



Camden Commission Report 2017

We want Camden to be a place for everyone.

Final report of the Camden Commission

Membership

Commissioners	
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Cllr Angela Mason	Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families, Camden Council
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Summary

The Camden Commission was set up earlier this year to assess the challenges and opportunities facing the borough, and to make recommendations for action and further enquiry by the Camden Council and its partners. This work is intended to provide the framework for generating a new strategic plan for the borough when the Camden Plan comes to its end next year. The Commission was Chaired by Cllr Sarah Hayward and made up of councillors, along with external experts brought in in an advisory role.

Camden

Camden is a diverse borough in the heart of London. We're one of the most vibrant and innovative places in the country, and our borough's history has been instrumental in the country's progress. Every major equalities movement has roots here. You can walk our streets and see testament to LGBT and gender equality rights struggles, the Anti-Apartheid movement and more. This heritage is intertwined with a rich artistic and intellectual endeavour, from Dickens and the Bloomsbury set, via our world class universities, to national and local museums and some of the richest music history and culture on the planet. This all comes together in a melting pot that offers so much opportunity for people from all over the world and from all backgrounds.

Historically, Camden has truly been a place where everyone can succeed and no one gets left behind, and we want to find ways to preserve this unique opportunity for all Camdeners.

Current context

Camden, like the capital and country, faces some very significant threats, many beyond our direct control. We are coming to the end of the eighth year of government cuts to our budget, and all other public services have faced cuts as a result of the government's so called 'austerity'. This has changed our services beyond recognition, and while some cuts have led to genuine innovation and improvement, overall we are able to do far less than we once were.

The housing market is broken in London and threatens everything from community cohesion to staffing for public services and the private sector to the health of our residents. Public funding for housing investment has been cut to the bone and refocused towards ownership rather than renting; and powers to intervene in the private rented sector are not strong enough.

Leaving the European Union is a huge unknown. We believe it will damage Camden and the country's economies. It could have a serious negative impact on our world leading universities. Our communities and workforce will change. The Government is not clear about what type of Brexit they are aiming for, which makes it harder to prepare for.

The economic, cultural and social upheaval will be significant, and challenging for everyone in the borough.

The Brexit debate and other trends in politics are leading to a more fractured and fractious discourse on many issues. Developments from the failure to respond to the refugee crisis, to domestic acts of terrorism to divisive and racist rhetoric of leading politicians has a damaging impact on community cohesion. We have seen religious communities targeted in Camden, which includes both anti-Semitic and Islamophobic crimes. Camden has a proud tradition of building safe, cohesive communities where people celebrate and cherish difference. This is under threat. It will become more and more important for the Council and all parts of our communities to work to retain strong communities.

Camden, like everywhere else, is subject to the forces of globalisation. While this does bring positives for communities in many respects - a dynamic and diverse economy, world leading universities with students and staff from around the world, institutions like the Crick and world leading companies with major headquarters or offices here - it also brings downsides. Too many people are excluded from the economic opportunity these positive aspects provide. Some people find rapid cultural and demographic change difficult, too much work is still low quality leading to increased levels of in work poverty, trends towards the gig economy making work more precious, and the impact on housing costs are all downsides of globalisation. While we can't control many of the forces of globalisation, we can help our residents, communities, and economy respond to them.

Current globalising and political trends are making some communities feel threatened. The nature of debate in the US has direct consequences here. Following last year's vote to leave the European Union we saw a rise in racist and xenophobic incidents in the borough. Our discourse seems to be becoming more fractured and divisive. This presents a very significant challenge in a borough that has prided itself on being cohesive and celebrating diversity. Continuing to foster and support cohesive and resilient communities will be a major theme of this report.

While all public services have been cut due to the government's so called 'austerity', and local government in general is suffering, our health and adult social care services face a particular funding

crisis. This is a huge challenge for the Council, local NHS bodies, and our citizens who are finding it increasingly difficult to access services in a timely way. Camden has been central to the campaigns for better funding of these services and took a lead on more public engagement, but this only goes so far when the government won't deal with the structural issues and we don't have the powers to do so ourselves. We can expect physical and mental health services to deteriorate further as a consequence and we'll need to work hard to mitigate and limit harm.

All of these threats contribute to one of the biggest challenges we face. The inequality gap in Camden is one of the largest in the country and is growing. This is bad for economy and bad for our communities. We believe it is our duty to intervene where we can to challenge this growing inequality and ensure everyone who lives here can access and benefit from the opportunities that exist.

Because, despite these threats, Camden has many opportunities and assets not available in other parts of London or the country. We have always been a place that wants to take charge of our own destiny where possible. To enable us to analyse the threats and opportunities, and in order to be able to prepare to respond to them, we set up the Camden Commission to examine these, and other issues, under broad themes: Inclusive growth; Social cohesion; and Reshaping public services. Through these themes we also explored what we want Camden 'the place' to be now and in the future.

The themes for exploration were cross cutting and allowed us to gain a better understanding of how different facets of Camden interact for good and ill, and to better understand what levers we have or have influence others.

Key findings

The report sets out our analysis under these headings, as well as areas for action and those for further exploration or investigation. The Commission report doesn't pretend to have all answers, as many of the challenges we face are emerging and evolving, and so will require responses to do the same. However, there are some key issues which we can start to tackle now.

You will find the report essentially written in two parts covering the Commission's analysis in the first part

and what this leads us to do next in the second part. We don't expect the Council to take forward all the ideas, and some of the contents will be controversial or political with residents and other stakeholders. Difficult issues are always contested issues but that doesn't mean the Council should shy away from trying to seek answers.

In broad terms, we see three future roles for the Council that overlap, that will enable it to take action on its own or with others to tackle challenges.

Camden as a civic leader and activist of Camden the place. This builds on the Camden Plan objective of Camden being a strategic and democratic leader and recognises that the Council's democratic mandate gives it unique convening power to bring people together around key challenges – for example, employers and trade unions around quality of work; our intellectual assets to get different perspectives on public policy challenges; or residents to help us solve challenges facing our communities or public spaces.

Camden taking an asset-based approach to public services rather than focusing solely on the deficits. Public services tend to be focused on ameliorating problems, rather than fostering opportunities. Sometimes this is the right approach – for example when a child is at risk. But there are huge opportunities for the Council to work with residents to collaborate on defining outcomes that actually help residents succeed by using their strengths and assets to overcome challenges. We already see these types of approaches in some areas, like public health. But we can do more across a wider range of services. This approach will help build resilience in individuals and communities so we can more effectively use our resources to help those most in need.

Camden as a radical innovator. Camden has a proud tradition of being at the forefront of public policy development and finding new answers to the challenges we face. Camden won't sit back and let these challenges wash over us. To ensure we're able to respond we will seek to build on the best traditions of our radicalism and foster an environment where we're willing to take risks to try new approaches. We've done this in the past with great success, and the challenges we face mean a radical approach has never been more urgent or necessary.

This approach to our work, will help us solve some of the key policy challenges identified in the second area of the report. The biggest challenge we face is housing, and we will need to ask tough questions and leave no stone unturned. Specifically, Camden's political parties will need to be prepared to consider options outside their normal comfort zones if we're genuinely to think about tackling the housing crisis.

The report of commission is intended to help Camden in its approach to developing the next strategic approach that will succeed the Camden Plan. Overall, we believe that Camden should seek, with renewed vigour and purpose, to be a place that tackles entrenched inequality, rises to the challenges of our times and can truly be a borough where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Section 1 – findings

Social Cohesion

The Commission heard evidence that the bonds within and between communities create a sense of shared purpose on which positive social action relies. Cohesion and integration matter, and they are instrumental in delivering wider outcomes for residents. The Commission was left with an overarching sense that Camden, and its sense of place, were strongly linked to values of openness and tolerance and, even more importantly, to physically mixed communities where people from different backgrounds spend time together. The wider context is challenging, and has grown more so since the Commission published its work. The Casey Report was controversial, and there is no clear indication of how and when the Government will respond. Brexit and the rhetoric of some international leaders on immigration and multiculturalism risks creating a climate that promotes division. Therefore, a strong focus on what brings communities together over the course of the next five years is essential.

The evidence strongly suggests that community cohesion in Camden is as much defined by issues of class, age and tenure as by ethnicity and religious identity. However, there remains a need to focus on bringing together different faith and ethnic communities in the borough and to build relationships between them. Focus groups with citizens demonstrated that there is concern

that national and global events (notably the EU referendum vote and the US elections) were evidence of a hardening of attitudes and increasing religious and racial intolerance. Equally, while the Commission heard about the rich assets Camden has to drive integration and cohesion, for instance through its 'family of schools', there is a need to explore the depth of social mixing that takes place and take action where there are gaps. We know that Camden has high levels of social cohesion, as defined by traditional measures which seek to establish whether communities tolerate difference, but there is less clear data on the degree of active integration.

Evidence suggested that there is stronger 'bonding' social capital (between similar groups) than 'bridging' social capital (between different social groups) and the Council has levers, through its civic leadership and funding arrangements, to address this. Bringing together different groups to explore common challenges, for instance through the Faith Leaders Forum, remains urgent and necessary work.

Housing emerged as a key issue around this theme. Those we consulted strongly linked the need for more affordable housing, the desire to preserve mixed communities, and social cohesion. A theme from engagement with tenants was the role that the gap between incomes and rents played in forcing long-term residents out of the borough, sometimes the sons and daughters of council tenants with deep roots in the borough. Testimony suggested the need for bold experiments to mitigate London's affordable housing crisis and preserve the mixed community which contributes so strongly to Camden's sense of place and identity. There was a broad consensus that the Council's role needs to be to bring together key partners, including business, to work constructively with the Mayor of London on this issue. Powers and funding limit what the Council can do on its own, but the power to convene and to advocate and influence are substantial levers which it must pull as hard as it can.

Social isolation and loneliness emerged as key issues, with significant impacts on material wellbeing and health – this was not just for older people, but for individuals across a range of different phases of life and in a range of circumstances. The fostering of social networks and mutual support between residents (across tenure, generations, and ethnic

and religious divides) can play an active role in addressing the complex causes of need. Health partners, in discussion at the Health and Wellbeing Board, explored the relationship between social isolation and health outcomes, noting that the latter was often the consequence of the former. This was reinforced by powerful testimony from VCS partners on the frontline about the way in which older peoples' social networks are often eroded, leaving them isolated and vulnerable, and the way in which new bonds can be forged between generations through innovative social action.

The Commission heard the need for the Council to think hard about how it delivers services to the public, recognising a role in promoting approaches which take their starting point as what citizens can do, rather than the needs that they have. An 'asset based approach' starts from the assumption that people can do more for themselves and others, while sometimes needing some support to identify and make use of the strengths that they have – whether as individuals, families or communities. This approach would recognise that in some instances the Council's role will change to facilitating and enabling rather than 'doing'. Commissioners also recognised the relationship between cohesion and resilience, with communities stronger when working together around shared goals, and the need to remain strong in the context of further economic and social change. A key recommendation from the Commission is that Council should kick start a borough-wide conversation about what it means to be a good neighbour, promoting a discussion about

North London Cares is a community network of young professionals and older neighbours which seeks to build connections and social networks to reduce social isolation. Working in Camden and Islington, it operates a friendship matching scheme bringing together older and younger neighbours to spend one-to-one time together, and a group activities on evenings and weekends that bring neighbours together to share time. It seeks to address the isolation and atomisation that can be consequence of a dynamic and ever changing global city like London.

shared values and action. In the recommendation section we highlight further actions that could help drive great cohesion and resilience over the next five years.

Re-shaping public services

Through the Commission's deliberations, the challenge of delivering public services and improving outcomes in a rapidly changing environment came across. In response to acute pressures of reduced funding, increased demand and changing customer expectations, it is clear that the Council and its partners need to focus on radical reform. A key challenge is trust in public institutions and, arguably, there is a crisis in legitimacy across the institutions of the state, media, and businesses, which make governing in 21st Century, particularly where there is an urgent need to make change, incredibly challenging. The Council's financial challenge over the next five years, mirrored across key partners, is immense. The threat of Brexit, and the potential for a recession and long period of sluggish growth as a consequence, may make these challenges worse.

As well as responding to change, the Commission also heard that innovation and reform link to a sense of place. Innovation is a core value for the borough and a current running through its history, from the thought of Mary Wollstonecraft to the radical municipal architecture of the post-war period. Camden's unique sense of place is strongly linked to its history of radicalism, innovation and democracy. These are huge resources which can be utilised and, encouragingly, the Commission heard great enthusiasm to take on these challenges and make Camden a place for everyone. It also heard many innovative and exciting ideas to make change happen, and about the huge assets in the borough, from its community of social entrepreneurs to Camden-based technology giants. Through the testimony and evidence it received, the Commission heard that facing up to change and re-shaping the world for the better were a core part of what Camden means to local people.

The Commission heard about the fundamental importance of the 'frontline', where the relationship between the citizen and the state shapes both outcomes and experience. It heard that frontline workers need to be able to build up relationships

with citizens and listen to their concerns, focusing on the whole person and their wider needs, not just the presenting issue. They heard that the council had already embarked on this journey, fundamentally changing the culture of the council, giving staff the flexibility to experiment and make connections to other services and organisations, identifying issues early on, and acting to prevent them escalating. This requires an organisational culture of trust and support, and also technology which allows workers to access the right data at the right time. This is challenging enough within the Council, and the Commission was keen to see the organisation continue to progress and develop in this regard; this also needs to go across organisational boundaries. Internationally, a good example is the Buurtzorg social care organisation in the Netherlands.

Testimony suggested the need to keep building on Camden's existing approach to involving citizens in the way that services are developed and delivered. The Council should commit to engaging local communities to build strong and durable partnerships, based on a more reciprocal relationship between the state and the citizen. Open, transparent approaches to the development and delivery of the next Camden Plan will help create a sense of shared purpose. The Council has already committed to setting up a Citizen's Assembly to help

Buurtzorg (translated from the Dutch as 'neighbourhood care') was founded in 2006 by Jos de Blok and a team of nurses who wanted to develop a new model of patient-centred care, focused on maintaining the independence and autonomy of patients for as long as possible. This empowered, nurse-led approach frees staff from management control, acting as 'health coach' for the individual and their family as well as delivering necessary care themselves. Nurses are able to address a full range of needs, meaning higher costs per hour but fewer total hours, improved quality of care and higher staff morale. Administration and management costs are low and a key principle is that nurses must spend two thirds of their time in contact with the people they support.

it develop its long-term vision, an idea which had its genesis in early meetings of the Commission. The Assembly meet for the first time in the autumn. The Council should pilot approaches that allow more direct involvement of citizens in identifying challenges as well as designing and delivering solutions. In making this transition, it is important for the Council to recognise that there is a great deal to value in the way services are currently delivered. The professional expertise of officers and the insight and electoral mandate of elected members are valued by citizens. There are situations, the safeguarding of children being an example, where the services are rightly delivered in line with a tight framework. Equally, there are also instances where resources or the right for a resident to do something are contested and the Council's role is to mediate and decide in line with its democratic mandate.

The Commission noted that Camden is at the forefront of outcome-focused organisations. However, there is potential to extend this by working further with residents to co-design outcomes, working together on the 'what' as well as the 'how'. Wherever possible and appropriate, the Council should work with residents to design strategic outcomes in genuine partnership. In making this shift, the Council could consider areas where effective co-design are integral to improving outcomes, such as mental health provision or employment services. Using the later example, the need to reduce unemployment is a key outcome, but the way in which the Council and partners go about achieving this could be based on a different relationship with residents, asking citizens what they need and designing services on this basis. This might shift the menu of services on offer in this area, from an apprenticeship – which may of course be the right thing – to a home broadband connection to help with job search. This could move the Council's approach from delivering 'public services', to delivering 'services with the public'. This subtle change in language could be transformative and builds on strong existing practice, for example, the principles behind Systems Thinking. This also reinforces the proposed shift from looking at needs and 'deficits', to working with the strengths and expertise of individuals, families and communities.

The Commission heard numerous times about the need to exploit technology to its maximum potential. A greater range of quicker and cheaper services through online channels should be a given, but the potential to make greater use of data and intelligence, and to deliver some more complex services through digital means, improving the experience for customers at a lower cost should be a focus. A radical joining up of data to enable the local public sector to anticipate demand, and focusing investment on early intervention and prevention should be a major priority, with strong leadership and collective effort between the key partners.

More generally, the Council's strong commitment to early help and prevention should continue to be a focus, and this is an area where the council and its partners should 'double down'. There are a range of strong examples on which the Council can draw, from its overarching Resilient Families approach to specific examples of innovative practice such as Family Group Conferences (FGC), which aim to build up family resilience among children, young people and families by tapping into and supporting the social capital that exists in their wider family and community. Examples of early intervention such as this, and the development of a set of universal services which see prevention as a core part of their mission, must be an overriding aim.

There was evidence about the specific role of the Council in stimulating innovation. Given the urgent need to innovate and increase public sector productivity, a key recommendation is for the development of a 'public sector innovation lab' that enables staff from across different organisations to develop new ideas. The Commission heard of examples, from Boston to Copenhagen, where labs were driving new ways of doing things. Camden has, with its network of knowledge-based organisations and community of social entrepreneurs, an unrivalled eco-system for social innovation. Bringing these intellectual assets together and focusing it on social policy problems should be a key role for the Council, and the Commission recommends the authority explores this approach. Throughout the recommendations section, you will see a number of specific recommendations like this which support the Council's role in promoting radical innovation.

Inclusive Growth

The testimony and evidence the Commission heard suggested that Camden's economy is successful but that too many local residents have been excluded from the growth they see around them because they cannot access the types of jobs or afford the type of services that are created. This can lead to a more general sense of exclusion, impacting on community cohesion and sense of belonging. The twin challenges Camden and London faces over the next five years are improving productivity and growth, while developing a more inclusive labour market, all the while under the gathering storm cloud of Brexit.

There are three primary labour market challenges which emerged from the evidence:

- In-work poverty, and the corresponding need to design approaches which enable residents to increase earnings or hours within a job or by moving jobs
- The inability of the labour market and employment support services to enable certain groups of residents to participate, particularly those with health conditions and disabilities
- The changing nature of the labour market and demand for new skills and more effective pathways for our young people from school and college into work.

The evidence strongly suggests that London's growth is not secure, with competition internationally and potentially from city-regions galvanised by new metro mayors. The key challenges highlighted include:

- The rising costs of doing business, with the lack of affordable business space being a key barrier to business start-ups and growth for SMEs, and challenges from rising business rates
- The 'liveability' of the city, and London's comparator performance on quality of life indicators. This touched on a different range of issues from air quality to affordable housing, but also how the public realm is managed, with businesses prioritising clean and safe streets
- The cost of housing, impacting the ability of businesses to recruit at all levels of the workforce
- The impact of Brexit, in particular the challenge of

access to skilled labour and how the London skills system would be able to meet the challenge of replacing EU workers.

The Commission heard about the concept of 'inclusive growth', popularised most recently by the RSA, and believes that this idea can provide a rallying cry around which the energy and creativity of the Council, businesses, trades unions and partners can be brigaded. There are opportunities to build on the Council's existing convening role with business to encourage employers to do much more to integrate themselves in their local communities and bridge the sense of disconnection that local people can feel from the global businesses in the area. The Commission believes that there should be a focus on developing a refreshed set of partnership arrangements that rally partners around a shared set of objectives of increasing productivity, reducing unemployment and creating quality jobs.

While controversial and contested, the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices analysed many of the key challenges of the modern labour market and resonated with much of the testimony the Commission heard about the 'gig economy'. The Council is well placed to advocate for change, using its influence to shape potentially significant initiatives like the Mayor's Good Work Standard. The Standard rightly seeks to rise to this challenge in partnership with business but must be both ambitious and also reflect the challenges for businesses in surviving in tough business climate while at the same

Camden Ability is a network of 'disability confident' local employers in Camden, supported by funding from the Council and Job Centre Plus (JCP) in support of ambitions to reduce the disability employment gap. Working with the Business Disability Forum, the networks offers employers access to free training and tailored consultancy support, as well as acting as a gateway to a range of resources available to business on health and wellbeing practice, accessing talent and supporting their employees. Members include the John Lewis Partnership, Kier, Laing O'Rourke and University College London.

time seeking to do the right thing (this could be achievable through a tiered approach, allowing businesses to progress through different standards overtime). The Council is well-placed to influence, having led the development of the Timewise Council scheme and in its promotion of the London Living Wage. Leading by example in this way allows the Council to role model good behaviours and makes its civic leadership more powerful and effective – it is important that the Council doesn't ask others to do anything it is not prepared to do itself.

The Commission also reflected on wider local public services and their role in providing pathways into work for local people. The price of housing in central London and the nature of the Council's workforce may place some limits on the percentage of staff that can be drawn from local residents. However, this is an area, with other major employers such as health and higher education, that should be explored further, particularly in light of the major changes brought by the apprenticeship levy. The latter represents a significant issue for the Council, public sector partners and local businesses, with the risk that resources that should be spent in Camden for the benefit of local people are top-sliced for investment elsewhere. The Council, as a provider and employer of apprenticeship, as well as a strategic leader of place, should have a strong role in making sure the levy works in the best interest of local people and businesses.

Businesses, both small and large, talked to the Commission about the cost of housing and the challenges this creates for recruiting and retaining the workforce they need to grow. Large employers like Grant Thornton cited examples of businesses considering taking matters into their own hands, working with institutional investors to develop housing options for employees.

Camden's track record as an innovator in employment services enables it to build an evidence base around what works and use its influence to hasten reform of employment and skills support. A key example of this is around the join between employment and health. The major challenge is around long-term, structural unemployment with health and disability often the primary barrier to work. Addressing this requires a whole-systems approach, mobilising GPs, commissioners and acute trusts as well as JCP, employers and the voluntary sector.

A genuine opportunity exists here as the responsibility for adult skills is decentralised. There is a pressing need to ensure the opportunity presented by the devolution of the Adult Education Budget from 2019 creates a step change in the responsiveness of the Further Education (FE) system to employer need. The Commission recognised that that these scheduled reforms to the skills system are partial at best, and that the wider system of transition from education into the world of work needed substantial reform and innovation. The analysis of the recent Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) Commission provided a cogent analysis of the future of the UK economy and the resulting demand for skills, allying this to practical recommendations which enable the Council, local businesses, and the FE and HE sectors to collaborate more effectively.

The Commission also reflected on ongoing major changes to the welfare system and the way this effects key groups, such as parents, who face significant barriers to entering work. As part of the roll out of Universal Credit, for instance, parents of three and four year-olds will be obliged to seek work or risk having their benefits stopped. In London, approximately 20,000 single parents will be affected by this change and, without commensurate investment in appropriate employment support or action to increase the supply of part-time and flexible jobs, there are significant risks of the policy failing. The Council and its partners should consider commissioning analysis of the existing and planned welfare changes in Camden and other relevant issues to help it plan future support.

While there are a wide range of recommendations both for action now and in the future in the final section, the Commission believes there should be a key focus on developing a partnership with businesses around inclusive growth. The need to refresh the Business Charter provides an opportunity to discuss and agree with businesses and citizens, the way in which the public, private and voluntary sectors can come together to create public value

Section 2 – Key policy areas and recommendations

The Commission did not set out to explore all areas of policy, or all the outcomes the Council and its partners will need to focus on in the future. Rightly, this job of work needs to be taken forward by the Council itself as it develops its next strategic plan. However, through the Commission's deliberations, a number of key areas of policy focus did emerge, and are closely related to the roles and behaviours set out in the Executive Summary.

The Commission's challenge to the Council would be to ensure a clear vision and strong, evidence based thinking to inform work around these key areas as it develops its next strategic plan. The Citizen's Assembly, an idea that emerged during the Commission's deliberations and is now being taken forward by the Council, will be a forum for helping to develop a future vision for borough. The Commission advises that part of its work addresses these following five key areas, as well as others which it sees as vital to the future prosperity of the borough.

Affordable homes to support mixed communities

Every piece of evidence gathered for the Commission pointed to the very severe structural challenge that London's broken housing market poses to the borough. Mixed, integrated communities are part of the borough's sense of place, and good homes where people can afford to live are a foundation stone for this.

However, the London housing crisis is deep and wide. The growth in housing costs have outstripped the growth in earnings for a generation, and the ability of the Council to respond has been constrained by the policies of successive governments. The paucity of grant funding, lack of flexibilities around borrowing and, more recently forced rent reduction, have hampered the ability of London boroughs like Camden who have ambitious plans to build from doing so. The Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP) is as strong a response within these constraints as possible, building high quality replacement homes for existing tenants and new additional homes for

social tenants and those on middle incomes. The challenges remain stark however, with a 5,000 strong waiting list of vulnerable households who are often in overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable accommodation, and the challenge of providing housing for those on low to middle incomes. The latter group are often key workers essential for our economy and public services, or the sons and daughters of existing tenants who desperately want to stay in the area. As well as unmet need, the Council also faces the challenge of providing housing to meet the changing needs of existing residents as they age. These issues are often interlinked. For example, some older tenants are living in homes which are too big for them and are no longer suitable, while families on the waiting list await a larger home while living in overcrowded accommodation. Overcrowding can have a negative impact on other dimensions of residents' lives, particularly children – from mental and physical health to sleep to having a quiet space for study. Meanwhile, the Council's ageing housing stock must be maintained and regenerated in the face of financial pressures, a challenge thrown into sharp relief by the Grenfell disaster.

The local private rented sector (PRS) is beset by issues of affordability but also how they are managed and, in some specific parts of the borough, of quality, all of which constitute a 'market failure'. This could justify more robust regulation and a more active role for local government in certain specific circumstances. However regulation should be approached with caution. For example, the Council's current position, informed by evidence, is that rent controls are a blunt instrument which may actually reduce supply in the PRS and a more nuanced approach to stabilising rents would be beneficial. It is difficult for tenants in the private rented sector to get their voices heard, enabling those renting properties to influence landlords, regulators and others.

While very significant, these challenges should not be a cause for pessimism. Rather, they should act as a call to action, which will require innovation and civic leadership. The Council can rally parties around this challenge, bringing together a wider coalition. It can also innovate as a developer, planning authority and social landlord, developing new approaches and working with residents in a more participative way. Recent work to address the challenge of

intermediate housing through the establishment of Camden Living is an example of the type of new solutions which need to be tried. Partnership with the Mayor and with the private sector will be key, as will a more permissive approach from government. In the development of the vision for Council's next strategic plan, housing will be a preeminent issue; one which touches on all residents' lives and on which all will have a views and insights. Building consensus and generating new ideas to address these challenges will be key role for the Council.

Healthy communities

The wider social determinants of health – the 'causes of the causes' are what shape the longer term health of our communities and this was a recurring theme in Commission discussions. Reducing inequalities in mental and physical health through better understanding and tackling the root causes of need is also key. Mental health, in particular, remains an area of challenge, with the prevalence of Severe Mental Illness (SMI) and common mental health conditions like depression very high in Camden. Arguably too, there is a children's mental health crisis, with unmet need manifesting, for example, in increasing demands on schools and other public services. There is the potential for huge damage to the future life prospects of Camden' young people.

The financial challenges of the health and care economy over the next five years are also unparalleled. As the King's Fund and others have argued, the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) process is 'the right thing, done the wrong way', without sufficient or appropriate public involvement. However, what it has succeeded in doing is opening up a new role in the health system for local authorities and, despite the challenges, the Council should continue to play a leadership role. It is vital that the Council continues to work with and challenge the system of commissioners and providers to move towards early intervention and prevention. This will mobilise a far greater range of agencies and institutions than are normally brought together to address the challenges of health and wellbeing.

By using its 'soft power' as the democratic leader of place, by seeking to innovate and push boundaries, and through its deep understanding of

its communities, the Council is uniquely placed to drive change.

It is clear that the transformation of health outcomes can only be achieved by working with citizens in a radically different way. This is an area where focusing on individual, facility and community strengths can achieve a step change in outcomes. The Commission heard about the impact of fraying social networks have on the health outcomes of older people, and about how a vibrant VCS, connected to commissioners and providers focused on early help and preventative work could make a difference. While structural changes to commissioning and provider relationships, accountability and funding will all play their part, radical change will only come about through deep changes in the behaviour and values across the wider health system. The challenge for the Council is to stimulate that change, using its power to convene and rally which is unique to it in its role as a strategic leader of place.

Good quality work, accessible to all

A major theme of the Commission was ensuring people have the right skills to benefit from our dynamic economy, and that employers are challenged to ensure work is of sufficient quality to meet the needs of employees. Employment is instrumental in supporting other outcomes, providing residents with the means to live in Camden and access the goods and services which its dynamic economy creates. This is a challenge of 'systems leadership', setting bold ambitions and convening the key players. It also requires innovative pilot work to show national and regional bodies that there is a different and more effective way of delivering employment and skills outcomes that start by looking at individuals' strengths.

To create jobs, the economy needs to grow and there should be no automatic assumption the London economy will continue to grow. Brexit, creates a context of uncertainty and risk, combined with significant long-term challenges for the central London economy around infrastructure, housing and land supply, and labour markets. There is a risk of businesses and employees relocating outside of Camden and London as the population grows faster than infrastructure capacity. Demand both for housing for London's workforce, and for commercial

land, pushes up land values and risks damaging living standards and growth. Most job creation over the next few years is expected to be at the highest and lowest levels of the labour market, meaning the middle is hollowing out which, when combined with the challenges of affordable housing creates huge challenges in maintaining the mixed communities which are so important in creating Camden's sense of place.

Preparing our young people for adult life

Throughout the Commission's work, the challenge of young people making the transition from home and education into work and housing of their own was ever present. Access to affordable housing which enables younger people to maintain a foothold in the borough, and to the type of quality jobs which would support this, are the core issues and the challenges are significant. Real term cuts to education have made it increasingly hard for Camden's excellent schools to support young people to achieve their potential, succeeding against the odds. Further Education (FE), which provides a critical gateway into work has had funding sharply reduced, and the recommendations of the Government's area-based reviews of post 16 education, combined with the devolution of the adult education budget to London, create both challenges and opportunities for change. Mobilising the whole skills system, from schools to FE and HE, utilising devolved powers and pushing for more will be key. Similarly, finding creative solutions and creating pathways into intermediate housing are required based on the needs and preference of young people with deep roots in the borough. Innovative approaches to intergenerational living have promise, with young people receiving discounted rents enabling them to save for deposits, in return for volunteering to support older neighbours. This is one example with the potential to square this circle, and meet a range of key outcomes. This type of innovation and experimentation is what is needed to try and address these challenges to build a Camden that is fair for people of all ages.

Environment

The quality of Camden's built environment and public realm, its parks and open spaces, and the range of arts and cultural institutions together make Camden a dynamic and exciting place where people want to come and live, and to stay and build their lives. Equally, this dynamism, combined with transport connectivity and amenities make it an unrivalled place for businesses to set up and grow. The Council's role in managing the environment and public realm is a vital strategic function, and maintaining a clean and attractive environment emerged as a key area in conversations about Camden as a place. Air quality, for instance, impacts on the 'liveability' of the borough, with this becoming an increasingly prominent issue for residents and businesses, and the Council should prioritise this, working with partners to influence regional and central government wherever it can. The Council's key role in is around strategic and civic leadership. While it can actively lead by example, its total contribution to carbon emissions and air quality is minor compared to the problem overall.

Similarly, parks and natural spaces are key to Camden's sense of place, but also to citizen's health and well-being, including their mental health. Accessible, welcoming and well-managed open spaces should be preserved and extended and, while Camden's central London location limits its ability to develop new green space, where opportunities exist to do so, through specific projects like the Camden High-Line proposal, then Council should embrace these.

The Mayor will be a key partner, through the development and delivery of his Environment Strategy and the recently published Transport Strategy, which contains constructive and ambitious ideas about the shift from cars active, healthy travel modes like cycling, walking and public transport. Working with regional government, our Business Improvement Districts, the Knowledge Quarter and others to make the case for continued investment, the Council drive the development of a shared and deliverable vision for a sustainable, attractive borough.

Summary of recommendations

As well as making strategic recommendations about the approach and role of the Council over the period of its next strategic plan, the Commission also wanted to provide practical, actionable policy ideas based on the evidence and its deliberations. The recommendations for action, which follow, represent a menu of policy options for the Council to take forward and the Commission would expect these to be further explored through the process of developing the next strategic plan. To assist the Council to prioritise and plan delivery, these recommendations have by the length of time they may take to implement (set out in more detail below) as well as the future roles the Commission has identified for the Council.

Short term	The Commission considers that these recommendations can be taken forward now, are broadly consistent with the Council’s current direction of travel, and are deliverable within existing resources
Medium term	These recommendations need further development work to understand their feasibility and deliverability but the Commission believes this work can be taken forward over the next 18 months
Long term	These recommendations can be taken forward over the course of the next plan, and require further work to define a specific objectives and activities (with the work to do that beginning now). These will often be areas requiring the Council to shape policy beyond its immediate control and work collaboratively with partners.

	Short term	Medium Term	Longer term
Camden Council as civic activist	<p>The Council should consider the findings of the Culture and Environment scrutiny panel in to Air Quality as part of the development of its next strategic plan.</p> <p>The Council should commission research to understand the impact of recent and planned changes to the benefit system such as the obligation to look for work for parents of three to four year olds.</p> <p>The Council should refresh its Business Charter to build on its strong relationship with businesses. The rally idea should be how the borough achieves Inclusive Growth and promotes Camden as the best place to do business in London.</p> <p>Camden should play a leading role in the development and delivery of the Mayor of London’s Good Work standard.</p> <p>The Council should continue to lead by example on employment practices maintaining and improving on its Timewise accreditation and promoting London Living Wage through its supply chains and business networks.</p> <p>The Council should promote and encourage businesses and schools to sign up to the STEAM Commission’s 21st Century Talent pledge.</p> <p>The Council should deliver the recommendations of the Camden STEAM Commission, facilitating closer collaboration between businesses and the education system, especially in relation to careers education and curriculum development.</p> <p>The Council should support those furthest from the labour market into work and particularly those with health conditions, building on existing work like Individual Placement Support and Camden Ability.</p> <p>The Council should continue to build its distinctive role around health and wellbeing, convening partners around the wider determinants of health. The Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives partnership should be a model for this.</p>	<p>The Council should consider developing a single strategic plan for reducing emissions that contributes to climate air change and local pollution. Within this, there should be a strong focus on how vulnerable and disadvantaged residents can enjoy a clean, green environment.</p> <p>Build on and enhance our track record of apprenticeships delivery, in particular engaging with business to create a wider range of apprenticeship frameworks at all levels, using the lever of the apprenticeship levy and opportunities around the redevelopment of Euston.</p> <p>The Council should play a leadership role, via its Brexit Working Group and with the GLA, to ensure that Brexit negotiations result in provisions that work for London’s people and business.</p> <p>The Council should work with business to understand the implications of the upcoming reforms to business rates and how they could be used to promote inclusive growth</p> <p>The Council should make better use of planning and development levers and the use of our own property assets to ensure the supply of space that is suitable and affordable for a range of SMEs, especially those from our growth sectors.</p> <p>Camden should work with the GLA to take an active role in the devolution of the adult education budget and ensure the skills system enables residents to move into and progress in work.</p>	<p>The Council should investigate the potential creating an inclusive economy ‘observatory’ to identify and disseminate good practice in relation to inclusive growth to inform public affairs work.</p> <p>The Council and its partners should explore the potential for a greater role for business in the provision of affordable housing, for example investment in intermediate housing for rent.</p> <p>The Council should work with businesses, colleges and schools to develop strategic interventions to mitigate the skills gaps created by Brexit.</p> <p>The Commission encourages the Council to consider developing a set of principles, working in tandem with our communities and partners, which govern how it works to shape the borough over the next five years and beyond.</p> <p>The Council should work with the Mayor of London to consider how a road pricing scheme, balancing the needs of the economy and the environment, could be implemented.</p>

<p>Camden taking an asset-based approach to public services</p>	<p>The Council should develop innovative approaches to working with residents building on the planned Citizen's Assembly, helping to co-design the Council's next strategic plan and new solutions to the most complex problems in the borough.</p> <p>Camden should scale up the community connectors programme to help signpost residents to relevant VCS organisations.</p> <p>The Council should review Member and officer accountability for community cohesion, ensuring arrangements in place are fit for purpose.</p> <p>The Council and partners should launch a series of engagement events with different fair and ethnic community groups in the borough.</p> <p>The Council should work with the wider community of schools in Camden to assess the extent of social mixing across the whole school system.</p>	<p>Engage with partners and the community to understand their priorities for affordable housing and investigate the appetite for innovative approaches.</p> <p>The Council should ask businesses to volunteer a set number of days per year to develop and deliver community initiatives in exchange for access to affordable workspace.</p> <p>The Council should develop a 'good neighbour' or neighbourhoods campaign which kick starts a borough wide conversation about what it means to be a good neighbour.</p> <p>The Council should explore the use of key policy levers to encourage neighbourliness and participation e.g. council tax discounts to incentivise volunteering etc.</p> <p>The Council should consider how to expand and promote a range of intergenerational activities, based on the views and interests of both older and younger Camden residents.</p> <p>The Council and its partners should develop an interactive map of community assets and infrastructure. Citizens and the VCS could co-produce this with the Council. This would include assets not normally considered as part of public service delivery, for example valued local retailers.</p> <p>The Council should ensure strategic partners/VCS funding is focused on activity to build social capital and bridging between groups</p> <p>The Council's developing strategy for older and disabled people and their carers should ensure that tackling social isolation and loneliness are key strategic priorities. Technology such as assistive technology should also play an important role.</p> <p>The Council should further explore the way in which health and social care integration can improve outcomes, particularly in relation to neighbourhood solutions to integrating front line services around customer need.</p> <p>Re-design the role and responsibilities of some frontline officers, increasing autonomy at the frontline. This should be supported by investment in technology and begin by piloting the multi-functional estate officer approach through the current landlord review.</p>	<p>The Council should play an active leadership role in thinking about cohesion and integration in the 21st century, moving beyond nationally driven discourse and towards place-based leadership.</p> <p>The Council should test and develop innovative approaches to measuring and tracking social networks and levels of social cohesion and social capital, which go beyond its existing data.</p>
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<p>Camden as radical innovator</p>	<p>Building on the initial work in housing management, the Council should continue to roll out systems thinking approaches to improve services and better meet user need and empower the frontline.</p> <p>The Council should lead on the development of innovative approaches to in-work progression, enabling low paid residents to build rewarding careers</p> <p>The Council should continue its journey to become an outcome focused organisation, building on the outcome-based budgeting (OBB) approach. The next strategic plan and future financial strategy are key opportunities to embed a mature approach, which ensures outcomes are central to the Council's approach. This should extend to the way performance is measured and to partnership arrangements.</p> <p>The Council should focus on digital services which move beyond transactions, enabling high value advice and support online, wherever this is appropriate, creating a 'digital front door'.</p> <p>The Council should take forward innovative, technology-driven approaches to intervening in failing markets. For example, working with private tenants and the tech sector to develop a ratings app for private landlords.</p> <p>Camden should seek to understand the extent and impacts of digital exclusion in the borough, and consider what steps it can take to improve access and digital skills.</p>	<p>The Council should consider rebalancing the tenure mix of the Community Investment Programme in favour of intermediate housing let by Camden Living.</p> <p>The Council should develop a public sector innovation lab that stimulates new thinking and channels best practice from across the world into Camden's approach to service delivery.</p> <p>The Council should invest in intergenerational housing schemes such as Homeshare, which tackle isolation and provides housing for young people. It should also repurpose current sheltered accommodation, potentially as intergenerational housing.</p> <p>The Council should engage with older residents to better understand what they want from housing and community-based care.</p> <p>The Council should build on its work to join up data with that of partners, developing approaches that can predict and pre-empt future demand. This should include the full range of service delivery, from health and care to street cleansing and public realm management.</p> <p>The Council should explore the potential for peer-to-peer platforms for social good e.g. the Beam platform which allows citizens to crowdfund support for homeless people.</p> <p>Explore the potential for online gaming to support older people to remain active and socially connected.</p> <p>Explore the potential for online community notice boards, supporting people with mobility issues to keep informed about what is going on in their communities.</p> <p>The Council should develop a Camden challenge fund, in collaboration with commercial partners, which invites innovators to address a major community challenge.</p> <p>Explore the development of a cohesion and resilience impact assessment to supplement the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) approach.</p> <p>Support the development of the Camden Highline to create a walking and cycling link between Camden Town and King's Cross.</p>	<p>The Council should explore new solutions to accelerate the supply of new affordable housing, including reviewing the density and height of new builds.</p> <p>The Council should take a leading role in lobbying the Government to enable local government to access additional funds to build new affordable housing including by removing borrowing restrictions.</p> <p>In recognition of the challenges in the private rented sector, the Council should lobby government for more local and regional powers to intervene in this broken market. This should include a greater role for councils in the licensing of the sector.</p>
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