LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All

REPORT TITLE
Camden Council: Data Strategy 2023-2025

REPORT OF
Chief Experience and Information Officer

FOR SUBMISSION TO	**DATE**
Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	27 February 2024

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

We Make Camden, as the London Borough of Camden's corporate strategy, articulates a shared vision for the future of our borough and everybody who lives and works here. Reflecting Camden's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Cost of Living Crisis, and shaped by the voices of local residents, it commits our borough's focus to a series of missions, challenges and goals that are intentionally more ambitious than the Council could achieve alone or by working in the way it has done in the past. This approach requires the organisation to work differently, rethinking its role from one of centralisation and control to one of convening, distributing power and resources, and sharing trust and accountability.

Building on the Data Charter we created with residents to guide how we collect, process and share data ethically, we believe that by taking control of our data, by addressing existing problems with our datasets and processes, by empowering our services to better utilise data in their everyday functions, and by providing decision-makers with the necessary insights and intelligence, we can gain a deeper understanding of our citizens' needs and promote the targeted change and improvement essential to We Make Camden's success.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Our vision for data in Camden is "to be the pioneering leader in the use of data that measurably improves citizens' lives". This ambitious vision is based on pragmatic approach to the management of our resource and capability. We will strive to partner with external collaborators to test new methods and tools utilising external expertise and skill and combining it with Council's subject matter expertise.
To achieve this vision, we will need "to fix foundations, manage data capability, foster data excellence, embed research and innovation to empower frontline services and provide novel insights".

The new data strategy sets out 6 key objectives to achieving our vision. These are:

- Objective 1: Build Solid Foundations and fix key problems.
- Objective 2: Unlock the power of data by maximising data use and accessibility.
- Objective 3: Empower Camden's Frontline Service Delivery
- Objective 4. Be bold and innovative in data use.
- Objective 5: Foster data professions, leadership, and capability
- Objective 6: Transparency and accountability to residents.

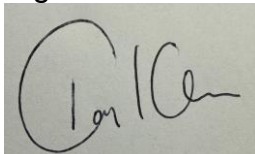**Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information**

No document(s) have been used in the preparation of this report:

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RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on the contents of the strategy

Signed:

Date: 16th February 2024

1.   BACKGROUND

1.1.   We Make Camden, as the London Borough of Camden's corporate strategy, articulates a shared vision for the future of our borough and everybody who lives and works here. Reflecting Camden's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Cost of Living Crisis, and shaped by the voices of local residents, it commits our borough's focus to a series of missions, challenges and goals that are intentionally more ambitious than the Council could achieve alone or by working in the way it has done in the past. This approach requires the organisation to work differently, rethinking its role from one of centralisation and control to one of convening, distributing power and resources, and sharing trust and accountability.

1.2.   Building on the Data Charter we created with residents to guide how we collect, process and share data ethically, we believe that by taking control of our data, by addressing existing problems with our datasets and processes, by empowering our services to better utilise data in their everyday functions, and by providing decision-makers with the necessary insights and intelligence, we can gain a deeper understanding of our citizens' needs and promote the targeted change and improvement essential to We Make Camden's success.

1.3.   As our data maturity grows, so does our ability to find patterns within our data, to anticipate possible future trends and to promote innovation and research – trying new ways of doing things with a view to learning, evaluating, and building on successes. This is Camden's pathway to becoming a purposeful organisation with deep relationships with our communities and high impact capabilities in digital and design.

1.4.   Reaching that future will require the entire organisation to adopt a new common data framework and to work in collaboration towards common vision, which this strategy sets out.

2.   Vision and Approach

2.1.   Our vision for data in Camden is **"to be the pioneering leader in the use of data that measurably improves citizens' lives".** This ambitious vision is based on pragmatic approach to the management of our resource and capability. We will strive to partner with external collaborators to test new methods and tools utilising external expertise and skill and combining it with Council's subject matter expertise.

2.2.   To achieve this vision, we will need **"to fix foundations, manage data capability, foster data excellence, embed research and innovation to empower frontline services and provide novel insights",** which translates into tackling existing data problems.

2.3.   The key element to achieving higher data maturity is managing data capability, which is the ability to manage effectively and efficiently, process, analyse and interpret data to drive decision making and achieve business objectives. It is underpinned by three key elements: people, processes, and tools.

People

It is essential to have staff with the right skills and expertise to work with data effectively. This includes data scientists, data analysts, data engineers, and other professionals with expertise in data management, analytics, and visualization.

Processes

Establishing clear processes for data management, data quality, and data governance as part of wider information governance ensures that data is treated as an asset and is managed appropriately. This includes processes for data collection, storage, processing, analysis, and dissemination. It is also important to have effective data governance processes in place to ensure that data is accurate, consistent, and properly managed.

Tools

The selection and implementation of appropriate software and hardware to support data management, analysis, and visualization. Having the right tools in place can enable data professionals to work more efficiently and effectively, reducing the time and effort required to analyze and draw insights from data.

2.4. Mature data capability means having skilled people, managing data that is well governed using the right statistical methods and tools to bring novel insight, spot past patterns and predict the future outcomes better so the Council can focus on preventative rather than reactive policies and interventions.

2.5. The merger of Camden Council with Public Health brings tremendous opportunity of development and adoption of better statistical capability as well as a better understanding of the citizens needs through frameworks such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

2.6. We will work with our Voluntary Charity Sector as well as Central Government bodies to help us join their data with Council's systems to gain the ability to understand better the impact of our current policies.

2.7. Camden is a place-based organisation which is why we are investing in sound geospatial strategy to allow our services and functions analyse and link data based on common standards.

3. Objective 1: Build Solid Foundations and fix key problems.

3.1. This means establishing clear standards for data collection, storage, and analysis, and ensuring that we have the necessary technology and resources to manage our data effectively.

3.2. Our mission is to establish a strong framework for data management and governance, which is essential for ensuring that data is accurate, reliable, and secure, and that it can be easily accessed and used by those who need it.

3.3. To achieve this objective, the following high-level activities will be undertaken:

  3.3.1. Establish clear policies, procedures, and standards for data governance and management.

  3.3.2. Ensure data accuracy and quality.

  3.3.3. Implement robust data security measures.

3.3.4. Develop a comprehensive data architecture.

3.3.5. Invest in data management tools.

3.3.6. Developing a comprehensive data governance framework

3.3.7. Establishing a centralised data management system.

4. Objective 2: Unlock the power of data by maximising data use and accessibility.

4.1. This means breaking down data silos, understanding where data is, describing data, engineering it one and reusing it often. By doing so, we can gain a better understanding of the needs of our community and develop targeted services that address these needs.

4.2. This objective is achieved by undertaking the following high-level activities:

4.2.1. Identify and prioritise data needs.

4.2.2. Invest in data analytics and visualisation tools.

4.2.3. Promote data literacy and training.

4.2.4. Improve data accessibility.

4.2.5. Foster data-driven decision-making.

5. Objective *3:* Empower Camden's Frontline Service Delivery

5.1. This means using data to identify areas for improvement and developing more efficient and effective ways to deliver services to our community. By doing so, we can enhance our community/citizen's experience and ensure that we are delivering services that are tailored to their needs.

5.2. Using our data to improve the quality and efficiency of services offered by Camden to all the residents entails a data-driven approach to ensuring that services are delivered in a way that meets the needs of residents, is efficient, cost-effective, and achieves the desired outcomes. We anticipate that this will lead to improved resident-satisfaction and overall better outcomes for our community.

5.3. To achieve this objective, we have outlined the following action items:

5.3.1. Identify key service delivery areas that can be improved through the use of data.

5.3.2. Develop a data-driven approach to service delivery.

5.3.3. Implement service-by-service all the frameworks established in Objective 1.

5.3.4. Innovate: make space for innovative thinking in solving of old problems

5.3.5. Train staff on the use of data: This involves providing training to staff on how to collect, analyse and use data to improve service delivery and data quality. This includes geospatial capability.

5.3.6. Engage with residents: This involves working with residents to understand their needs and preferences and using this information to improve service delivery.

5.3.7. Design and develop a set of core linked data assets which allow services to understand Camden's population and their characteristics better in a safe and secure manner.

6. **Objective 4. Be bold and innovative in data use.**

6.1. This means exploring new ways to collect, analyse, and use data, and embracing emerging technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence. By doing so, we can unlock new insights and opportunities that will benefit our community.

6.2. The aim is to encourage experimentation, innovation and exploration of new ways of using data to improve service delivery and to meet the evolving needs of the community. This will help us to stay ahead of the curve, deliver better services, and ultimately, improve the quality of life for our community.

6.3. To achieve this objective, the following high-level activities will be undertaken:

6.3.1. Encourage experimentation and innovation

6.3.2. Explore new data sources and technologies.

6.3.3. Collaborate with partners: This includes collaborating with external partners forging new collaborations, such as community groups, businesses, and academic institutions, to identify new data sources, develop innovative use cases, and build partnerships to support data-driven initiatives.

6.3.4. Develop new frameworks which measure impact of Councils policy: work with service areas on the use of new methods to track effectiveness of our policies and develop frameworks which promote targeted approach to supporting our citizens.

6.3.5. Measure and evaluate impact: This involve measuring and evaluating the impact of data-driven initiatives, to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement, and to continuously refine and improve our data strategy.

6.3.6. Establish a data innovation hub that enables staff to experiment with new data tools, techniques, and approaches.

7. Objective 5: Foster data professions, leadership, and capability

7.1. To foster a culture of data-driven decision-making by providing training and resources to develop data professionals, leadership, and capability across Camden Council.

7.2. To achieve this objective, we will take the following actions:

7.2.1. Develop a comprehensive training program for all data literacy levels as well as seniority.

7.2.2. Provide training and support for staff and stakeholders: This involves providing training and support to staff and stakeholders to build their data literacy skills, and to promote a culture of viewing data as an organisational asset.

7.2.3. Foster a data-driven culture: We will encourage a data-driven culture by promoting the importance of data in decision-making and by recognising and rewarding staff who demonstrate outstanding performance in data management and analysis.

7.2.4. Develop a clear career progression path: We will develop a clear career progression path for data professionals to encourage their growth and development within the Council.

7.2.5. Attract and retain top talent: We will work to attract and retain top talent in the data field.

7.2.6. Collaborate with external partners: We will collaborate with external partners such as universities, industry associations, and other local councils to develop and share best practices in data management and to stay up to date with the latest developments in the field.

8. Objective 6. Transparency and accountability to residents.

8.1. This means being open and transparent about our data practices and ensuring that residents can access and understand the data that we collect and use. By doing so, we can build trust with our community and ensure that our data practices are aligned with their values and expectations.

8.2. By promoting transparency and accountability to residents through the use of data, we can build trust with our community, demonstrate our commitment to data-driven decision-making, and ultimately, improve the quality of life for our residents.

8.3. To achieve this objective, the following high-level activities will be undertaken:

8.3.1. Increase data transparency: This involves increasing the transparency of council operations and decision-making processes by making data publicly available and accessible through data portals, reports, dashboards and other communication channels.

8.3.2. Establish data sharing protocols: This includes establishing clear protocols for sharing data with stakeholders, such as community groups, businesses, and other government agencies, to promote collaboration and transparency.

8.3.3. Use data to inform decision-making: This involves using data to inform council decision-making processes and communicating how data is used to make decisions to the community.

8.3.4. Ensure data privacy and security: This includes implementing strong data privacy and security measures to protect resident data, and communicating how resident data is collected, used, and stored.

8.3.5. Solicit feedback from residents: This involves actively soliciting feedback from residents on how data is being used and how it could be used to better serve the community.

9. LEGAL COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

9.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add to this report.

10. FINANCE COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

10.1. The Director of Finance has been consulted on this report and has no additional comments.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no proposals with environmental implications made in this report.

REPORT ENDS