

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: All</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Themed Debate - Working with Partners and Institutions to Benefit Camden	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Full Council	<b>DATE</b> 20 January 2025
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This is the background report for the Full Council debate on 20 January 2025 on Camden's approach to working with partners, institutions and business to benefit our residents and communities.</p> <p>During the debate we will hear contributions from a range of Camden stakeholders, including elected members, residents, representatives of partner organisations, and policy experts, which may inform Camden's approach to partner engagement going forward.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Charlotte Akinola Cabinet Office Portfolio Lead Corporate Services 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG Email: <a href="mailto:charlotte.akinola@camden.gov.uk">charlotte.akinola@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>The Council is asked to consider the report.</p>	

Signed:



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## 1. Background

1.1 Camden is a place that has significant ambition to make change – for our communities as well as to make our contribution to national change. Across our civic and community leaders, our businesses, our knowledge institutions, our public sector anchors – we have a huge amount of expertise, wealth, ideas, capacity and courage. As a Council we believe it is our role to direct, shape and inform those resources to contribute to our shared vision for Camden’s future. We Make Camden, and our four Camden Missions, are a statement that we believe we can and should achieve more for our residents through partnership with institutions and organisations across the borough, than working alone as a Council.

1.2 Our We Make Camden partnerships approach, focused on our Missions but also on our wider organisational ambitions, is not to focus on single relationships between us and partner organisations, but to enable networks and relationships to grow around our shared priorities and vision for the Borough.

We know from speaking to our partners that they value the Council’s role in:

- Understanding evidence and data and what is happening in the borough and how they can contribute – information sharing
- Planning and resourcing activity in the Borough that might not be funded elsewhere
- Bringing together a range of partners that wouldn’t otherwise come together – convening
- Brokering opportunities for collaboration and partnership – directing
- Intervening to create opportunities for under-represented groups or in areas that require action or focus – shaping
- Creating a platform for wider voices and using our role as a Council to bring together partners to advocate for change – participation

In these ways we are an interesting and useful partner for many organisations around Camden and there is a strong appetite from corporate partners and borough wide institutions to connect with us.

1.3 This report sets out our corporate approach to partnerships, reflecting our missions approach, as one way in which we engage with organisations in our Borough and seek to achieve our shared vision for the Borough. This covers:

- **Creating Public Value** - Our approach to using our corporate levers to create value from our contractual and regulatory relationships that contribute to our We Make Camden ambitions
- **Building a Camden Partners Network** - Our approach to building relationships with institutions, businesses and organisations in the Borough around our shared vision for Camden and our role in connecting and convening.

1.4 Camden has locational advantages at the heart of a global city, with many larger businesses and institutions located in the borough for this reason. However, residents in the Borough also experience significant poverty, inequality and hardship. Research shows that children growing up in poverty in otherwise wealthy areas experience worse outcomes than children growing up in poverty in more deprived areas – showing that inequality, not just poverty, is

critical for Councils to tackle. We believe it is our responsibility as an organisation to look to more equally share the value that is generated in our Borough amongst those that live here.

- 1.5 As a Council, Camden has taken a strong position that we can drive value for our communities from our formal levers – such as procurement and social value, planning and community infrastructure levy (CIL) and licensing. Through our We Make Camden strategy and our Missions, we have a set of shared “north stars” to point the work of partners and the Council toward to create value for our communities – whether it is encouraging apprenticeships for young people, more sustainable fleet and transport for services in the Borough, equitable employment practices or increasing access to free school meals.
- 1.6 We have invested in partnerships capacity across the Council to support and enable senior leaders to work closely with anchor institutions (our largest corporate and knowledge organisations across the Borough) and strategic capacity to support our services to think about how to drive value for residents and communities from formal partnerships with organisations. We continue to be reflective of the ways in which we can use our Council levers (procurement, regulation, licensing, planning) to bring together Camden’s resources in different ways, and also bring together the ideas, innovation and creativity of partners who share our vision for a more equitable, fair, sustainable and inclusive Borough where everyone has a voice.
- 1.7 Our 2020 Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review highlighted our strong practice and approach to building partnership and participation across sectors with organisations in the borough outside of contractual or regulatory roles. We believe that businesses, community and voluntary organisations and anchor institutions, and their employees, want to be part of Camden and want to contribute. We have strong networks of voluntary and community sector partners, and we have created new ways to invest in an inclusive local economy through our Future Camden Fund and the Community Wealth Fund.
- 1.8 Since 2020 a lot has happened. We have faced, and weathered, a pandemic. We are still seeing, and will continue to see, the profound impact it has had on our communities and our borough. We have seen how, in times of crisis, we are strongest when we work together; across sector, geography and organisational boundaries. We have seen more than ever, the benefits that working in a more networked and connected way across Camden can bring. What we have set out in We Make Camden is intentionally bold and ambitious. Our missions are set-up to stretch us further. They are cross-cutting to encourage us to continue working with and across the borough; creating new partnerships, connections and networks. Making sure that over the coming years, everyone in the borough is able to participate in helping to achieve our shared vision for Camden.

## **2. Creating Public Value**

- 2.1 Camden’s partnership work with institutions and businesses is driven by a shared ambition to work together to make Camden a fairer, more equal

borough. But the Council does also have levers it can utilise in order to deliver against our We Make Camden ambitions, missions and challenges. These include:

- **Our procurement levers** – directing our spend to buy goods and services to impact our We Make Camden ambitions and our Missions – this can include specific contributions to local employment, apprenticeships but also thinking about the design of procured or commissioned services to contribute to priorities e.g. ensuring homecare staff are supported to travel sustainably as part of their duties;
- **Our planning levers** – shaping investment into Camden’s buildings and public realm to align with our key priorities around affordable housing, sustainability and net zero and employment opportunities in the borough;
- **Our grants and funding** – Camden is a significant funder of community and voluntary partners in the borough including providing core funding to organisations. Through this funding we seek to provide support to organisations to work with the Council on our wider We Make Camden ambitions including community cohesion and resilience, community capacity building and networking, and citizen participation and involvement.

2.2 Some key examples include:

<p><b>Procurement and Public Value</b></p> <p>Camden has taken a strong position on driving public value from our contracts including requiring partners to pay London Living Wage and encouraging high standards in terms and conditions for workers. Camden was an early signatory to the Unison Ethical Care Charter.</p> <p>The Council ensures that social value commitments are part of contract deliverables. Camden applies a 10% weighting in our tenders which means that suppliers are required to generate social value through their contracts, which can include initiatives like community engagement, apprenticeships and local employment, donations towards a community, charity or event and support to close the digital divide.</p> <p>The Council have created an internal cross council social value request list that enables us to broaden our ask on what may be needed across all areas of Camden.</p>
<p><b>Planning and Public Spaces</b></p> <p>A range of public benefits are secured from new developments through S106 agreements or funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy to help ensure investment into the borough delivers economic opportunity and homes for local people while minimising its impact on the environment and creating places which will be cherished for generations. These benefits include construction and end-user apprenticeships and work placements, local procurement, commitment to using Good Work Camden, signing up to the STEAM pledge, affordable workspace, direct delivery of affordable and accessible homes or contributions to the Council’s affordable housing fund, new public spaces and community facilities, and contributions towards, new</p>

and existing transport facilities, open spaces and public realm, employment and training initiatives and carbon reduction measures.

Recent examples include securing £23m from the British Library Extension development to deliver new affordable homes in Somers Town, affordable workspace, £760,000 for employment and training, an Employment Benefits Plan which includes a doubling of their school learning program, expansion of their adult learning program and expansion of their local library satellite program. Over 600 affordable homes, £10m towards step free access at West Hampstead Station and a new health centre from the O2 development. New step free access to Kings Cross Station, an education space to deliver a STEAM based education program for local schools and 19 social rent and 14 intermediate homes and £6.2m to the Affordable Housing Fund and affordable workspace from the MSD development at Belgrove House. Where new public spaces are created these are required to be managed in accordance with the Public London Charter.

New development must also pay Community Infrastructure Levy and 25% of Camden's CIL is ringfenced to wards and spent on a wide range of local projects to address local priorities. £2.4 million of local CIL funds were spent in 2023/24 on over 80 community projects sponsored by ward Councillors. Larger projects included Primrose Hill Library, refurbishing a building in Gospel Oak for use by the Women and Health charity, funding for cost-of-living projects, and improvement to the Pirate's Castle in Camden Town.

### **Euston and High Speed 2**

We have taken a strong position about the value that Euston and HS2 should deliver for local communities, and how Government and partners in the development should provide value and address disruption for communities now. We have worked closely with HS2 to deliver the Euston Construction Skills Centre, a £4.1m facility that was handed over to the Council in 2023 and will provide employment and training opportunities for local communities and people.

### **Local Supply Chain Opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises**

Camden Council actively supports local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community, and social enterprises (VCSEs) by providing them with opportunities to tender for contracts.

The Council publishes contact details for local suppliers on our intranet and encourage contract managers to use local wherever possible. The benefits of this are increased flexibility, greater control, cost effectiveness, a greater understanding of the local community and a reduced carbon footprint.

### **Community Wealth Fund**

Camden has established the Camden Community Wealth Fund to invest in businesses in Camden and provide repayable loans, equity finance and business support to people and organisations across Camden. The fund will also prioritise business owners who often face barriers to accessing finance via more traditional routes. By taking stakes in businesses for return, the Council will both look to invest in organisations that contribute to our wider We Make Camden ambitions but also look to shape an inclusive local economy for our Borough.

In 2025, we are entering the Camden Community Wealth Fund's pilot phase. The pilot phase will launch two models that focus on identifying the participation model for the Fund's full launch.

**Future Camden Fund**

The Future Camden Fund (FCF) awards funds to small local businesses who are contributing to an inclusive economy through either a new project or business expansion. The programme has two funding options: match trading grants and loans. For each option, the Council award up to £50,000. To be successful, businesses must demonstrate impact in at least one of the programme's inclusive economy priority areas, which are: training and education for local people; programmes for young people; digital inclusion; underrepresentation; local and diverse supply chains; access to STEAM; citizen health and wellbeing; sustainability, net zero and ethical choices; small businesses.

To date, almost £1m has been generated in the borough through the programme - £500k organic growth by businesses, and £500k matched grant income or loans awarded from Camden Council.

**Strategic Partners Funding**

The We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme 2024-31 supports civil society groups who are vital in delivering for Camden's diverse communities and building community strength. The investment programme provides £4m a year in grants to Camden's VCS and provides support to Community Partners who work in deep rooted ways with our communities, taking a preventative approach and supporting community voice and social action. Since launching in March 2024 we have:

- Supported 38 organisations who are deeply rooted in our communities via our Community Partner Fund- providing them with a 7-year unrestricted funding commitment. Providing multi-year, unrestricted funding creates a wider ecosystem of grants, allowing organisations the flexibility to respond to community needs, refocus, grow and address key risks, creating a sustainable, responsive sector.
- Continued to provide Advice grants to organisations providing independent advice and support to Camden Residents. Since launching in 2020, partners funded through the Camden Advice Network have supported residents to claim over £40 million in unclaimed benefits. They've supported residents in managing and reducing their priority and non-priority debts by £1.6 million.
- Strengthened organisational support to voluntary and community organisations by investing in partners such as Voluntary Action Camden, Young Camden Foundation and Volunteer Centre Camden who provide training, support and advice to organisations as well and ensuring the voice of the sector and the communities they serve are heard at a strategic level.
- Supported collaborations between VCS partners, small group and other business and statutory partners across Camden

**Cultural Camden**

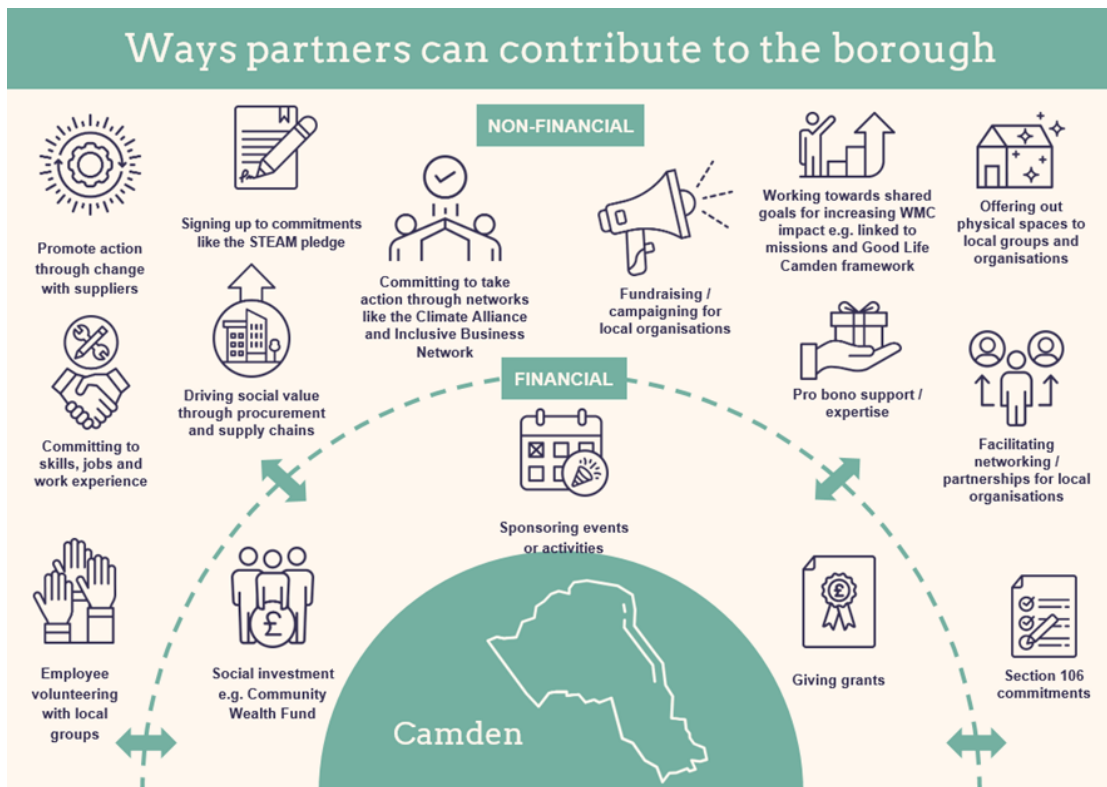
The Culture Service is responsible for strategically growing and protecting arts and culture in the borough and leading the Cultural Partnership –Cultural Camden, a strategic network of key arts and culture organisations in the borough. As part of this, the community festivals grants programme awarded 67 grants to community organisations to deliver festivals in their neighbourhoods between April – December in 2024. These include Camden People's Theatre: Tolmer's Square Variety Spectacular in Regents Park,

Kindle Corner: South Asian Heritage Storytelling for all in St Pancras & Somerstown and York Rise Street Party: Highgate.

### 3. Building a Camden Partners Network

3.1 Our Missions are our Camden approach to breaking down big, complex societal challenges into goals that the Council and partners can collectively work toward and measure progress against. They are intentionally more ambitious than the Council could ever achieve by itself or by working in the way it currently does - requiring change and partnership. Our Missions are the bringing-together of the Councils wider track record developing an approach to partnerships over time that seeks to build on more transactional, contractual approaches to engaging organisations in the Borough.

Figure 1 – ways partners can contribute to the borough



3.2 As a Council we have a very strong track record of working in partnership with institutions and businesses.

#### Working with Universities and Higher Education

The Council has developed strong relationships with local universities, including with University College London (UCL), with whom we have shared a memorandum of understanding since 2020. This has translated into a wide range of fruitful academic and strategic collaborations, including the Citizen Scientist Academy and the Good Life Euston framework. We also have very strong partnerships with Central St Martins (CSM) and University of the Arts London (UAL). More widely, CSM have been strong partners in deepening

networks of collaboration in their local neighbourhood around Euston and through innovative participatory projects in response to borough challenges such as overcrowded housing and loneliness and social isolation as part of the public collaboration lab.

### **The Knowledge Quarter**

The Council is a founding member of the Knowledge Quarter Partnership which was established in 2014 with the aim to connect academic, scientific, cultural and commercial organisations to promote access to knowledge, support creativity and stimulate growth for the social and economic benefit of the local area and society at large.

In 2023, the Council, in partnership with London Borough of Islington and the Knowledge Quarter Partnership, published KQ2050 - our strategy for the inclusive growth of the knowledge economy in the area around Kings Cross and Euston. The strategy is our framework for collaboration with the institutions and businesses in the KQ to deliver the vision “by 2050, we want the Knowledge Quarter to be and be known as the best place in Europe for collaboration, innovation, and research; a place that delivers inclusive opportunities for local residents, regardless of their means, to fulfil their social and economic potential within the KQ area.”

The strategy sets out the Council’s commitments around creating the policy environment and public realm to support growth and our expectations of the institutions and businesses who benefit from being here in terms of environment and net zero, meaningful engagement in education and inclusive recruitment and employment. The strategy also commits the Knowledge Quarter partnership to leveraging its membership to deliver opportunities for residents.

### **Camden Giving**

Camden Giving was set up in 2017 as an independent charity. They take a participatory approach to distributing funding (private and public sector) to support and grow local community and citizen led projects and services. The Council has a very strong partnership in place with Camden Giving who are delivering the We Make Camden Kit, which the Council worked alongside Camden Giving to develop and which we continue to provide funding towards.

The We Make Camden Kit is a partnership between Camden Giving, Camden Council, Camden citizens, and Camden businesses. The Kit is a revolutionary approach to funding new ideas, supporting Camden residents who have first-hand experience of the challenges facing the borough and how best to tackle them. It helps them (with small grants, support and infrastructure advice) kick-start community projects that contribute to one or more of the We Make Camden Missions.

### **Camden Climate Change Alliance**

The Camden Climate Alliance (CCA) is a network made up of businesses, community and schools working together to drive positive change and tackle the climate crisis in Camden. They work with over 400 businesses, community organisations and schools to help tackle the climate crisis in Camden and be a local force for good. A key priority of the Alliance is to help unlock value for – and with – business and community partners to enable and inspire climate action that has the potential to deliver meaningful, long-lasting, positive change, to reduce carbon emissions, invest in our young



people, improve local air quality and green local spaces. The Alliance provides technical support, access to grant funding and creates opportunities for the network to thrive and learn through workshops and networking events. The CCA membership network continues to grow and has recorded an 8.5% increase in members for 2023. This takes all-time membership to 455 organisations. Newer members include Time Out, Anthesis Group, Work Life and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Notable links can be drawn between businesses joining the CCA and their subsequent participation in grant funded schemes offered through the Alliance.

#### **Inclusive Life Sciences Coalition**

Camden has partnered with Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets to deliver the LIFT Programme. It aims to offer new opportunities and promising futures to residents, with opportunities in the local technology, science and digital sectors. The programme is delivered via 4 themes; community engagement, employment and business support, land and assets (affordable workspace) and thought leadership. To date the Lift programme has engaged more than 2,500 Camden residents in community engagement events or skills and training programmes, has delivered 288 people into jobs, 85 into apprenticeships and 85 into paid internships. Lift has also supported 110 startups led by local, under-represented founders.

Camden, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets and the City of Westminster with MedCity have come together to form an informal 'coalition of the willing' to encourage, promote and facilitate a much stronger emphasis on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the London Life Science sector. Health and Life Sciences are strategic, priority sectors for London and the UK. Growth is concentrated in Central London which is served by the councils in this coalition. However local communities are not enabled – through skills, knowledge, connections and work experience – to fully access this sector, the wider supply chain or even to benefit fully from the therapeutic and public health benefits.

#### **Inclusive Business Network and Health Partner Engagement**

Through Good Work Camden, the Council convenes the Inclusive Business Network (IBN) – a community of practice of around 40 local employers who are interested in improving their good employment credentials – the network benefit from a programme of support around themes such as inclusive recruitment, flexible working and progression and development. Alongside the IBN, The Good Work Camden service includes an employer engagement and brokerage function whereby we work with local businesses to create employment opportunities, collaborate on making recruitment accessible and to make sure jobs are of good quality.

The Council engages with a large number of health and social care employers via our membership of the NCL ICS People Board and the Workforce Supply Delivery Board and via our NCL Health and Social Care Academy. All these forums and programmes are focused on increasing local recruitment and the inclusivity of recruitment and employment practice in the sector. A new Place-Based Team is being established by NCL and Camden to oversee the delivery of the suite of work and health initiatives planned from 2024 – including the government's new Health & Work programmes, WorkWell and Connect to Work.

Since August 2023, the Good Work Camden has partnered with the NHS North Central London Trust to provide our residents with direct access to job opportunities. This partnership helps remove common barriers in NHS applications, such as lengthy forms, long interviews, and the requirement for detailed assessments or supporting statements. Through this collaboration, the NHS Trust matches our residents with Band 2 and Band 3 roles at three major hospitals: UCLH, Moorfields Eye Hospital, and The Whittington. NHS employers work with Good Work Camden to offer workshops throughout the year to improve CVs, support applications, work on interview skills, and learn about career options within the NHS, including Reservists positions and permanent roles.

#### **Camden STEAM Ambassadors**

The main objective of Camden's new STEAM strategy, launched at Google's King's Cross headquarters in March 2023, is to create more pathways for young people to enter and succeed in a STEAM career and engage more young people from underrepresented backgrounds in STEAM training and opportunities. The strategy outlines the rapid scaling up of key initiatives such as STEAM Work Experience and creating a Camden STEAM Apprenticeships programme to bring together schools and employers to develop pathways for our young people into apprenticeships and employment. Our STEAM programme supports our continuing commitment to equality, engaging young people from underrepresented backgrounds in STEAM and supporting them to access all the opportunities that Camden has to offer.

#### **Google AI Campus**

Google has worked with Camden Learning, Camden Council and Camden schools to launch an AI Campus for pupils in the borough – the first of its kind in the world. The aim of the campus is to help ensure that a diverse range of children and young people can take advantage of all the opportunities offered by this next generation.

A cohort of 32 students from every Camden secondary school have been selected for the inaugural cohort and wider benefits for Camden schools and their pupils will include mentoring, masterclasses and work experience placements offered by Google and other local tech companies, as well as enrichment sessions offered across a range of related subjects for both primary and secondary aged pupils.

While Google wants to grow a more diverse community of AI practitioners to ensure that the benefits of AI are shared more widely, the company is also keen to extend its support to the Camden community by offering wider education, training and career opportunities for local young people in the STEAM sector.

- 3.3 The Council plays an important leader of place role in convening the borough, as well as being operationally involved in networks and partnerships that are delivering the missions. A key part of our approach to deliver WMC is in convening an annual summit which brings together multi-sector partners and citizens leading social action to celebrate, reflect on and push for further action toward the missions. We have delivered three summits to date, each hosted by a local partner organisation (University College London, Wellcome Collection, and University of London Senate House).

#### **4 Looking to the future**

- 4.1 This report has out the Council's corporate approach to partnerships, reflecting our missions approach, creating public value and building a Camden Partners Network. A lot of progress has been made so far but there is still so much to do. The We Make Camden Mission Ambassadors programme encourages organisations to sign up to We Make Camden Movement, promoting and advocating for the missions, providing sponsorship, skills and space as well as expertise and experience to develop and share research, learning and evaluation around the Missions.

#### **5. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 5.1 Any additional resources that the Council is able to bring into the borough for the benefit of its residents is very welcome especially in the context of the ongoing financial challenges faced by local authorities. The activities and initiatives described in this report are funded from existing budgets and/or have been subject to specific decisions e.g. the Community Wealth Fund. When using the levers described in section 2, particularly procurement, the Council is always mindful of the balance to be struck between public/social value and the financial value needed to remain within allocated budgets.

#### **6. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor has reviewed this report, and his comments have been incorporated.

#### **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications to this report.

**REPORT ENDS**