

2012 — 2017

The Camden plan

We want to make Camden a better borough — a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind.

We're going to create a place that works — for everyone.

The Camden plan

Camden sits at the heart of the world's most vibrant city. This gives us a rare advantage in challenging economic times and we need to capitalise on that by creating the conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth.

We will do this by working closely with other organisations and businesses to encourage investment and growth for the benefit of everyone.

We will make sure the services we provide are of a high standard and value for money, so everyone is satisfied and those that need support get it. We will guarantee that every child gets the chances they deserve and every adult has an opportunity to work and feel valued.

We will invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live – everyone's Camden.



The Camden plan
**Our ambition
for Camden**

Camden is the beating heart of London – one of the most diverse places in the capital and the country. Stretching from Covent Garden to Hampstead and Highgate, it contains some of the poorest and some of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in London.

This diversity is at the centre of our ambition – for Camden to be a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind.

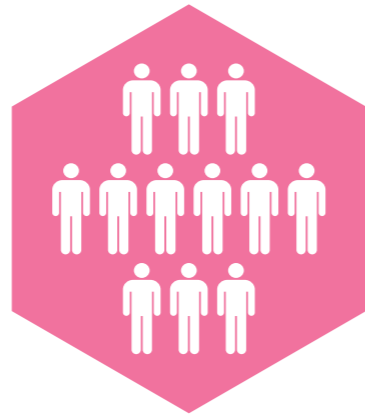
We want to reduce inequality while preserving the social mix, by building resilience in individuals, communities, businesses and the Council itself.

Some facts on Camden's social mix



Growth

Camden's population is estimated to be 211,700 but its high population density and lack of space for new housing means it has increased only slightly in recent years. The next few years will see strong population growth in the new King's Cross development but more modest growth elsewhere. The number of children in the borough has increased almost 10% over the last ten years.



Population

The majority of Camden's population are long-term residents – a third are owner-occupiers and a similar proportion live in social housing. However a third of Camden's population either moves to the borough or leaves it every year, due in the most part to one of the largest student populations of any London borough. The student population also contributes to the high proportion of twenty and thirty-somethings, and one of the smallest older populations of any London borough, albeit growing rapidly.



Diversity

Camden's population is highly ethnically diverse with larger Bangladeshi, Somali and 'White other' (from countries such as Australia, France, USA, Italy and Poland) populations than elsewhere in London.



Income

At £33,000 the median household income in Camden is almost identical to London as a whole. Within Camden it ranges from £26,000 in St Pancras and Somers Town, which is poorer than the poorest London borough, Newham, to £45,000 in Frognal and Fitzjohns which is as wealthy as the richest, Richmond-upon-Thames and the City of London.

Camden's social mix

Camden residents regardless of their background are proud of its unique social mix. But as Londoners we can see that it is under threat. The combination of recession and cuts means that real household incomes for many in Camden are falling and will continue to fall. Equally the changing social policy landscape, with welfare reform and new social housing policies, has real risks for our mixed community. The future has never seemed more uncertain.

We want the borough to remain a home for everyone despite these changes. Without places to live, jobs and community support to draw on, people on modest incomes cannot continue to live and thrive in the borough. We will do our best to help them to do so.

Councils have a limited influence on the national economy and national government policies. And just as household budgets are under pressure, so are council budgets. There will be less and less public money for local authorities to deliver public services and tackle inequality so we must make every programme and every intervention count – we must prioritise carefully what we do. We see our role as a council as ensuring those individuals and communities who most need them have the resources to become more resilient and more self-reliant to whatever the future may bring.

Such challenging times require radical reform if the Council is to provide the leadership that will support Camden's residents and bring partners together to deliver new solutions that will benefit everyone. We passionately believe that the Council should take responsibility for mapping out a journey of reform, taking this out to the community and to our partners to discuss how we can deliver this together. This plan sets out that journey and marks the beginning of a new conversation and a new relationship.



We want the borough to remain a home for everyone.

Our focus

We have developed five strategic objectives that will be our focus over the next five years, acting as the framework for this reform.

These are summarised here:

One

Providing democratic and strategic leadership fit for changing times

We want to get closer to our communities, supporting them to be self-sustaining but also using our role as the democratically elected voice of Camden to influence national and London government and work with partners to unlock the borough's collective resources for the benefit of all.

Two

Developing new solutions with partners to reduce inequality

Inequality has many dimensions. There are huge variations in health, education, housing and crime outcomes across the borough. These are long-term problems we have been grappling with for many years. However we recognise that with severely reduced resources we need to explore new solutions alongside our partners if we are to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Three

Creating conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth

Although Camden has a strong local economy we need to do all we can to continue to attract businesses, jobs and investment to the borough. We want to bridge the gap between the employment opportunities available in Camden and the increasing levels of unemployment, particularly amongst young people. We will work with the business and education sectors to help ensure residents are in the best position possible to gain employment.

Four

Investing in our communities to ensure sustainable neighbourhoods

We should not underestimate the challenge of maintaining a strong and cohesive community in Camden. Being in the centre of a busy world city at a time when the public sector is downsizing creates some real issues that we need to respond to. We want communities across Camden to become more sustainable so that they can do more to help themselves and each other. Our investment in both the physical and social infrastructure will be critical to making Camden a better place to live.

Five

Delivering value for money services by getting it 'right first time'

We want to make sure that services we provide are of a high standard and value for money, so everyone is satisfied and those that need support get it. We believe it is possible to improve customer service at the same time as continuing to reduce costs. If we deliver services that are 'right first time' then fewer resources are required to resolve the problems arising from getting it wrong.



About this plan



This plan sets out the destination and the starting point but much of the journey is still to be mapped out with others.

Working together to realise the Camden plan

This plan is focused on delivering this radical reform. As such it does not capture everything the Council does. There are many statutory services that the Council delivers and will continue to do so. Our ambition for these services is that we deliver them well – high standards matter as does ensuring that we provide value for money. In that sense they will come under the scrutiny of our reform agenda.

What follows is a focus on each of our strategic objectives setting out our thinking – why we think they matter and what work we have done so far to mark the path of change. We have clear ambitions and outcomes that we are planning to have achieved by 2017, with some proposed immediate next steps and longer-term plans on how we will deliver the ambitions of the plan.

We know that delivering this plan requires a vastly different way of working for the Council. As such we will develop a transformation programme that ensures we are able to deliver our ambitions.

We are clear that we cannot deliver the plan alone and that to achieve our ambitions for Camden we need to work with both the community and our partners. For this reason the plan is not a comprehensive list of what needs to be done. It sets out the destination and the starting point but much of the journey is still to be mapped out with others. Throughout this plan are a series of questions designed to start a new conversation to develop a shared response to the challenges we face.

1. The financial challenges we all face make it more important for the Council to focus on reducing inequality and tackling disadvantage in the borough although this won't always involve the cheapest option. What do you think of our approach?

2. We can't face all of the challenges we have identified alone. There is a vital role for local organisations and people and we have tried to express that within this plan. We know that this is not the end of a process and the questions we pose within this document look to open up the debate to everyone who has a stake in the future of Camden. We want your views but beyond that, are there specific things that you could do to realise our ambitions? What could the Council do to help local people, groups and businesses take action?

3. Do you work for or represent an organisation in Camden? Do the priorities we've outlined in this plan meet with your work and objectives?



Strategic objective one

Providing democratic and strategic leadership fit for changing times

Why it matters

In a changing landscape for local public services there is a real risk that services become fragmented with a negative impact on communities. No one wants this to happen and we believe strongly that the Council can play a significant role in ensuring it doesn't.

Partnerships are key and our partners have told us that they value the role of the Council, with its democratic mandate to steer a course through the changing public sector landscape. Providing strategic leadership across partner organisations is critical to enabling shared goals to be delivered.

We want to provide that leadership and by doing things differently we believe our leadership will be stronger. The community is looking to the Council to lead the way on major challenges already faced by the borough ranging from government proposals for High Speed 2 to delivering our own ambitious community investment programme.

What we have done so far

Over the last year the Council has led the way in creating new ways of working. This has ranged from new partnership boards such as the creation of the Camden business board and the shadow health and wellbeing board to the Camden education commission, recruiting independent commissioners to develop a local response to the radical changes to the schools system and develop an ambition for Camden for the next 10 years.

The need to make such far-reaching cuts over the last two years has seen the Council set out to talk to more people than ever before, involving them in these tough decisions. We introduced a new way of involving local people in decision-making through our area action groups and put in place an extensive programme of events, formal consultations and online activity to ensure that the decisions we made reflected our residents' priorities. However through this process it became clear that what we have in place no longer fits the current and future challenges of local government.



Over the last year the Council has led the way in creating new ways of working.

Our ambitions



We want to renew local democracy in Camden by getting back in touch with residents of Camden so that they in turn feel better connected to the Council. That way Camden will feel more like everyone's council.

We want everyone to feel that we are really listening and that we will respond. Trust is critical and we know that we need to earn that trust through an honest and open approach to decision-making. We want to reach a position where residents respect the fact that difficult decisions have to be made but that the Council will work with the community and with partners to explore options along the way. A democracy that is fit for the 21st century.

Outcomes we are planning for 2017

By 2017 we will have delivered the following outcomes in our journey towards our longer-term aspirations for Camden:

- put in place partnerships that are action-focused and really make a difference by playing their part in solving the longstanding problems that exist in Camden;
- introduced innovative ways of talking to our residents that have successfully reached our seldom-heard groups in the community and got more people involved in decision-making;
- increased satisfaction of residents with the opportunities to both participate in and influence the decision-making of the Council.

We want everyone to feel that we are really listening and that we will respond.

How we will get there

Stronger partnerships that deliver integrated outcomes for Camden:

- bringing more of Camden’s stakeholders together by building on initiatives like the Camden business board to ensure everyone plays a role in improving our borough;
- retaining the strength and focus of our community safety partnership board, ensuring we share the learning as an example of what can be delivered if partners can come together in an action-focused way;
- developing new partnerships in the changing world of health services through the creation of Camden’s health and wellbeing board with the Council playing a crucial role in leading the board, and a clear focus on integrating commissioning to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for the local community;
- take forward the recommendations of Camden’s education commission through a new Camden partnership for educational excellence. The Council will work with the partnership to prioritise, drive and monitor improvements in educational attainment and training for all young people in Camden to achieve our goal of having the country’s best schools within a decade;
- develop a new strategic partnership framework – with a forum that enables different sectors to come together, make connections and agree a shared vision for the future of the borough.

Strengthened democratic voice:

- project a stronger voice for Camden, alongside our partners, at a national and regional level to influence government and Mayoral policy-making and get the best outcomes for our residents in the areas that we believe will have the biggest detrimental impact on Camden;
- carry out a cross-party review of the Council’s constitutional arrangements to explore the opportunities to change the way in which we do business to one which has more resonance for residents and shapes a stronger leadership role for councillors as part of the reinvigoration of wider civic life in the borough.

Involving the community more:

- introduce innovative and more accessible ways of influencing decision-making for all residents – ones that move away from those formal-style forums which reach only a small number of people in the community;
- explore ways in which the community can get closer to the decisions that affect them, building on initiatives already started. We will explore options for introducing more neighbourhood based decision-making or pilot an approach within an area of Camden to see what works best;
- making our decision-making processes more transparent, ensuring residents have opportunities to have their say and that the Council is open, transparent and accountable for each decision it makes.

Immediate next steps

Our immediate plans include:

- launching our Camden partnership for educational excellence;
- embarking on a new community conversation as part of the launch of this plan, giving the community influence over the delivery of the plan;
- setting up the cross-party review of the Council’s constitutional arrangements.



Questions

1. What do you think of our approach?
2. Do you have ideas of your own on how we can achieve our ambitions?
3. How can the Council help and encourage more people to be active in their community?
4. How could we make it easier for you to influence the decisions we make?
5. How can local people, organisations and the Council work better together to lobby for the needs of Camden?



Strategic objective two

Developing new solutions with partners to reduce inequality

Why it matters

Reducing all types of inequality is critical to delivering our ambition for Camden to be a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind.

We are passionate that our key focus as a Council must be on tackling the longstanding problems that cause disadvantage in our community. These enduring problems have existed over generations despite the work and interventions of both the public and the voluntary sectors.

The Council has a strong record of innovation in public services which has never mattered more than now. Tackling these longstanding problems will require radical new solutions. This will mean working alongside the community and local partners, drawing on our strengths in this area but also thinking creatively about new ways of delivering solutions together.

What we have done so far

In responding to the financial challenges we have faced over the last two years we chose to protect our most vulnerable residents from the worst of the cuts, in services such as early years for example.

We have introduced new models of delivery with our funding to the voluntary and community sector, now shaped around promoting equality and cohesion and a separate innovation fund. For those services which have had their funding reduced, we have provided transitional funding for many community groups through the Camden people's fund.

The depth of our commitment to equality can be seen in our recently published equality objectives, our plans for an equality taskforce and the research we have commissioned into the impact of national government reform and local service change on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Camden.



Our key focus as a council must be on tackling the longstanding problems that cause disadvantage in our community.

Our ambitions

Our aspiration is to make a significant difference to the levels of inequality in Camden through creative and innovative solutions. We do not accept the inevitability of the scarring effects of extreme income inequality on the wellbeing of the poorest households, especially on children. We want to work with families to keep children safe and free of crime. Our long-term goal is to eliminate child poverty in the borough.

We are also concerned about the striking health inequalities between those who live in Camden's wealthiest areas versus those who live in the most deprived areas. Our priority in tackling this will be to do all we can to help residents in our poorest wards to live longer. And we know poor quality housing can have a fundamental impact on people's health and wellbeing, so we believe that no-one should live in sub-standard housing. Ultimately we want to ensure that all households have the resources, financial or otherwise, to be resilient to the ups and downs of an uncertain economy.

Outcomes we are planning for 2017

By 2017 we will have delivered the following outcomes in our journey towards our longer-term aspirations for Camden:

- created new partnerships that mean that all of Camden is working towards a shared goal of fewer children living in poverty;
- reduced the number of families in Camden with complex needs;
- increased the life expectancy of people living in Camden's most deprived areas which will reduce the health inequality that currently exists;
- provided better homes for all council tenants through direct investment and estate regeneration;
- worked successfully with landlords to improve the standards of private rented accommodation.

We aim to make Camden a community where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind.



How we will get there

We know that we won't be able to achieve all of our aspirations in the lifetime of this plan, but we can take action now to accelerate the change we want to see. We have set out below some new ways of working and new solutions that we will progress, in partnership, to enable us collectively to have the impact on inequality we aspire to.

New ways of working alongside individuals and families:

- developing a new integrated approach with partners to supporting families with complex needs more effectively in areas such as domestic violence;
- ensuring all children have the best start in life through early intervention programmes;
- creating accessible pathways to education, employment and training targeted at families with children in poverty;
- supporting workers on modest incomes to stay in work by ensuring the affordable housing and early years support they need for their children is available;
- delivering our better homes programme, investing in improving the standard of council homes in Camden.

New community-led approaches:

- developing personalised solutions and support for residents in need, and where possible enabling them to lead the problem-solving to achieve the outcomes they want;
- supporting all households to make use of the resources available to them, financial or otherwise, to be resilient to the ups and downs of an uncertain economy.

New sources of financing:

- exploring new sources of finance through social investment and new financing models such as community budgets, where we see real potential to achieve outcomes that we can't pursue through traditional models.

A new culture of innovation and creativity:

- working closely with local GPs, the voluntary and community sector and patient representatives to develop a new health and wellbeing strategy for Camden which will create the vehicle for implementing a new approach to service integration;
- exploring a new relationship and new business models with private landlords, for example to enable more affordable private rented accommodation in Camden.

Immediate next steps

Our immediate plans include:

- establishing an equality taskforce, with an independent chair and cross-party involvement, to explore structural and systemic reasons for all types of inequality, providing a fresh look at what influences inequality locally whilst recognising that regional and national factors are also inextricably linked to local outcomes;
- carrying out innovative research into the cumulative impacts of public sector cuts on our communities to influence the future policy direction of the Council and national government;
- developing our health and wellbeing strategy to set out our priorities and plans for tackling health inequality in Camden;
- delivering a partnership-based project to better integrate and focus support to families with complex needs.



Questions

1. What do you think of our approach?
2. Do you have ideas of your own on how we can achieve our ambitions?
3. What type of role do you think local people, partners and businesses should play in helping to reduce disadvantage in Camden?
4. What do you view as the most important priorities for the Council to focus on in terms of inequality in Camden?
5. In which parts of the Council's work should we be more open to new ways of funding? These could include drawing social investment from philanthropists and businesses or developing ways of generating income from existing or new services.



Strategic objective three

Creating conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth

Why it matters

Camden is like nowhere else in the world. We sit at the heart of the world's most vibrant city with a staggering variety of businesses choosing Camden as their base – ranging from the legal and financial sectors to music, digital and creative industries. This gives us a rare advantage in challenging economic times which we aim to use for the good of everyone.

We want to create the conditions for business success in Camden so that existing Camden-based businesses grow and we attract new businesses that we see flourish. We want to understand business needs better so that we can concentrate on developing the vocational skills of Camden residents so that they are more likely to be successful in gaining local employment. That way investment and growth can be for the benefit of everyone.

What we have done so far



In 2011 we set up the Camden business board to take a strategic lead on key economic issues and improve how the Council works with local businesses, recognising that they are the engines of economic growth. Through the board we began work on encouraging more apprenticeships and expanding corporate social responsibility in the borough. We have also been focusing on improving our services to businesses.

Our education commission has also been critical to progressing this agenda with its focus on 14 to 19 year olds and exploring what action needs to be taken to make Camden's schools the best in the country.

We sit at the heart of the world's most vibrant city with a staggering variety of businesses choosing Camden as their base.

Our ambitions

We want to create a platform for sustainable economic growth in Camden by promoting business success and fostering a strong partnership with business. We want residents to benefit from the employment opportunities this creates by better linking the efforts of the Council, schools and employers across Camden to provide residents with the vocational skills needed to gain employment.

We know that to succeed our children need to get off to the right start and therefore it is essential to ensure the level of our education provision, school places and standards are of the best quality. We aim to arrive at a position where all young people in Camden are either in education, employment or training. The future of our young people is one of our biggest concerns – we need to do all we can to get them into employment and we believe that effective partnership working is key to meeting this aspiration.

Outcomes we are planning for 2017

By 2017 we will have delivered the following outcomes in our journey towards our longer-term aspirations for Camden:

- an increase in educational attainment to achieve our goal of having the country's best schools within a decade;
- increased the number of Camden residents and students gaining local employment based on the skills and vocational training they have gained;
- reduced unemployment in Camden, particularly amongst vulnerable and social groups where long-term problems with unemployment exist;
- increased the number of young people in education, employment or training in Camden;
- an increase in the number of Camden residents employed in new business developments in Camden.

We aim to arrive at a position where all young people in Camden are either in education, employment or training.



How we will get there

We will not deliver our aspirations alone and we want to see our partnership with businesses and the education sector work in real terms – with an understanding of what we can do for them and what they in turn can do for the community.

Camden ‘working’ for businesses:

- having a more strategic relationship through the Camden business board and a council that is responsive to the concerns of businesses;
- providing easy access to advice and information for new and existing Camden businesses;
- supporting and attracting local businesses to compete for Camden contracts whilst ensuring our practices are fair and transparent, and that we get value for money from our contracts;
- ensuring an economic legacy of the Olympic Games by attracting visitors back to Camden after 2012.

Businesses ‘working’ for Camden:

- facilitating a new relationship between employers and educational institutions across Camden that will enable us to collectively work better for Camden;
- partnership sponsorship of continuous improvement in education attainment levels in Camden schools, aiming for every school to have a nominated business partner and every large business taking on a Camden young person for training or employment;
- supporting career paths in Camden with an education and skills programme that is ambitious and flexible enough to adjust to changing employment markets;
- encouraging businesses to adopt the London Living Wage and positive employment practices all of which will benefit workers and get more people back into work;
- delivering a shared commitment to embrace the green agenda in the way local businesses operate and in our supply chain so that they minimise any negative impact on the environment;
- offer businesses opportunities for local social investment as a part of new ways to tackle inequality.

Increased employment of Camden residents:

- develop partnership programmes that promote education and training and offer apprenticeships;
- support Camden residents to gain from wider London employment opportunities through identifying the skills needed by London’s growth industries in the future and ensuring that our residents can access training to develop them;
- seeking to increase access into work for women who historically have faced exclusion from the labour market, through the work of Camden’s equality taskforce;
- work with business developers who come to Camden to seek opportunities to secure employment for the local community;
- promote Camden as an exemplar employer – recognising and promoting our role as a local employer by offering apprenticeships and employment opportunities to Camden residents.

Immediate next steps

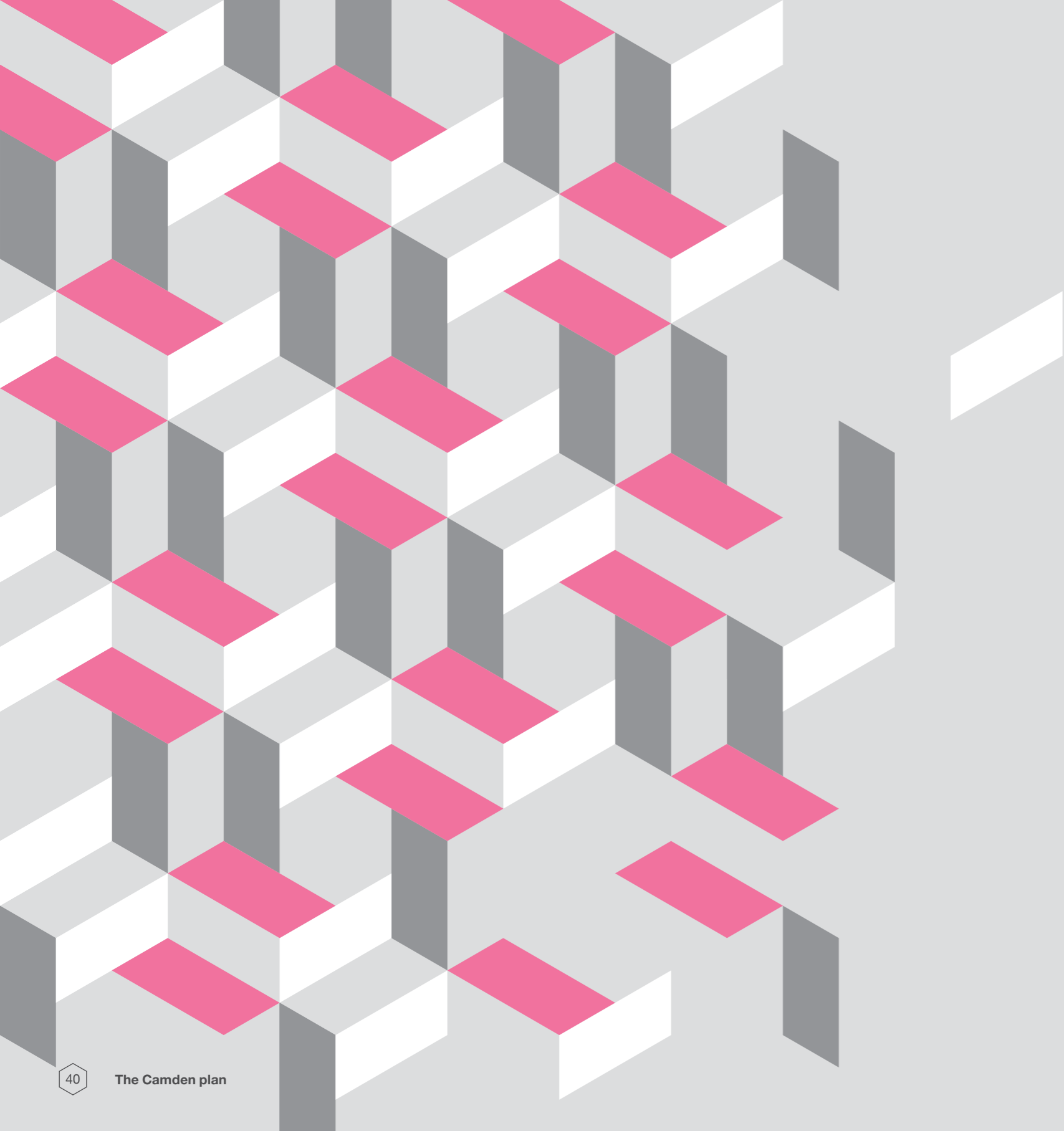
Our immediate plans include:

- the launch of our business portal as a single point of contact for businesses as the beginning of a strong reputation as a Council that is ‘open for business’;
- the launch of our new partnership for educational excellence as the mechanism for shaping our aspirations for business to support positive education and employment outcomes in Camden;
- taking forward the business board’s recent commitment to increase the number of local people employed by Camden businesses and improve work experience opportunities for all Camden’s children, not just those with the right connections;
- exploring, alongside our partners, the employment opportunities for Camden residents at King’s Cross Central as one of the largest development sites in Europe.



Questions

1. What do you think of our approach?
2. Do you have ideas of your own on how we can achieve our ambitions?
3. How can the Council best invest its resources to support employers in the employment of local people?
4. What role should businesses have in supporting the training needs and 'skilling up' of local young people?
5. In the context of increasing competition, what more could the Council do to encourage and support business creation and growth?
6. In aiming to make Camden the best place to be educated, what should be the focus of the new Camden partnership for educational excellence?



Strategic objective four

Investing in our communities to ensure sustainable neighbourhoods

Why it matters

As the public sector downsizes, communities across Camden need to become more sustainable so that they can do more to help themselves and each other, building on the support that local government is able to provide. Recognising that a community that does more for itself has less call on limited resources but more importantly is a better place to live.

Critical to communities in facing this challenge is that the Council provides facilities that are fit for the future and meet community needs. Community facilities, be they schools, housing or community centres, play an important role in shaping places and the communities that live there. If we get this right then we truly believe our communities will be strong and cohesive.

What we have done so far

Our community investment programme has begun over the last two years in response to the huge reductions in capital budgets from central government, and because the physical infrastructure of the borough is a priority for the Council.

Housing, schools, community facilities and community safety are critical to our communities. Our investments have ranged from funding additional police officers in Camden Town and our homes for older people programme, to our commitment to having a community centre in every community.

Our move away from area forums to area action groups and the introduction of our shaping services programme have offered the opportunity for the community to influence what happens in their area. And the Council and community have already started to come together to deliver services in a different way – with the transfer of Caversham children's centre to be run by the community and, in a first for local government, we've undertaken a similar transfer of three Camden libraries.



The Council and community have already started to come together to deliver services in a different way.

Our ambitions

Our aspiration is to deliver a modern fit-for-purpose range of community facilities for Camden that recognises times change and the provision of services needs to change too. We believe that if we can work with the community we can deliver facilities to meet many different needs that are sustainable, highly valued and well used. These facilities will bring the community together.

Alongside investment in physical infrastructure we also want to invest in the social infrastructure of Camden. We want to work with the voluntary sector and communities themselves to establish self-sustaining community outcomes through supporting volunteering and building capacity in the community. Our investment will also support the community to tackle the environmental challenges we face.

Another essential prerequisite for a community to thrive is that its residents are safe and just as importantly feel safe. This includes our older and more vulnerable residents who we want to be able to live within the community making it a community for everyone. We want to make Camden stand out as a borough where more people feel safe than any other part of London.



We believe that if we can work with the community we can deliver facilities to meet many different needs that are sustainable, highly valued and well used.

Outcomes we are planning for 2017

By 2017 we will have delivered the following outcomes in our journey towards our longer-term aspirations for Camden:

- as a result of the community investment programme we will have invested £117 million to improve 57 school buildings – helping to ensure Camden has enough school places;
- the programme will also have enabled us to invest £119 million in housing, creating over 2,000 new homes with more new Council and social housing so that residents can access affordable and decent housing in the borough;
- with investment also made in delivering community centres that are fit for the 21st century and a centre for independent living and other purpose built adult social care facilities at Greenwood Place;
- delivered a personalised approach to social care support for our older, disabled and vulnerable residents that enable them to live safely and receive the support that is right for their needs;
- an improvement in health outcomes across the borough and reduced interventions by agencies;
- a 27% carbon reduction across the borough;
- an increased level of trust within the community;
- reduced levels of crime, particularly violent crime.

How we will get there

Key to delivering these aspirations will be our relationship with partners and the community as a whole.

Investing in our places, investing in our people:

- prioritising our investment in those places that need it the most through our community investment programme with a focus on improving the physical condition of our school buildings, providing new social housing that will enable communities at serious risk from the changes to housing and welfare reforms to stay in Camden and enhancing community facilities in areas where changes are planned;
- recognising, as part of our community investment programme, the importance of working alongside communities to ensure that taxpayers' assets are developed with the long-term interests of local people in mind;
- enabling residents to reduce the cost of their homes by increasing their energy efficiency;
- supporting neighbourhood plans which harness the energy of the community to shape growth in their areas;
- working in partnership at a local level to develop and implement solutions that really make a difference at minimal cost by making better use of the wealth of community assets that exist across the borough.

Ensuring Camden is a safe place for everyone:

- reducing anti-social behaviour which can slowly erode residents' sense of safety and using our planning and licensing functions to maintain a night-time economy that is safe and vibrant;
- giving residents more support to influence community safety services, for example through our community auditor scheme;
- making sure our public spaces are safe and well used, through our approaches to street presence and urban design;
- exploring opportunities to develop restorative justice and community payback further to support communities to feel safer, whilst retaining a clear focus on tackling youth violence.

Creating communities for the future – now:

- working with communities and the voluntary and community sector to establish self-sustaining community outcomes;
- helping people to help themselves through supporting volunteering and building capacity in the community, both financially with funding to voluntary organisations but also ensuring that all council services recognise and promote the value of voluntary action;
- encouraging more residents to take 'green' action either independently or through a local community or group;
- leading by example in promoting the Council's programme of work for carbon reduction on our own estate – from council homes to Camden schools. And working with local businesses to ensure they are making an active contribution towards our long-term target of a 40% carbon reduction in Camden by 2020;
- ensuring all council services contribute to the health outcomes we are working to achieve, particularly in areas such as fuel poverty, air quality and road safety;
- promoting opportunities for the community to run services where it makes sense.

Immediate next steps

Our immediate plans include:

- conversations with every community to inform the community investment programme on an area basis;
- exploring with our partners the opportunities for a more prominent restorative justice programme in Camden;
- engaging communities in designing services to tackle the issues that affect them most;
- commissioning the most sustainable council building of its type in the country complete with leisure facilities that will be in use from 2014 as part of the Kings Cross Central development.



Questions

1. What do you think of our approach?

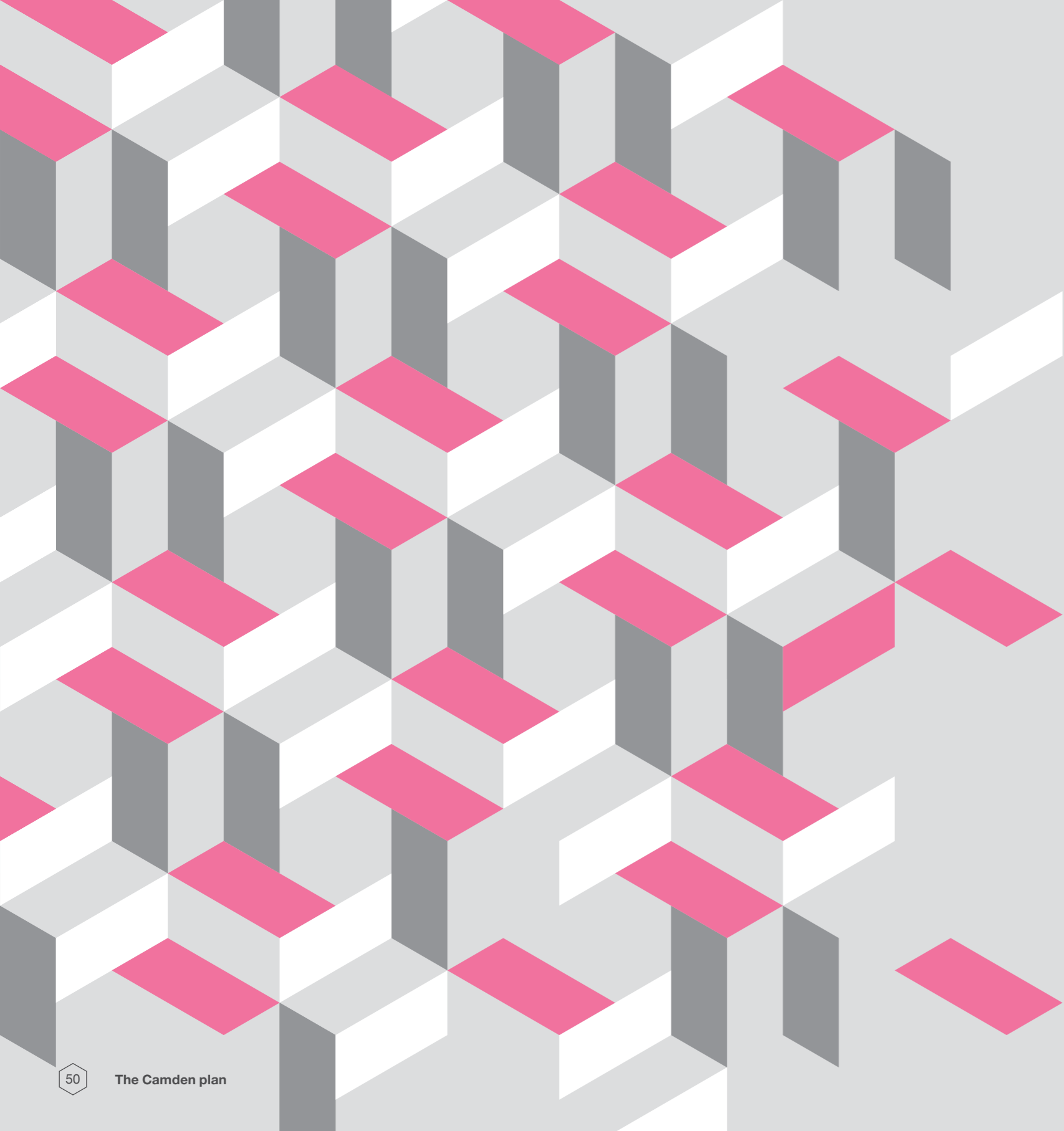
2. Do you have ideas of your own on how we can achieve our ambitions?

3. What can the Council best do to help people make the right choices to live healthier lifestyles?

4. What more should we be doing to ensure Camden remains an affordable place to live for everyone?

5. What is the most important thing the Council could do to encourage residents and businesses to behave in more environmentally friendly ways?

6. The Council is redeveloping or selling old land and buildings to fund improvements to schools, housing and community facilities. What do you feel the priorities should be for this money in your area?



Strategic objective five

Delivering value for money services by getting it ‘right first time’

Why it matters

We serve every resident, business or visitor to Camden in some way – everyone experiences at least one of our services when they are in Camden. Rightly the expectation of customers is that services work for them and that they offer value for money. We want their experience to be a positive one whether we deliver the service directly or commission others to do so.

What we have done so far

We reduced our costs by £39.8 million in 2011/12 and while we have preserved frontline services wherever possible, the impact on the organisation cannot be underestimated. We have also moved forward with our commitment to transparency by publishing what we pay senior staff and listing all transactions over £500.

Our 'right first time' programme has been piloted through our housing repairs service in the Gospel Oak area with some very positive results that we want to learn from before rolling it out more widely across other council services.



Our ambitions

We want to provide excellent Camden services despite the tough financial climate we are working in. Although closing some services may be necessary and appropriate the Council has set itself a goal to challenge the way it works – to improve services in the eyes of the customer whilst reducing how much it costs to provide. A bold aspiration but one we think we can and should deliver.

We will make sure the services we provide work for our residents and do provide genuine value for money, so everyone is satisfied and those that need support get it.

Rightly the expectation of customers is that services work for them and that they offer value for money.

Outcomes we are planning for 2017

By 2017 we will have delivered the following outcomes in our journey towards our longer-term aspirations for Camden:

- an increase in the number of residents who feel that the Council is providing value for money;
- we will have changed our services so that customers can do business with us in the way that best suits their lifestyles;
- an increase in resident satisfaction with the Council overall and as a result of 'right first time' changes in service provision;
- efficiencies delivered to meet the Council's cost reduction targets;
- set a clear and long-term approach to the Council Tax levels taxpayers can expect to pay in this difficult financial climate;
- long-term plans to ensure we remain a financially stable authority in a very different financial climate.

How we will get there

Our focus is very much on how we deliver our services with an understanding of the needs of our customers at the heart of any changes. We will develop a transformation programme for the Council which ensures we are able to deliver the rest of this plan.

The following ideas will be incorporated as a key focus of the transformation programme:

Delivery designed around our customers:

- building on the success of the housing repairs pilot, implementing a programme of 'right first time' service reviews to improve the experience of the customer whilst reducing costs by identifying what causes duplication and service failure;
- improving ways customers can access services so that they have more choice in how to contact us, recognising that people's access needs are different. And supporting those customers who want to improve their web skills and create improved digital access;
- improving and integrating our knowledge of the customer to help join up service delivery better and on a bigger scale;
- develop a single view of the customer that will mean the Council can provide services that are tailored to people's needs, enabling us to introduce a personalised Camden account for all our residents and businesses. They will in turn have a single view of the Council to get a consistent and good customer service;
- improving our learning from complaints, using them to improve services.

Driving out inefficiencies and delivering real value for money:

- continuing to reduce our operational costs through a series of initiatives including plans to move the majority of our staff to a single building in King's Cross and reviewing pay and conditions of our workforce;
- introducing an annual programme of challenging inefficiency to ensure the spotlight is on back office functions, as well as front-facing services through the right first time programme;
- moving to a transparent model of spending where we are able to compare ourselves to others and make ourselves accountable to the public for the spending decisions we make;
- develop a clear understanding of the true added value of our spending where, for example, we can demonstrate that our investment in preventative services saves much more over time than we spend. This includes costs saved by our partners, such as the health service, when we successfully enable residents to continue to live independently at home;
- investing in a high-quality workforce which embraces the challenges faced by the Council and the community.

Immediate next steps

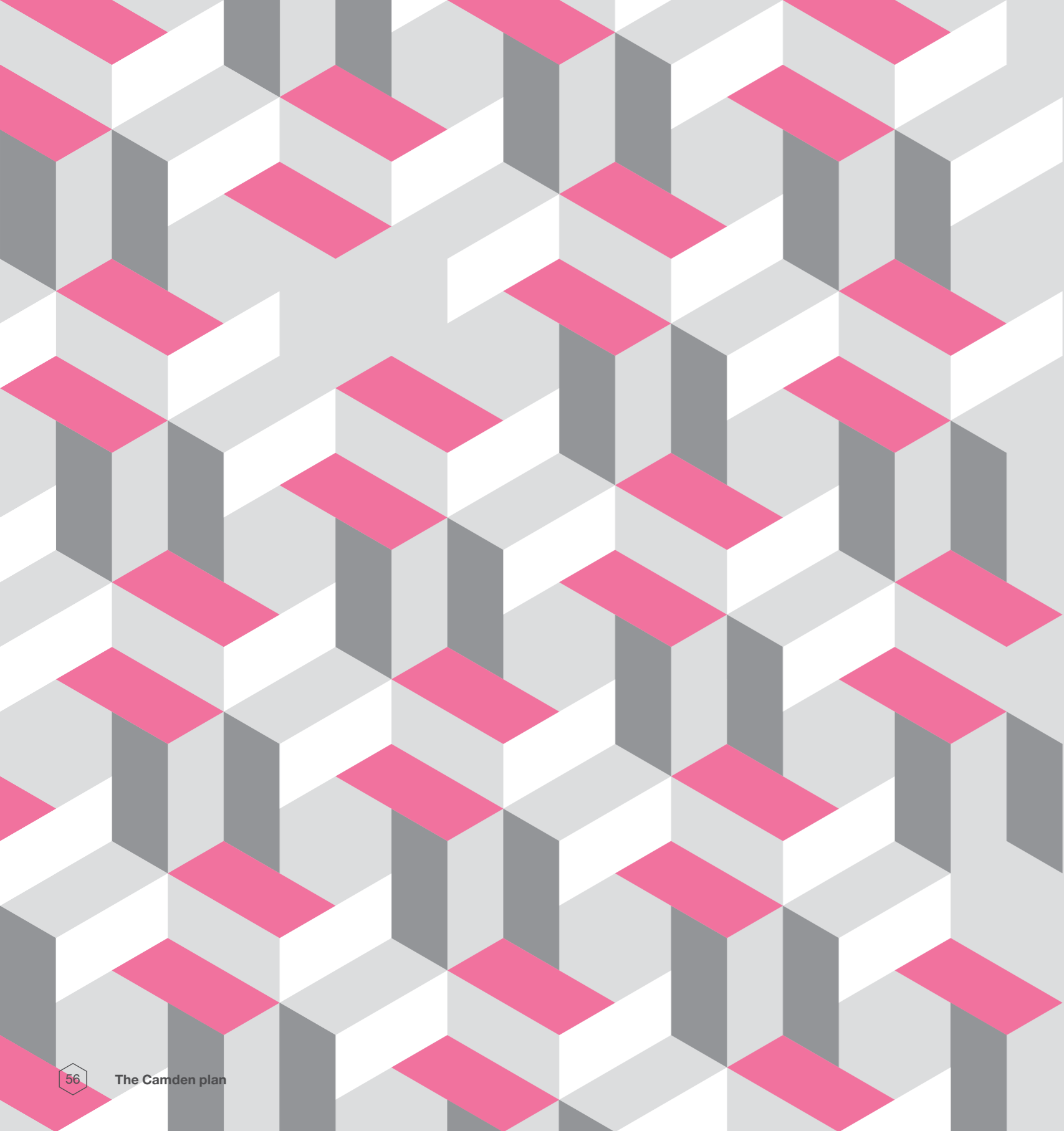
Our immediate plans include:

- launching a 'right first time' programme that builds on the positive results we have achieved in the housing repairs services;
- announce our long-term plans for Council Tax in Camden;
- develop plans for a personalised Camden account.



Questions

1. What do you think of our approach?
2. Do you have ideas of your own on how we can achieve our ambitions?
3. Is there more we could do to involve local people in monitoring our performance and holding the Council to account?
4. We are looking at developing a single account for people in Camden to make your dealings with the Council easier. What might you want from this and are there any examples from elsewhere that you think we could learn from?
5. In your dealings with the Council, what is most likely to influence whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied?



The Camden plan

Our framework for action

The five strategic objectives of this plan are interdependent – they cannot be separated from each other and to meet them, we know we will need to organise ourselves differently and develop new approaches to the design and delivery of services.

Running through all five themes, we have identified a set of principles that staff across the organisation will need to draw on as we seek to deliver the plan. These principles will underpin our actions across the plan as a whole and inform the transformation programme for the Council that will be launched over the coming months. This will ensure we can and will deliver the Camden plan.



Our framework for action

The first principle is integration. We need to move away from a service-based silo-mentality and drive better integration within the Council as this will improve the service to the customer.

The second principle is closely related as it also focuses on integration but from an external perspective – creating active partnerships. We need to shift to partnerships that demonstrate that working with the rest of the public sector, voluntary organisations and businesses and institutions on the ground and at a strategic level reaps rewards.

Thirdly there is a real ambition to be much more resident-centred in everything we do. All our services should be truly focused on the needs of residents, individuals, families and businesses. This means designing some of our services quite differently.

And the final principle relates to communities and our drive to see them more involved in decision-making and participating in developing local solutions that will over time be self-sustaining and deliver better outcomes.

The transformation programme will capture these principles, looking at what they mean for the Council and its workforce. They will inform new ways of working that will be rolled out across the organisation.

We recognise that we will not fully deliver all of the ambitions and aspirations for Camden within the five years of this plan. Radically increasing life expectancy and reducing child poverty will take much longer to achieve but we will make significant progress in tackling these challenges and lay the foundation for further successes.

We are focusing on a clear set of outcomes that we want to achieve by 2017 and these will drive the priorities and decisions we make over the next five years. The Council intends to be accountable to scrutiny from members and our communities for the delivery of this plan through these aspirations and outcomes.

We intend to be open and transparent about what we achieve and where we struggle to deliver our aspirations. We will reflect, learn and adjust our priorities if we operate as a Council that is open to understanding why things go wrong.

We know we will need to organise ourselves differently and develop new approaches to the design and delivery of services.

We want to hear from you

Over the last couple of years, we have been listening to your views on the things that are important to you in Camden.

There are things we know we need to do differently and we believe these are reflected in this plan for Camden. However, in the face of financial constraints, there are some big decisions to be made and we cannot take these without speaking to local people. It is also clear that meeting the challenges we all face in Camden needs more than just a plan from the Council; much of what you have told us has focused on the different contributions that residents, businesses and other organisations can make.

These issues are summed up in a number of questions. They cover some fundamental points of principle, they call for new ideas to tackle old challenges, and also ask whether there is more we can do to empower communities to come up with their own solutions.

Questions

Working together to realise the Camden plan

1. The financial challenges we all face make it more important for the Council to focus on reducing inequality and tackling disadvantage in the borough although this won't always involve the cheapest option. What do you think of our approach?
2. We can't face all of the challenges we have identified alone. There is a vital role for local organisations and people and we have tried to express that within this plan. We know that this is not the end of a process and the questions we pose within this document look to open up the debate to everyone who has a stake in the future of Camden. We want your views but beyond that, are there specific things that you could do to realise our ambitions? What could the Council do to help local people, groups and businesses take action?
3. Do you work for or represent an organisation in Camden? Do the priorities we've outlined in this plan meet with your work and objectives?

Providing democratic and strategic leadership fit for changing times

1. How can the Council help and encourage more people to be active in their community?
2. How could we make it easier for you to influence the decisions we make?
3. How can local people, organisations and the Council work better together to lobby for the needs of Camden?



We're calling for new ideas to tackle old challenges.

Questions

Developing new solutions with partners to reduce inequality

1. What type of role do you think local people, partners and businesses should play in helping to reduce disadvantage in Camden?
2. What do you view as the most important priorities for the Council to focus on in terms of inequality in Camden?
3. In which parts of the Council's work should we be more open to new ways of funding? These could include drawing social investment from philanthropists and businesses or developing ways of generating income from existing or new services.

Creating conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth

1. How can the Council best invest its resources to support employers in the employment of local people?
2. What role should businesses have in supporting the training needs and 'skilling up' of local young people?
3. In the context of increasing competition, what more could the Council do to encourage and support business creation and growth?
4. In aiming to make Camden the best place to be educated, what should be the focus of the new Camden partnership for educational excellence?

Investing in our communities to ensure sustainable neighbourhoods

1. What can the Council best do to help people make the right choices to live healthier lifestyles?
2. What more should we be doing to ensure Camden remains an affordable place to live for everyone?
3. What is the most important thing the Council could do to encourage residents and businesses to behave in more environmentally friendly ways?
4. The Council is redeveloping or selling old land and buildings to fund improvements to schools, housing and community facilities. What do you feel the priorities should be for this money in your area?

Delivering value for money services by getting it 'right first time'

1. Is there more we could do to involve local people in monitoring our performance and holding the Council to account?
2. We are looking at developing a single account for people in Camden to make your dealings with the Council easier. What might you want from this and are there any examples from elsewhere that you think we could learn from?
3. In your dealings with the Council, what is most likely to influence whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied?

Your views

This document is designed to provide you with an opportunity to comment on our approach and share your ideas about how we can achieve the ambitions set out in this plan. You can do this by responding to the questions which we have included in this paper.

Your involvement will mark the beginning of an ongoing conversation to develop a shared response to the challenges we face. The Camden plan sets out our destination and our starting point but much of the journey is still to be mapped out with others.

You can tell us your views in a number of ways.

Email

wearecamden@camden.gov.uk

Post

Corporate strategy team
Room 305
Camden town hall
Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

Visit

wearecamden.org/camdenplan

In person

We are happy to meet groups, bodies or other interested parties to discuss these proposals in person. Please contact us to arrange a meeting.

Telephone

Call us on 020 7974 2715 if you have any questions about how you can give your views.

Textlink

If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can contact us via our Textlink service on 020 7974 6866.

This closing date for responses to these questions is Wednesday 18 July 2012.