard analysis

https://www.healthystreetsscorecard.london/results/results_input_indicators/

Work continues to develop the next Camden Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (2025/26 to 2027/28) –workshops for Camden teams and work with Members and the public generally have provided further insight for the development of the 3 year plan, alongside more detailed sessions with the Disability Oversight Panel and the Climate Citizens Panel. The Plan will be presented to November's Cabinet meeting for approval.

Camden's Parking Service is awaiting the annual pan London parking and traffic stats from London Councils. This will enable them to understand where they rank for the last financial year in comparison to other London boroughs.

6.8 Public Safety

6.8.1 *Challenges*

Resourcing remains a significant challenge within the relevant environmental health and statutory/regulatory services. The increased investment into the Food Safety service has provided scope to establish a new service model with an increased priority attached to training and development.

Sustained high level of demand, particularly for environmental health related services continues to present challenges. Ongoing IT/system upgrades combined with changes to the environmental health service models/structures are designed to ensure that the Council continues to be able to respond to the demand trends.

Tension remains high due to external factors impacting Camden such as the ongoing conflict in the Middle-East. The Community Safety service continues to prioritise activity delivered in partnership with the Metropolitan Police with an emphasis on community engagement and reassurance. The internal tension monitoring group also continues to play an important role in co-ordinating the tactical and operational Council response to a range of issues.

6.8.2 *Opportunities*

The upgrade of the IT system used by the relevant environmental health and regulatory services is designed to support the ongoing development of agile front-line services. The opportunity to upgrade the existing systems is designed to provide efficiencies whilst also providing scope for the services to use data more effectively.

The development of Licensing Charter in partnership with stakeholders has provided an important opportunity to further support the key aspirations outlined within the Camden Evening and Night-time Economy Strategy. Responses suggested wide awareness of what good practice looked like, especially for prominent venues who understand the importance of managing relationships and understanding their neighbourhoods and training staff.

Opportunity to fully embed the learning from the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) review/Taskforce pilot which informed the development of a new risk based approach towards ASB case management. The revised system has been fully implemented alongside the revised ASB policy and the creation of the Mental Health Protocol.

6.8.3 *Learning*

Learning from the ASB review continues to inform the delivery of the revised cross-council approach towards tackling anti-social behaviour. Feedback from local residents and communities continues to be used to inform the development of action plans designed to address anti-social behaviour, particularly in Camden Housing Estates that are most disproportionately affected.

Engagement with residents groups and stakeholders has played a major role in the development of the draft Statement of Licensing policy. The draft proposals will be considered by Camden Licensing Committee members who will determine whether the current proposals shall be publicly consulted on.

Learning from the ongoing Contingency Planning review continues to inform changes to a number of Council procedures, policies and operating practises.

6.9 **Recreation**

6.9.1 *Challenges*

Services are continuing to experience poor behaviour by parts of the Camden community with incidents occurring across our community spaces. This quarter has seen significant issues arising at Kilburn and Queens Crescent Libraries where a multi agency response has had positive impacts.

A restructure of the management levels of library team was being implemented during this period. Overall positive impact but the transition period led to some inconsistency in service delivery.

The unveiling of Purchase Street Open Space coincided with the 30th anniversary of the murder of Richard Everitt. Ensuring the space was to the family's satisfaction was challenging as a result of the time of year and suitability of flowers by the memorial.

6.9.2 *Opportunities*

The auto-enrolment of Primary School children at Camden libraries to become members has been implemented through Q2. IT development work is still underway.

A newly formed Leisure Service (Sports and Physical Activity and Green Spaces Teams) has the opportunity to deliver better integrated wellbeing outcomes for communities (physical and mental health).

6.9.3 *Learning*

The Reading Agency have completed a needs analysis to inform the reading strategy and the Council's Insight, Learning and Impact team have completed library catchment area data analysis based on active members (those borrowing a book in the last 12 months) and comparison with census data which will support the service to understand who is being reached and who is not.

7. **Finance Comments of the Director of Finance**

7.1. The Director of Finance has been consulted on this report and has no additional comments.

8. **Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

8.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add to this report.

9. **Environmental Implications**

9.1 There are no proposals with environmental implications made in this report.

10. **Appendices**

10.1 Appendix A: Corporate Performance Data Dashboard Q2 2024/25

REPORT ENDS