

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

COUNCIL MEETING – 7th April 2025

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

- 1. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Sharon Hardwick and which was seconded by Councillor Anna Burrage**

The Council notes that:

- Camden's libraries are vital public spaces that support lifelong learning, creativity, connection and wellbeing. They offer free access to books, digital tools, study resources, warm spaces, cultural activities and trusted advice – all within safe, inclusive and welcoming environments.
- In the face of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, libraries have continued to play a crucial role in supporting residents – helping people get online, access services, and feel part of their community.
- Labour-led Camden has consistently invested in strengthening and modernising the borough's libraries – not just improving buildings, but reimagining what libraries can offer in response to the changing needs of our communities.

This Council further notes examples of improvements across Camden's libraries, including:

- West Hampstead Library: Reopened as planned on Monday 24 March after four months of decarbonisation and redecoration works. The project delivered three key energy conservation measures: replacing single glazing with heritage-style double-glazed units, upgrading the gas boiler system to air source heat pumps, and switching all remaining lighting to energy-efficient LEDs. These upgrades will prevent around 9 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, supporting Camden's borough-wide goal to reach net-zero by 2030.
- Swiss Cottage Library: Refurbished in 2022 with a major £3.7m upgrade focused on sustainability, energy efficiency and accessibility. Through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, the library underwent a deep retrofit that significantly reduced its carbon footprint and future energy bills. Earlier this year, the newly redesigned children's library was also unveiled to mark the library's 60th anniversary – an imaginative, interactive space that brings new life to a much-loved and iconic landmark.
- Highgate Library: Reopened in January 2024 after a major upgrade that included a new lift, improved layout, new furniture, and full internal redecoration – creating a more accessible and welcoming space for the community, whilst preserving the character of the Grade II listed building.

- Kilburn Library: Plans are underway for a full redevelopment, bringing the underused lower ground floor back into community use and adding new facilities including a kitchen, creative and digital spaces, and an improved children's area.
- Holborn Library: Currently undergoing refurbishment, including better ventilation, modernised shelving and furniture, and the creation of flexible spaces to support community use and partnerships.
- Queens Crescent Library: Recently enhanced with new family-friendly areas and interactive resources that have helped make the space more engaging and welcoming.

This Council additionally notes:

- With the second-highest adult engagement rate in England in 2023/4, Camden's libraries have seen a strong return to in-person use since the pandemic, with growing footfall and high demand for in-library support, study space, events and digital access. Residents increasingly value libraries as trusted spaces to connect, create and learn.
- Libraries are playing a growing role in delivering Camden's cultural vision – supporting everything from reading groups to coding clubs, creative workshops to live performances. They are spaces for local expression and opportunity.
- The launch of Camden Reading Together reaffirmed our commitment to building a borough of readers – celebrating the joy and power of reading across generations and communities.
- Libraries are also adapting to new ways of meeting residents' needs, including through the Library of Things initiative, which supports sustainable living and promotes shared community resources.

This Council resolves:

1. To continue prioritising long-term investment in Camden's libraries and library staff, and seek additional opportunities to expand and futureproof facilities and services.
2. To promote and celebrate the transformation of Camden's libraries, ensuring residents are aware of the wide range of services, spaces and support now available to them.
3. To deepen partnerships with community groups, schools, young people, cultural organisations and local creatives – ensuring libraries reflect and respond to the energy, interests and diversity of Camden's communities.
4. To reaffirm our commitment to keeping Camden's libraries open, free and welcoming to all – ensuring they remain a cornerstone of inclusive public life, rooted in local neighbourhoods and evolving with the needs of our residents.

2. To consider the following motion, notice of which was given by Councillor Judy Dixey and which was seconded by Councillor Linda Chung

This Council notes that:

- From April 2025, National Insurance employer contributions (NICs) will rise by 1.2 per cent, and the secondary threshold will be lowered, meaning employers will start paying NICs on employees' earnings from £5,000 instead of £9,100;
- Analysis by the Nuffield Trust estimates these changes will cost the adult social care sector over £900 million next year and impose a total burden of £2.8 billion on 18,000 independent social care providers across England;
- The Local Government Association has called for "immediate adequate investment" to address unmet need and ensure timely access to social care.
- In February the House of Lords passed a Liberal Democrat led amendment to exempt social care from NIC rises, but that the Labour government overturned the amendment in the House of Commons.

This Council believes that:

- Social care providers, including hospices and voluntary sector organisations, will struggle to absorb these costs, leading to service cuts or staff reductions.

This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:

- Calls on the Government to exempt social care providers from all increases in employers' NICs;
- Urges the Government to ensure cross-party talks on social care funding, aiming to deliver long-term, sustainable solutions has its full support;
- Requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor, relevant Government ministers, and Camden's MPs to express these concerns and share a copy of this motion.

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

This Council notes that it is important to support local businesses throughout the borough but that this must be done in a financially sustainable manner and with the agreement of local residents. The Queens Crescent street market roadway scheme is an example of how this support should **NOT** be given.

The 120 metres of the street market is in the process of being decorated with curlicue granite embossment of the ground surface and raised granite planters. A Freedom of Information request has unearthed the outrageous costs for this scheme.

The projected end total would seem to be around £3.5M and the current expenditure stands at £1.6M. Of this, designers and project managers have been paid some £600,000. Any calculation of the percentage of non-productive cost of the building contract of £2.0M shows an unjustifiable figure over 28%. And this is not a complicated house building project or a highly technical laboratory. It is a short market road in Gospel Oak.

It is understood that the granite has been brought over from Eastern Europe and the bill for it so far is approaching £0.5M.

Yes, the market has long needed a boost but is this the correct way to help locals or businesses? There are signs in shops rebutting this conception and many local residents and businesses are stunned and even offended.

Notwithstanding the fact that £2.0M of the funds for this project have been from the Greater London Authority's Good Growth by Design fund, this is still public money and it is not being spent wisely.

Therefore this Council commits to:

- Ensuring far more responsible assessment of public road schemes and the setting up of a cross-party panel to logic check such proposals before they are given the go ahead.
- Ensuring that, while it is too late to save the money spent or committed to this scheme, in times of tightened belts, such extravagances should be curtailed in the future.

ENDS