

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

COUNCIL MEETING – 7th April 2025

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment to motion 1 proposed by Councillor Linda Chung and seconded by Councillor Matthew Kirk.

The Council notes that:

- Camden's libraries, **including the three community libraries**, are vital public spaces that support lifelong learning, creativity, connection and wellbeing. They offer free access to books, digital tools, study resources, warm spaces, cultural activities and trusted advice – all within safe, inclusive and welcoming environments.
- In the face of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, libraries have continued to play a crucial role in supporting residents – helping people get online, access services, and feel part of their community.
- Labour-led Camden **Council closed Belsize Library, Primrose Hill Library and Keat's Grove Library in 2012. These libraries were saved by their local communities, using various different approaches. They continue to thrive today, despite a lack of support from the Council.**
- **The Council** has consistently invested in strengthening and modernising the **borough's** libraries **it did not abandon** – not just improving buildings, but reimagining what libraries can offer in response to the changing needs of our communities.

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

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

from Liberal Democrat Councillors on a cross-ward basis, in recognition of the important impact the library makes across the Borough.

- Highgate Library: Reopened in January 2024 after a major upgrade that included a new lift, improved layout, new furniture, and full internal redecoration – creating a more accessible and welcoming space for the community, whilst preserving the character of the Grade II listed building.
- Kilburn Library: Plans are underway for a full redevelopment, bringing the underused lower ground floor back into community use and adding new facilities including a kitchen, creative and digital spaces, and an improved children's area.
- Holborn Library: Currently undergoing refurbishment, including better ventilation, modernised shelving and furniture, and the creation of flexible spaces to support community use and partnerships.
- Queens Crescent Library: Recently enhanced with new family-friendly areas and interactive resources that have helped make the space more engaging and welcoming.

This Council additionally notes:

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

This Council resolves:

1. To continue prioritising long-term investment in Camden's libraries and library staff, and seek additional opportunities to expand and futureproof facilities and services.
2. To promote and celebrate the transformation of Camden's libraries, ensuring residents are aware of the wide range of services, spaces and support now available to them.
3. To deepen partnerships with community groups, schools, young people, cultural organisations and local creatives – ensuring libraries reflect and respond to the energy, interests and diversity of Camden's communities.
4. To recognise the valuable partnership working and mutual support between Camden and the three community libraries and to ensure that Camden demonstrates reciprocity in the relationship.
5. To thank the communities and volunteers that have kept the three community libraries open since the Labour administration cut them off in 2012.
6. To reaffirm our commitment to keeping **all** Camden's libraries open, free and welcoming to all – ensuring they remain a cornerstone of inclusive public life, rooted in local neighbourhoods and evolving with the needs of our residents.

The amended motion therefore reads:

The Council notes that:

- Camden's libraries, including the three community libraries, are vital public spaces that support lifelong learning, creativity, connection and wellbeing. They offer free access to books, digital tools, study resources, warm spaces, cultural activities and trusted advice – all within safe, inclusive and welcoming environments.
- In the face of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, libraries have continued to play a crucial role in supporting residents – helping people get online, access services, and feel part of their community.
- Labour-led Camden Council closed Belsize Library, Primrose Hill Library and Keat's Grove Library in 2012. These libraries were saved by their local communities, using various different approaches. They continue to thrive today, despite a lack of support from the Council.
- The Council has consistently invested in strengthening and modernising the libraries it did not abandon – not just improving buildings, but reimagining what libraries can offer in response to the changing needs of our communities.

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Amendment to motion 2 proposed by Councillor Patricia Leman and seconded by Councillor Jonathan Simpson

This Council notes that:

- From April 2025, National Insurance employer contributions (NICs) will rise by 1.2 per cent, and the secondary threshold will be lowered, meaning employers will start paying NICs on employees' earnings from £5,000 instead of £9,100;
- ~~These changes, which are being made in response to years of economic uncertainty and long-term structural pressures, will create challenges across many sectors including Adult Social Care. Analysis by the Nuffield Trust estimates these changes will cost.~~ Like all employers the adult social care sector, ~~which includes approximately 18,000 independent social care providers across England, will be impacted. over £900 million next year and~~

~~impose a total burden of £2.8 billion on 18,000 independent social care providers across England;~~

- The Local Government Association has called for “immediate adequate investment” to ~~ensure that increased National Insurance employer contributions do not have a negative impact on those who draw on care and support. address unmet need and ensure timely access to social care.~~
- Camden continues to work closely with providers of adult social care every financial year to adjust to increases in the London Living Wage and inflation, to support and maintain a sustainable, high-quality market of local providers in line with our duties under the Care Act
- ~~In February the House of Lords passed a Liberal Democrat led amendment to exempt social care from NIC rises, but that the Labour government overturned the amendment in the House of Commons.~~

This Council believes that:

- Social care providers, including hospices and voluntary sector organisations, will need ~~support to adjust to the National Insurance increases, and that they will turn to local authorities to identify solutions. Struggle to absorb these costs, leading to service cuts or staff reductions.~~
- Any response to these changes must recognise the need for stability and sustainability across the whole economy.

~~This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:~~

- ~~Calls on the Government to exempt social care providers from all increases in employers' NICs;~~

~~This Council therefore urges the Government to:~~

- ~~Urges the Government to~~ Ensure cross-party talks on social care funding, as part of the commission led by Louise Casey and the development of a new national strategy for adult social care which can ~~aiming to~~ deliver long-term, sustainable solutions. ~~has its full support;~~
- Work with local authorities and their Health and Wellbeing Boards to ensure that market sustainability is reflected in the government's review of the Better Care Fund from 2026/27.
- ~~Requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor, relevant Government ministers, and Camden's MPs to express these concerns and share a copy of this motion.~~

The amended motion therefore reads:

This Council notes that:

- From April 2025, National Insurance employer contributions (NICs) will rise by 1.2 per cent, and the secondary threshold will be lowered, meaning employers will start paying NICs on employees' earnings from £5,000 instead of £9,100;
- These changes, which are being made in response to years of economic uncertainty and long-term structural pressures, will create challenges across many sectors including Adult Social Care. Like all employers the adult social care sector, which includes approximately 18,000 independent social care providers across England, will be impacted.
- The Local Government Association has called for "immediate adequate investment" to ensure that increased National Insurance employer contributions do not have a negative impact on those who draw on care and support.
- Camden continues to work closely with providers of adult social care every financial year to adjust to increases in the London Living Wage and inflation, to support and maintain a sustainable, high-quality market of local providers in line with our duties under the Care Act

This Council believes that:

- Social care providers, including hospices and voluntary sector organisations, will need support to adjust to the National Insurance increases, and that they will turn to local authorities to identify solutions.
- Any response to these changes must recognise the need for stability and sustainability across the whole economy.

This Council therefore urges the Government to:

- Ensure cross-party talks on social care funding, as part of the commission led by Louise Casey and the development of a new national strategy for adult social care which can deliver long-term, sustainable solutions.
- Work with local authorities and their Health and Wellbeing Boards to ensure that market sustainability is reflected in the government's review of the Better Care Fund from 2026/27.

Amendment to motion 3 proposed by Councillor Marcus Boyland and seconded by Councillor Rebecca Filer

This Council notes that it is important to support local businesses throughout the borough ~~but~~ **and** that this must be done in a financially sustainable manner ~~and~~ with the agreement of local residents. The **regeneration of Queen's Crescent street market** ~~roadway scheme is an example of how this support should NOT be given.~~ forms part of Camden Council's work to deliver on priorities identified by the community – including improving the street environment, boosting footfall, and creating a more pleasant, accessible space for everyone.

The 120 metres of the street market is **undergoing improvements that include granite paving and new planters, designed to support a more pedestrian-friendly space and enhance the character and resilience of the area.** There will also be improvements for street traders including upgraded electricity supplies and improved storage facilities. These changes are the result of years of engagement with local residents and businesses, and form part of a broader vision for inclusive regeneration across Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town. ~~in the process of being decorated with curlicue granite embossment of the ground surface and raised granite planters. A Freedom of Information request has unearthed the outrageous costs for this scheme.~~

The projected end total ~~would seem to be~~ is around £3.5M and the current expenditure stands at £1.6M. Of this, around £600,000 has supported design and project management - standard for a project of this complexity - enabling safe, high-quality delivery in a busy public space. The main construction contract of £2 million includes durable materials such as Yorkstone paving. ~~Of this, designers and project managers have been paid some £600,000. Any calculation of the percentage of non-productive cost of the building contract of £2.0M shows an unjustifiable figure over 28%. And this is not a complicated house building project or a highly technical laboratory. It is a short market road in Gospel Oak.~~

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

~~Yes, the Queen's Crescent market has long needed a boost, and this scheme directly responds to that need. From November 2018 to May 2019, a six-month co-design process took place, involving on-street exhibitions, public discussions, walkarounds, design testing, and a podcast capturing local voices. The Council introduced an 18-month trial traffic scheme based on this input to reduce vehicle dominance and improve accessibility – including improved disabled parking provision.~~

Public consultation on the pedestrian and cycling improvements showed strong support: 66% backed the revised pedestrian zone, and 59.8% supported traffic restrictions on Weedington Road. Compared to 2021, the proportion of people who said Queen's Crescent is a pleasant place to visit rose by 10 percentage points. Residents particularly welcomed easier and safer walking (62.4%), better air quality (53.8%), safer cycling (53.3%), and easier crossing (54.4%) — clear signs that this investment is delivering real and visible benefits. ~~but is this the correct way to help~~

~~locals or businesses? There are signs in shops rebutting this conception and many local residents and businesses are stunned and even offended.~~

~~Notwithstanding the fact that Crucially, £2.0M of the funds for this project have been from the Greater London Authority's Good Growth by Design fund, demonstrating wider confidence in Camden's approach and reducing the direct cost to the Council. this is still public money and it is not being spent wisely.~~

Therefore this Council commits to:

- Ensuring that future public realm schemes continue to involve early engagement, community-led design, and careful assessment of costs and benefits;
- Building on Camden's approach of trialling, testing and adapting schemes based on real-world experience and public feedback;
- Continuing to deliver regeneration that is inclusive, high-quality, and focused on long-term value for our residents and local businesses. ~~Ensuring far more responsible assessment of public road schemes and the setting up of a cross-party panel to logic check such proposals before they are given the go ahead.~~
- ~~Ensuring that, while it is too late to save the money spent or committed to this scheme, in times of tightened belts, such extravagances should be curtailed in the future.~~

The amended motion therefore reads:

This Council notes that it is important to support local businesses throughout the borough and that this must be done in a financially sustainable manner with the agreement of local residents. The regeneration of Queen's Crescent street market forms part of Camden Council's work to deliver on priorities identified by the community – including improving the street environment, boosting footfall, and creating a more pleasant, accessible space for everyone.

The 120 metres of the street market is undergoing improvements that include granite paving and new planters, designed to support a more pedestrian-friendly space and enhance the character and resilience of the area. There will also be improvements for street traders including upgraded electricity supplies and improved storage facilities. These changes are the result of years of engagement with local residents and businesses, and form part of a broader vision for inclusive regeneration across Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town.

The projected end total is around £3.5M and the current expenditure stands at £1.6M. Of this, around £600,000 has supported design and project management - standard for a project of this complexity - enabling safe, high-quality delivery in a busy public space. The main construction contract of £2 million includes durable materials such as Yorkstone paving.

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ENDS