

COUNCIL – 7th APRIL 2025

BUSINESS FROM THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING ON 3rd MARCH 2025

Report of the Borough Solicitor

This report relates to the unconsidered motions and the responses to written Council questions from the Council meeting held on 3rd March 2025.

1. Background

The Constitution advises that where motions have not been dealt with by the conclusion of the meeting of the Council, they fall without discussion and are passed to the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair whose response is then to be provided to the next meeting of the Council. Also the responses to written questions that were provided for last ordinary Council meeting are to be circulated as part of the next meeting's agenda for information. These responses are then noted at that next meeting without debate.

2. Responses to motions

At the meeting of the Council held on 3rd March 2025, there were 3 motions that were not considered due to lack of time. As the Constitution requires, these motions were passed to the relevant Cabinet Members or Committee Chairs, who are required to report back to the next meeting of the Council. A copy of the motions and the responses are attached at Appendix A to this report.

3. Responses to written questions from Councillors

The written questions from Councillors and the responses from Cabinet Members linked to the Council meeting on 3rd March 2025 are attached as Appendix B.

4. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

- 1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Steve Adams and which was seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkinson**

The Council notes that Camden staff levels rise yearly and further, that over 10% of employment is through agencies. The cost of this to the borough is over £2.2M per year. In times of financial structure, it cannot be good practice for this to continue unchecked.

It should also be noted that the use of temporary staff can affect service quality, introduces a burden on Camden through the need for continual, repetitive induction training and can also result in a lower level of corporate commitment. A happy workplace is one where everyone feels both an intrinsic part of the organisation and permanently embedded in its ethos.

The Council resolves to make greater efforts to drive down the non-productive costs of staffing by reducing the reliance on agency hiring towards a level of 5%. This reduction would deliver a £1.1M saving while not reducing staff levels. By more use of existing technology, the Council also commits to a future reduction in total staff numbers through efficiencies.

RESPONSE BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

It is important to recognise that Camden Council, as a large organisation with teams that have statutory minimum staffing levels, will always have a need for some temporary staff. Agency staff play an important part in adding capacity and bringing specialist skills into the organisation for short periods of time to cover absences and in cases where there are specific skills shortages and recruitment challenges.

However, it is right to pay attention to agency staffing levels and seek to minimise the Council's reliance and spend on agency staff as far as possible. This is why Camden's agency staff management operates with tight controls, including a requirement for Executive Director approval for any new agency staff recruitment. All Directors are required to review their agency usage with a view to making reductions so that agency staff usage is less than 10% of both headcount and spend by June 2025.

Camden has had success in reducing its reliance on agency staff in services where there have historically been recruitment challenges. For example, the success of the children's social work recruitment campaign has resulted in reduction in long term agency placements in that area.

The Council continues to see successes with the Camden Talent Pool that has been integrated into the agency supply framework. This creates opportunities for temporary roles to be filled by Camden residents, aligning with the Council's goal of facilitating stable, well-paid work, which is recognised as pivotal to broader outcomes

such as health, well-being, and secure housing. The Council's aim is to meet temporary staffing needs whenever possible from the resident talent pool. Over the past year 72 residents have been successfully recruited into temporary positions.

2. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Patricia Leman and which was seconded by Councillor Tommy Gale

This Council notes that:

- Since 2010, successive coalition and Conservative governments have slashed Camden's core funding, requiring us to deliver savings of more than £220 million. In recent years, councils have been pushed into financial crisis across the country, issuing Section 114 bankruptcy notices and cutting essential services.
- Due to Camden's strong financial management, we are not at risk of bankruptcy. We have balanced our budget while continuing to invest in vital frontline services, public spaces, and support for all residents.
- The new Labour government has inherited a funding system that has left councils struggling, but Camden welcomes the commitment to a multi-year funding settlement from next year.

This Council further notes that:

- Despite the financial pressures of the last 15 years, Camden has continued to invest in making the borough one of the best places to live, work, and visit. This year's budget ensures that Camden remains financially resilient, socially inclusive, and committed to delivering excellent services for all residents.
- For families and children, Camden continues to provide free school meals for all primary school pupils, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, gets a nutritious meal every day. The budget commits further capital investment in children's social care to provide better accommodation for care-experienced young people, while ensuring continued support for youth centres, early years services, after-school programs, and apprenticeship schemes to help young people reach their full potential.
- For working people and local businesses, Camden is expanding business support initiatives through investment in affordable workspaces and local entrepreneurship schemes. The Council continues to back initiatives that create good, well-paid jobs for residents, while ensuring that major projects like HS2 and the Knowledge Quarter provide long-term employment opportunities for local people.
- For all residents, Camden remains committed to high-quality public spaces, culture, and local infrastructure. This year's budget includes:
 - Capital investment in sites like Acland Burghley School Hall to support arts and community use.
 - Ongoing investment in parks, green spaces, street cleaning and high streets, making Camden cleaner, safer, and more welcoming.
 - Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure, improving sustainable transport options across the borough.

- For older and disabled residents, Camden continues to prioritise social care funding, helping meet growing demographic pressures. The Council is investing in new social care accommodation to improve long-term support for vulnerable residents.
- For renters and homeowners alike, the Council's capital investment plan supports social housing improvements, ensuring continued investment in council homes, better conditions for private renters, and efforts to keep Camden a place where people of all backgrounds can afford to live.
- For residents needing more intensive support with housing, the budget increases Camden's investment in homelessness prevention by £0.5 million, expands in-house temporary accommodation through the Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme and Community Investment Programme, and provides an £8 million budget uplift to meet rising temporary accommodation costs.
- For those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, Camden has confirmed the continuation of its £2 million Cost of Living Fund and £2.1 million Family Crisis Fund, providing vital support for residents facing financial hardship.

This Council resolves to:

- Continue Camden's strong financial stewardship, ensuring we remain financially sustainable and continue delivering excellent services despite national funding pressures.
- Ensure Camden remains a place where people of all backgrounds can afford to live, work, and raise a family. This includes building new affordable homes, protecting private renters, and improving council housing.
- Stand up for residents facing hardship by maintaining generous Council Tax support, and investing in food security programs.
- Deliver high-quality public services that benefit the whole community, from libraries and leisure centres to safer streets and cleaner air.
- Maximise economic and housing opportunities for residents by ensuring major developments create jobs, apprenticeships, and genuinely affordable homes.

RESPONSE BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

The Council remains in a resilient financial position but the challenges it is facing cannot be underestimated.

2024/25 has seen pressures increase rapidly in demand-driven service areas such as homelessness and children's social care, as the number of cases and their complexity grow whilst service providers' prices increase. In September 2024, London Councils reported that London Boroughs are expected to overspend their budgets by more than £600m in 2024/25, with a £250m pressure on homelessness alone.¹

The financial context in which local authorities have operated has been shaped by a range of pressures and challenges over the last 15 years. These have included the cumulative impacts of the significant real terms reductions in capital and revenue

¹ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news-and-press-releases/2024/londons-housing-crisis-threatens-break-borough-budgets-amid-ps700m>

funding through austerity, the requirements for councils to deliver significant additional services without the accompanying resources and more recently, the rapid increases in inflation and interest rates from 2022.

In response to these pressures the Council has agreed and delivered a number of Medium Term Financial Strategies including over £220m of budget savings since 2010. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's response to the challenges facing the borough have informed the setting of this year's budget, with investments focused on community priorities, our Council Tax Support Scheme, social care and housing help to support the most vulnerable in the borough.

This year's budget maintains that commitment, with:

- A continuation of our investment in our Council Tax Support Scheme and Cost of Living Crisis Fund.
- Investing £0.5m in more homelessness prevention officers, increasing the capacity of the team by 20% and buying back more ex-Right to Buy properties to increase social and temporary housing in the borough.
- Laying the foundation for future generations through the Camden Community Wealth Fund.
- We are also investing in the development of the Council's debt mission work to try and ensure that everyone can get the support they need to avoid debt and be financially secure. As part of this work, the Council has established a Money Advice team to support residents to maximise their income and to manage and avoid debt where possible.
- Investing £11.1 million into the acquisition of residential properties for the provision of children's social care, so we can bring more provision in-house.

The new government has indicated it is committed to multi-year funding settlements which will support the Council's medium term financial planning. The move to multi-year financial settlements is part of an expected wider range of local government finance reforms due from 2026/27. The government has not yet announced the specifics of these reforms, but they are expected to include the simplification of grant funding streams, an end to competitive bidding and systemic reforms of service areas such as homelessness and adults' and children's social care. The move to multi-year settlements will help reduce uncertainty and sharpen the Council's long term financial planning.

We Make Camden sets out our commitment to investing in our communities. Delivering our ambitions is supported by a set of Camden Missions and Challenges that we want to tackle with our partners and communities across the borough. The Council's financial strategy helps shape our ability to deliver on those commitments.

It is vital that the Council remains financially resilient so that we are able to deliver on our commitments to the borough.

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

This Council notes that:

- Carers Trust estimates that there are at least one million young carers aged 17 and under in the UK and over 600,000 young adult carers between the ages of 18 and 25;
- In Camden, 23 young carers are formally identified by the Department for Education, but the true number of young carers in Camden is likely to be far higher;
- Young carers miss an average of 23 school days per year and young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university;
- Caring responsibilities can affect young carers' readiness to engage fully in school life, adding barriers to punctuality, their capacity to complete homework, and their ability to focus and participate effectively in lessons.

This Council resolves to mark Young Carers Action Day on 13 March 2025 by:

- Signing up to the Young Carers Covenant, published by Carers Trust in March 2024.
- Committing to implement the Carers Trust's 'No Wrong Door' for Young Carers, to improve services between adult and children's social care services, Integrated Care Boards and other key organisations in respect of identification and support for young carers and their families.
- Working alongside all schools and colleges to deliver Young Carer Awareness Training for staff so that they can recognise and address the challenges faced by young carers.
- Encouraging schools and colleges to mark Young Carers Action Day by providing guidance, assembly plans, and awareness-raising materials.

RESPONSE BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Camden has a long-established commitment to ensuring the best possible start in life for young carers in our borough. Support for young carers is a named priority in the 'Belong' strand of Camden's [Resilient Families Framework](#) (see page 11, column 4). This is overseen by the Camden Children's Trust Partnership Board. Camden is launching a Carers Partnership Board in April 2025. This partnership provides opportunity to further strengthen multiagency collaboration for carers of all ages, particularly around transitions for young carers.

The Directorate Management Teams in Adults and Health and Children and Learning recently committed to adopting the joint ADCS/ADASS memorandum of understanding [No Wrong Doors for Young Carers](#). Our cross-sector young carers working group has undertaken a self-assessment against the No Wrong Door

checklist to identify how our implementation of No Wrong Door would be structured. Work is in train to progress No Wrong Door with ICB colleagues. Camden has a joint operating protocol between adult social care and children's services for supporting young carers. The protocol has recently been refreshed and now explicitly reflects No Wrong Door principles.

We welcome the proposal to adopt the [Young Carers Covenant](#) from the Carers Trust as a further signal of the Council's commitment to young carers. We intend to undertake a similar process for adopting the covenant to the work undertaken to recognise care as a protected characteristic.

Our young carers strategy is currently jointly held with Islington, with whom we jointly commission our external Young Carers Service delivered by [The Children's Society](#). Our young carers working group is overseeing the development of a refreshed young carers strategy for Camden (our current strategy is due to expire at the end of 2025). Young carers will be codesigning the strategy throughout, with first stage engagement work taking place March to June 2025 in partnership with the Childrens Society.

The refreshed young carers strategy will be completed by November 2025 and presented to Cabinet in February 2026. This is to allow sufficient time for meaningful codesign with young carers to ensure it fully represents their voice and influence, and for partner engagement in strategy priorities and proposed actions.

Comprehensive data insight work on young carers, combining data from ONS census, children's services, adult service and school census, has been undertaken by Camden's data insight team and public health data teams. This data insight is being used to both inform strategy development and to help identify operational strengths and areas for development. This is being refreshed once every school term (to coincide with school census data release). We know there is more to do to identify young carers, and the operational working group is proactively working with partners to achieve this.

The refreshed young carers strategy will sit alongside Camden's Adult Carers Action Plan which was launched in July 2024 and coproduced with carers from across the borough. Young adult carers are a priority area for action in the Action Plan, and children's and adult services are working together to develop these plans. Camden Carers provide support for [Young Adult Carers](#) and work is ongoing with the new provider of young carers services to sustain smooth and timely transition planning as young carers approach adulthood.

We are working in partnership with The Childrens Society to plan for [Young Carers Action Day 2025](#). The theme is 'Give Me a Break'. Resources are being issued to schools in next week's Head Teachers Bulletin and have been sent to Camden Learning Leads for attendance, safeguarding, mental health and educational psychology for distribution to their schools networks.

ENDS

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION 1

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

BY: COUNCILLOR NASH ALI

As a Regent's Park Ward councillor, I am very proud of the achievements of the Community Champions Programme in the Regent's Park Ward. Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the achievements and future development plans of the Community Champions Programme?

REPLY

Camden's community champions programme has been running on clusters of social housing estates, in Kentish Town, Kilburn and Regent's Park, for the last five years. The current contracts are due to end on 31 March, but I am pleased to say that following an external evaluation of the community champions programme, the Council has agreed to increase the number of community champions projects from three to five. This means that from 1 April there will be additional projects in Highgate and King's Cross.

Each project will be run by a Voluntary or Community Sector (VCS) organisation, who will appoint a coordinator to work with residents to identify their priorities for improving health and wellbeing. Residents can then volunteer as champions to increase awareness of existing health and wellbeing services and design and implement new activities and projects that address their health and wellbeing priorities.

I believe the community champions programme will be instrumental in tackling health inequalities and supporting the Government's NHS reforms, focussing on community over hospital and prevention over treatment.

The three existing community champions projects have delivered a range of achievements over the last five years which are difficult to summarise, so I hope this quote, taken from the Community Champions Learning and Evaluation Report prepared by Collaborate for Social Change, provides a good overview.

"The Community Champions programme has supported improved health and wellbeing outcomes for participants, especially in mental health and community connection, but also in food access, physical activity, and community safety. It has developed individual capabilities like confidence and leadership skills, as well as enhancing community assets including public spaces and support networks. These outcomes have been enabled by the persistent and creative efforts of coordinators to engage residents, the flexibility and resources provided by

commissioners, the infrastructure lent by host organisations, and the growing participation of champions and communities”.

QUESTION 2

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR JUDY DIXEY

What is the most up to date number of homeless people to whom Camden Council owes a duty? How many of them and what proportion are currently in accommodation out of borough? Please provide this information in a table showing the breakdown of the numbers by different types of accommodation, i.e. hostels, hotels, B&Bs etc.

REPLY

Like all London councils, Camden has experienced a significant rise in homelessness and the number of households requiring temporary accommodation. Despite these challenges, we have successfully maintained 80% of our households within the borough of Camden. Unlike many other London councils, we have not placed households outside of London and continue to secure accommodation within a reasonable travel distance of Camden using public transport.

Table of All households in Temporary Accommodation

	B&B	S/C Private Leased	Hostel	S/C LBC Stock	Total	In/Out Borough
Total	328	388	107	170	1010	799/211

S/C = self
contained

QUESTION 3

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

BY: COUNCILLOR STEVE ADAMS

In 2016, Progress 8 was introduced as a measure of school improvement. It measures progress in the top 8 subjects from the start of secondary school to GCSE - compared to expected levels of improvement.

Between 2016 and 2023, the biggest increase in Progress 8 took place in London. This reflects wider national improvements in education between 2010-2024, with the number of good or outstanding schools increasing from 68% to 86% in that period,

and with England jumping from 25th to 13th place in the international league tables for reading, and from 27th place to 11th in maths.

However, Government data released in December shows that Camden has the worst progress score in London. It also has the eleventh biggest decline in secondary school progress of any council in the country in the last 5 years and the biggest decline anywhere in the south of England.

Why have Progress 8 scores declined so rapidly in Camden, compared to London as a whole and progress in neighbouring boroughs?

REPLY

Progress 8 is a secondary accountability measure aimed at measuring the progress of pupils across a selected set of 8 subjects: English; mathematics; three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification. It is a type of value added measure, meaning that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils with the same prior attainment at Key Stage 2. The measure at Key Stage 2 is based on Year 6 outcomes in Reading and Mathematics SATS tests.

Progress 8 has been contended by Institute of Fiscal Studies, the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and the British Educational Research Association as a measure of accountability for secondary schools because it does not account sufficiently for the varying starting points of students, potentially disadvantaging schools with a higher proportion of lower-attaining students. School leaders have suggested that it places undue pressure on schools to focus on a narrow set of subjects, potentially neglecting broader educational development and that the measure can be influenced by external factors beyond a school's control, such as socio-economic status and regional disparities, which can skew the results. It is currently being reviewed by the Department for Education as part of the school accountability and assessment reforms.

Due to the pandemic no school or college level education performance data was published in 2020 or 2021 and in 2023 Ofqual confirmed a return to pre-pandemic grading with an allowance for disruption so that overall results would be similar to those of 2019. Ofqual guidance is that the three-year trend considered valid for reporting covers 2019, 2023 and 2024 to take account of this. There will be no progress 8 scores next year due to the pandemic resulting in the cancellation of statutory testing in 2020.

Overall Camden Progress 8 fell in 2024, relative to small increases for London and national averages and this represents a three year declining trend. Camden ranked 97th (152 boroughs) nationally and 32nd (32 Boroughs) in London. There is a wide spread of Progress 8 scores between the 10 Camden school, including 2 schools that ranked well above average. The EBacc and Open buckets were both significantly low in 2024. Analysis suggests that there is wide variation in

performance in English, Maths, Science and Humanities and the need for a more common focus on subjects in the 'open' element.

Overall, the average attainment 8 score (actual grades achieved) in Camden was 47.9 in 2024, is slightly higher than the national average (43rd in England) and 25th across the 32 London boroughs.

In the last three years there were two Camden secondary schools were found by Ofsted to be requiring improvement and one found at risk of being less than good. Following rapid improvement all are now graded good with the overall proportion of schools now graded good or better in Camden (100%) well above national averages.

It is recognised that the declining trend in progress outcomes needs to be reversed. Camden benefits from a collaborative and coherent secondary school network that is responsive to working collectively to improve outcomes and learn from the strongest practice. Open and robust standards conversations with Secondary Headteachers have been held, and challenging KS4 targets agreed with all Camden Secondary schools benchmarked to the top 20% of schools nationally. Half termly meetings with Headteachers and Chairs have been initiated with the lowest performing schools to offer challenge and support, this has resulted in increased advisory support. Enhanced use of academic performance data has been developed over the course of the year including the use of a shared data platform. A new senior secondary adviser and a secondary mathematics adviser have increased capacity and are now supporting schools with the lowest maths outcomes. Alongside a raising standards leads network being formed to ensure schools are using the best methods to improved outcomes and subject expertise has been commissioned to support individual schools with lower outcomes in specific open bucket subjects e.g. Humanities, Performing Arts.

QUESTION 4

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

BY: COUNCILLOR REBECCA FILER

Please could the Cabinet Member outline how many families have used the Council's Cost of Living Fund and Household Support Fund in 24/25, broken down by ward?

REPLY

From April 2024 to 31st January 2025, 4,845 households have received 6,290 grants from Cost of Living and/or Household Support Fund awards from Camden. This equates to a total of over £2.183m, averaging £451 per household or £347 per grant. This may cover multiple awards per household.

A full breakdown of the volume of households supported broken down into Cost of Living Fund and Household Support Fund per ward is included below in Table 2 –

please note that Out of Borough awards refer to those in out of borough Temporary Accommodation.

Table 1 refers to the number of awards per ward broken down into Cost of Living Fund and Household Support Fund (factoring in an average of 1.3 awards per household)

Table 1: Grants per ward: Household Support Fund and Cost of Living Fund

Recipient's Ward	Cost of Living fund Grants awarded	Household Support Fund Grants awarded	Total Payment Amount
St Pancras and Somers Town	357	405	£266,250
Haverstock	280	303	£213,200
Kilburn	264	288	£192,900
Gospel Oak	224	226	£155,850
Regents Park	224	208	£149,800
Kings Cross	178	216	£139,200
Camden Square	162	184	£121,004
Kentish Town South	161	177	£117,900
Holborn and Covent Garden	155	191	£114,700
Camden Town	130	133	£87,500
South Hampstead	116	126	£85,800
Fortune Green	115	108	£77,750
Highgate	104	108	£73,400
Primrose Hill	91	99	£63,000
West Hampstead	84	96	£60,550
Bloomsbury	78	94	£58,500
Kentish Town North	83	85	£58,300
Frognal	47	57	£36,600
Belsize	48	58	£33,300
Hampstead Town	22	17	£12,900
Out of borough	88	100	£64,800
Totals	3,011	3,279	£2,183,204

Table 2: Households supported per ward: Household Support Fund and Cost of Living Fund

Ward	Household Support Fund Households Supported	Cost of Living Fund Households Supported	Total Payment Amount
St Pancras and Somers Town	331	271	£266,250
Haverstock	248	205	£213,200
Kilburn	238	205	£192,900
Gospel Oak	201	176	£155,850
Regents Park	174	164	£149,800
Kings Cross	175	136	£139,200
Camden Square	150	120	£121,004
Kentish Town South	139	121	£117,900
Holborn and Covent Garden	169	126	£114,700
Camden Town	111	97	£87,500
South Hampstead	105	89	£85,800
Fortune Green	101	84	£77,750
Highgate	92	88	£73,400
Primrose Hill	83	67	£63,000
West Hampstead	77	71	£60,550
Bloomsbury	80	62	£58,500
Kentish Town North	71	68	£58,300
Frognal	38	33	£36,600
Belsize	48	40	£33,300
Hampstead Town	15	18	£12,900
Out of borough	82	85	£64,800
Totals	2,696	2,292	£2,183,204

QUESTION 5

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

BY: COUNCILLOR LIAM MARTIN-LANE

Please could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the progress on the partnership delivery of Camley Street? What support is being offered to businesses and workers whose occupations are based there?

REPLY

In October 2024 the Council signed a development agreement with Ballymore Lateral to deliver around 350 new, energy efficient homes, around 170 of which will

be genuinely affordable. In addition, over 200,000 square feet of Knowledge Quarter-led commercial space will be created, delivering around 1,000 jobs in the light industrial, life sciences, technology and digital industries.

A full design team has been procured who are working towards a planning application submission later this year.

Businesses located within the regeneration area have been kept informed on progress, including the requirement to have vacated their premises by 31st October this year. The Council has confirmed with each business the amount of compensation they will receive. Businesses have also been informed that the Council will be as flexible as possible – if, for example, they find a suitable location to relocate to and want to leave earlier than October 2025.

To support businesses, a property agency has been employed to locate suitable alternative premises available within an agreed radius from Camley Street. A specialist charity, [Tree Shepherd](#), has been employed to work alongside the businesses affected by regeneration. This support has included regular visits to businesses, particularly the garages at 120-136 Camley Street; helping these businesses to find suitable new locations and offering business development advice for those worried about attracting new customers. Businesses will be introduced to the Council's job brokerage service Good Work Camden to support affected staff in case of any redundancies. This support package will continue until every tenant has moved to new premises or retired their business.

A number of units on the Cedar Way industrial estate have been leased to Co-Laboratories as part of the "meanwhile strategy" to keep the estate active where units have become empty much earlier than the required date for vacant possession. [Co-Laboratories](#) provide affordable incubator lab space for small start-up life science companies.

QUESTION 6

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN

BY: COUNCILLOR NINA DE AYALA PARKER

Could the Cabinet Member share the latest calculations of tree canopy cover in the borough? I am aware of the capital investment made over recent years to plant more, new trees, and the work undertaken by community groups to support tree planting. What progress has been made over this period?

REPLY

I'm very proud of the extra investment the council has made in planting new trees across the borough in recent years. It helps us deliver on the aim of the council's tree planting strategy, which is to increase canopy cover to 26.6% by 2045. Examples

include the new trees recently planted on Canfield Gardens and other streets in South Hampstead.

Tree canopy cover across the borough increased from 22.9% in 2016 to 24.6% in 2023. This is an increase of 1.7% points – equivalent to approximately 34 football pitches of additional canopy cover created through the tree planting programme, community tree planting by groups such as Think and Do, and maintaining a healthy tree population.

1.7% does not sound like a huge proportion on its own but I think it's a change to really celebrate. This is especially given the highly urban nature of Camden including constraints around planting in street and the requirement to keep much of Hampstead Heath open.

QUESTION 7

**TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND A SUSTAINABLE
CAMDEN**

BY: COUNCILLOR JAMES SLATER

Investment in retrofitting our schools is central to reducing the carbon emitted by this part of the council-owned estate. What further plans does Camden have to address this and what funding have we recently sought to support this?

REPLY

We are delivering a range of initiatives to decarbonise the School Estate in Camden. We have successfully secured investments totalling £12.1m for our schools. Of this, £3.5m is government grant which has been achieved from the following:

- Retrofit projects part funded through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to plan and deliver targeted improvements across the school estate. The criteria for this funding focuses on sites with older, inefficient gas boilers and replacing these with sustainable low carbon heating systems, as well as delivering other upgrades such as insulation and LED lighting. £2m of grant funding has been secured since 2022.
- Seeking funding through the GLA Greener Schools pilot to deliver LED lighting upgrades across two sites
- The below table provides a breakdown of projects completed and in the pipeline, including funding we seeking through PSDS4.

Other sustainability initiatives we are progressing include:

- Working with external providers on community investment models for solar PV installs, which has been trialled at Hampstead School, Parliament Hill and Regent High. Further sites are being assessed for suitability to roll out on a wider basis.

- We are also planning for Heat Decarbonisation Plans across all our sites, to enhance our performance data base and feed into future grant applications for sustainability projects. We will also share this data with schools, to support their development of wider Climate Adaptation Plans (the DfE requires schools to have these in place by the end of 2025).

Significant investment is required to reach a net zero standard across the school estate. A study completed by Etude in 2021 estimated the cost to retrofit the LBC school portfolio to a net zero standard would be circa £112m. This estimate has recently been reviewed and updated to £139m. External grant funding is sought and explored wherever possible to prioritise sustainability projects, as the limited DfE condition budgets are fully committed to the delivery of core building works to ensure health and safety.

PSDS Grant funded projects completed	Grant Amount (£m)	LBC Co-fund (£m)
Acland Burghley School	£0.2m	£0.7m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air source heat pump • Radiator and building management upgrades • LED lighting • Mechanical ventilation upgrades 		
Eleanor Palmer Primary School	£0.1m	£0.4m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air source heat pump • LED Lighting • Cavity wall insulation & draught proofing 		
PSDS Grant funded projects underway		
Hampstead School	£1.3m	£1.1m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air source heat pump • LED Lighting • Double glazed windows • Solar PV 		
Primrose Hill Primary	£0.4m	£2.1m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground Source heat pump • LED Lighting • Secondary Glazing • Solid Wall Insulation 		
Camden fully funded project - PAS 2035 pilot, underway		
Brookfield Primary	-	£2.2m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air source heat pump • LED Lighting • Double glazed windows • Solar PV 		

Grant application being assessed / awaiting final approval		
Brecknock and Langtry – PSDS grant	£1.3m	£1.8m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air source heat pump • LED Lighting • Wall Insulation 		
Greener Schools Pilot – GLA grant	£0.2m	£0.3m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar PV • LED Lighting 		
TOTAL	£3.5m	£8.6m

QUESTION 8

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR IZZY LENGA

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and what Camden is doing to assist hosts, given the first visas were due to expire this February?

REPLY

As a borough of sanctuary Camden is committed to helping all refugees living in the borough or transient in the borough, to access the support they need to rebuild their lives and take positive decisions about their own future.

Since March 2022 Camden Council has been a leading participant in the Homes For Ukraine (HFU) community sponsorship scheme. The scheme enables eligible UK households to host a Ukrainian family or individual, fleeing war and persecution. Under the terms of the HFU Visa, Ukrainian refugees have been granted 3 years Leave to Remain (LTR) and access to public services and benefits in the UK.

Since the commencement of the HFU scheme, over 1000 Ukrainian refugees have found temporary sanctuary in Camden, made possible by the strength and compassion within our communities. Many of the Ukrainian households have now moved on from host-guest arrangements, either through self-agency, or with help from Camden to find private rented sector homes.

There are currently 225 Ukrainian guests living in the borough in 150 hosting arrangements.

What are the developments announced by the Government?

In November 2024 the Government announced that Ukrainians living in the UK under the current 3-year HFU VISA would need to apply for Ukrainian Permission Extension (UPE) 18-month VISA. This will grant them a further 18 months stay in the UK. This change has taken effect from the 4th of February 2025 to account for the first

wave of Ukrainian arrivals about to reach the end of their 3-year leave to remain period.

Refugee facing teams in the Council are working with our lead Ukrainian community partners, to guide both guests and hosts through these changes, using data to ensure readiness (see fig 1). Notably Ukrainian refugees will need to apply for UPE from the point where their original Visa has 28 days left before its expiry.

Fig 1 below, highlights where Ukrainian guest Visa 3-year end dates occur. These end dates are staggered in line with arrival dates, beginning in March 2022.

HFU Visa end dates for Ukrainian arrivals in Camden from March 2022



Thank you payments

The Government also announced in November 2024 that the thank you payment payable to hosts would be reduced from £500 per month to £350 per month, in order for the scheme to be financially sustained for another 18 months.

In the light of the change, Camden will be increasing its own discretionary “top up” paid to hosts receiving the thank you payment from £50 per month to £100 per month. This would mean that hosts, from April 2025, would receive £450 per month (the Governments £350 plus our top up of £100). The increased payment would cover an initial 12-month period, then be subject to review.

QUESTION 9

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

BY: COUNCILLOR TOMMY GALE

Please could the Cabinet Member provide an update on how Breakfast Clubs are being used in Camden to enable children across the borough to start the school day with a nourishing meal?

REPLY

Camden is a national leader in terms of the progress that has been made with the provision of school breakfast over the past two years. The new government announced a commitment to offering a free breakfast club in every primary school in England. Camden's provision already surpasses the government's baseline offer for schools to provide school breakfast. We will be watching how the scheme develops to ensure Camden schools have the best access to breakfast available to them. Uptake figures up to December 2024 indicate that Camden initiatives have enabled up to 3228 children to have a free breakfast every day - up from 587 children in 2022. In total more than 635,000 breakfasts are provided per year.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis and the growing number of Camden households experiencing or at risk of food poverty, the Council supported all of our schools to offer access to a school breakfast, with a minimum requirement for breakfast food to be free for pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

Alongside this commitment in January 2023 the Council commissioned Magic Breakfast to help support delivery of the school breakfast programme to meet the needs of Schools where 30% or more of pupils were eligible for pupil premium funding.

Our Health & Wellbeing team have also provided support, resources, and advice to schools that access the National Schools Breakfast Programme (NSBP), the national subsidised school breakfast scheme, and to those schools that have chosen to continue arranging their own breakfast service.

The Council currently contributes over £175,000 per year to support the school breakfast programme.

Our Support in Schools to develop the programme

Over the past two years, the Camden's School Breakfast Programme has expanded. **Magic Breakfast support 24 of our schools including 2 special schools and 1 Pupil Referral Unit.** The most recent additions to this list are Richard Cobden

Primary School, Haverstock School, and Heath-Pupil Referral Unit which joined in Autumn 2024.

Specifically, Magic Breakfast has been supporting schools to increase uptake. One example of successful secondary school engagement is with La Sainte Union. The school has worked hard to promote the breakfast service and recently provided five sixth form pupils with Level 2 Food Safety training, to qualify them to assist with the delivery of the breakfast service. Uptake has increased to approximately 150 pupils eating breakfast a day, which is the highest uptake among secondary schools in Camden.

Another example of the innovative methods used can be seen at the Swiss Cottage school, where sixth formers run the 'Magic Breakfast café' as a learning exercise. Classes are able to make bookings at the café for breakfast. Additionally, when children are not attending the café, they have breakfast in the classroom. Swiss Cottage have managed to offer breakfast to all pupils on role every day.

Breakfast provision is highly valued by school staff, parents and pupils. Not only does providing school breakfast help to tackle the issue of hunger in children and young people, but qualitative feedback shows that the provision of school breakfast has had positive impacts on school attendance and concentration and has helped reduce some household costs during the cost-of-living crisis. Quotes from qualitative feedback can be seen below:

"It's great seeing the children being able to access food in the morning. It has become a morning staple, and all children look forward to the 'grab and go breakfast' available in the playground from 8:30am - some often going back for seconds!"

School staff member, Fleet Primary School

"After I have my breakfast, my brain is better at concentrating and managing my distractions."

Year 3 pupil, Christ Church School

Development in 2025

In 2025 the Council and Magic Breakfast will continue to work with schools to develop new ways to make school breakfast appealing to pupils, with the aim of increasing uptake. We already support schools to provide breakfast during breakfast club, on the playground, in classrooms, and other locations. We are also exploring and identifying innovative methods for improving the provision of school breakfast.

QUESTION 10

TO THE: CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

BY: COUNCILLOR LORNA JANE RUSSELL

Would the Cabinet Member for Better Homes please confirm the breakdown of Camden Council social homes that have:

1. Single, double and triple glazed windows
2. Internal or external wall insulation
3. Air or ground source heat pumps
4. Solar panels

Please break these figures down per estate or the number of street properties per ward.

REPLY

The attached spreadsheet provides data for housing owned by the Council, broken down in line with the request above.

The Council has a clear analysis of the works required to improve the energy efficiency of its stock and is proactively exploring options to secure investment and new funding models for this work. Grant of approximately £7m has been secured for pilot projects in the last 3 years, and the Council allocated a further £23.4m in its new capital programme for targeted measures/match funding to secure a minimum Energy Performance Certificate rating of "C" for those homes that are currently below this standard.

The recently approved Housing Investment Strategy (Cabinet, January 2025) also notes that the nature of the housing stock can determine the measures that can be installed, for example Camden has a large number of older homes that are listed or in conservation areas. Camden is therefore actively engaged in work with London Councils to understand how retrofit programmes can address all types of property located within the capital.

ENDS

