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| LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN | WARDS: All Wards |
| REPORT TITLE Insight, Learning and Impact Report: Homes and Community Directorate – Quarter 2/Mid-Year 2025-26 | |
| REPORT OF Executive Director, Supporting Communities | |
| FOR SUBMISSION TO Housing Scrutiny Committee | DATE 9 December 2025 |
| SUMMARY OF REPORT This report focusses on the performance in Quarter 2 (Q2) 2025-26 for each division across the Homes and Communities Directorate. In this report, directors have been asked to provide a narrative covering key areas of challenge, opportunity, and learning. This report is divided into three main sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary table which highlights key responses from services for Q2 2025/26 across each of the Homes and Communities Directorate. • A more detailed narrative of the individual service responses • Appendix A contains the data dashboard. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report. Contact Officer: James Coumbe – Insight, Learning and Impact Lead London Borough of Camden 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG Email: james.coumbe@camden.gov.uk Tel: 020 7974 5965 | |
| RECOMMENDATION | |

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report, including the most recent data and trends and the emerging challenges identified.

SIGNED



Gillian Marston

Executive Director Supporting Communities

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Insight, Learning and Impact (ILI) Q2 report covers the period between July 2025 – September 2025.
- 1.2 The ILI report is submitted to all scrutiny committees twice a year (mid-year at Q2 and end of year at Q4). The report will go to all the scrutiny committees but they will no longer receive the full report, instead just the extract from the report relating to the committee's remit.
- 1.3 The ILI report includes both the data dashboard and service narratives. The data dashboard (Appendix A) gives Scrutiny Committees the opportunity to view service performance data collected across the year and compared to previous years. The service narratives (in the body of this report) provide an overview of the key issues identified by officers for each service.
- 1.4 To produce the service narrative, all Camden Council Directors were asked to provide a narrative covering key areas of challenge, opportunity, and learning, looking back over Q2 2025/26 on the following points:
 - What were the biggest challenges to your service delivery i.e. what challenges are going to require the organisation's attention and focus
 - What are the biggest opportunities i.e. where could you most benefit from support to deliver improvement?
 - What have your services learned and what do you need to learn in the future e.g. from data or evaluation, regional or national research.
- 1.5 The main report begins with a tabled overview of service issues for Q2 2025/26 in responses to the three key questions above. That is followed by a more detailed narrative of those individual service responses.
- 1.6 The Corporate Data Dashboard is at Appendix A which provides the latest performance data and previous years for the key measures from the services, and which accompanies this report.

2 Homes and Communities response summary

| | Challenges | Opportunities | Learning |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention • Homelessness and Rough Sleeping • Temporary Accommodation (TA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive review of TA teams and approach • Home visiting programme • New HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) licensing scheme. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on data and performance for service delivery • Establishing an Income team to manage rent accounts on a permanent basis • Embed the co-produced 'Service Standards' |
| Property management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of disrepair cases and legal costs associated • Adapting to new Building Safety Regulator Gateway work for tall buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building safety team continues to undertake extensive work to comply with the Building Safety Act • New Housing Investment Strategy to invest additional capital resources in the Council's housing stock • Restructure of repairs team to become neighbourhoods based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council continues to work closely with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) on its response to the Regulatory Notice issued July 2023 • A second new lessons learned lead appointed and continue on work on learning from complaints and ombudsman. • Emphasis on channel shift has continued following success of Madetech, the repairs case management system |

3 Housing

3.1 Challenges

Homelessness

In Camden, there has been a significant increase in the demand for homeless assistance in 2025. Data from the service shows on average the homelessness service sees nearly 400 approaches per month; this is up almost 40% from 2024. Through the restructure the service have increased capacity, recruiting five additional officers and specialism roles to support some of the Council's most vulnerable residents – these include support for hospital discharge, domestic abuse victims and people leaving prison.

Temporary accommodation (TA)

Increasing homelessness approaches has resulted in a significant increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation - from 498 in 2019 to 1221 as of September 30th 2025, with limited move-on options due to lack of Private Rented Sector (PRS) accessibility and affordability as a result of limited benefit entitlements, cost of living crisis and impact of the Renters Rights Act, this means the Council are seeing households staying in TA for longer periods. Like the majority of other Councils, Camden is facing a significant overspend in this area (forecast £20.1m for Q2) and the focus of the service is in addressing and stabilising this spend, whilst working with colleagues across the Council to better centre the voices of people in Temporary accommodation.

Leaseholder Services

Outstanding Right to Buy applications following the change of legislation in November 2024 remain a challenge. The service currently have 771 live applications, however in terms of processing these they are ahead of the curve compared to other boroughs as all applications have now received their initial investigations and they have now streamlined their processes so that these can be dealt with at a faster pace.

Neighbourhoods (Housing)

Demonstrating that the team can deliver good quality services and value for money, they will be looking to roll out the Council's estate and block inspection programme across the various estates with a pilot to test the effectiveness of this approach starting in the new year.

3.2 Opportunities

Homelessness

In Q2 the homelessness service and key partners from across the council ran a design sprint with the aim of preventing homelessness, designing and testing new tools and ways of working to ultimately reduce the number of people becoming homeless and subsequently going into temporary accommodation. One pilot tested working cross-

departmentally with Money Advice Camden team and Contact Camden to maximise income for residents and support them to access grants as a way of remaining in their current accommodation. The four-month pilot was reviewed in October and has yielded positive results, out of 29 interventions in this period, so far none have gone into TA with 75% of cases avoiding homelessness applications and two prevention cases where intervention meant the residents were able to stay in their current accommodation. The service are now building this way of working into business as usual.

Temporary Accommodation

The Taskforce has been tackling Camden's over-reliance on using costly commercial hotels and taking action to address the TA overspend. Camden has moved 180 households from commercial hotels and 68 households from expensive nightly paid annexe accommodation into alternative, less expensive forms of temporary accommodation which is often more appropriate for people in TA, providing more stability in a challenging national context. There is particular focus on maximising the use regen stock due for redevelopment for the provision of temporary accommodation to reduce the financial burden on the Council.

The service are also ensuring that their TAPP properties to provide temporary accommodation and are exploring options through the Taskforce to acquire properties from the open market to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation from the private sector. Additionally, approval has been given to:-

- Make 50 direct offers from general needs to singles in adult pathways ready for move on, which will create supported housing capacity for singles currently in unsuitable temporary accommodation.
- Purchase additional 20 general needs properties through grant funding and to utilise the same number of general needs properties for the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Utilise 50 general needs properties for the provision of temporary accommodation.

Since the start of the year the Council has onboarded 20 new temporary accommodation providers, focusing on affordability and quality. This will improve the supply of quality temporary accommodation options which residents can be placed in.

As part of a wider strategy to reduce the use of expensive temporary accommodation, the Council is exploring options of working in partnership with developers and large property portfolio holders to provide "settled" accommodation through a property leasing model, which will provide stability for households and deliver value for money for the Council.

The Housing Service has recently been restructured, and this quarter saw the continued recruitment of new officer and the role of Temporary Accommodation Officers been adapted to include visiting households in temporary accommodation to undertake tenancy audits, property checks and deliver welfare support. The service are now fully staffed in temporary accommodation operations and are piloting patches based on postcodes for temporary accommodation officers which it is hoped will increase support for residents living in TA.

Neighbourhoods

Work continues to deliver the home visiting programme, which was launched earlier this year, supported by a purpose-built application to streamline visits and capture key tenant information. This ambitious initiative is set to cover visiting all tenants over the next three years, enabling earlier identification of support needs, promoting tenancy sustainment, and ensuring properties remain in good condition.

Income

Arrears performance continues to improve, with monthly targets consistently being met. The team remain on track to exceed a 100% collection rate by the end of the financial year. A clear focus and structured plan are in place to continue engaging with residents, ensuring proactive support and timely, effective interventions that drive further progress in arrears management.

The Council is also seeing a rise in the number of Universal Credit tenants, driven by the Department for Work and Pensions' managed migration from legacy benefits. This trend is expected to continue as more claimants transition to UC. The team is closely monitoring the impact to ensure tenants are supported through the transition and strong performance is maintained and they are exploring the option of increased direct debit dates to ensure flexibility and inclusivity for residents to be able to pay their rent.

Leaseholder Services

Leaseholder income remains ahead of the locally agreed target with 77% of income from all day to day invoices billed for the finance year having been collected and 26% of that for Major Works (note Leaseholders can pay for Major works over extended periods of time and hence the % collected against that billed in a year is low). Leaseholder Services is also putting on its first leaseholder conference in many years, this will occur on 6 November and will focus on how they are improving their services following the restructure and Cllr Slater's report.

3.3 Learning

Rough Sleeping & Housing First

The new Greater London Authority (GLA)-funded Housing First Programme is in its 6th month of implementation. The aim of the service is to provide stable housing and wrap around support according to the Housing First principles to people in Camden experiencing entrenched rough sleeping and other disadvantages and where

domestic violence and abuse is present in the relationship. The programme has passed the mobilisation stage and 15 of the 30 properties are currently occupied with inbound, intensive support from Specialist Housing First Workers. There continues to be a lot of learning coming from this experimental scheme which has gathered interest from colleagues across social care and the homelessness system integration programme to feed into future commissioning of Housing First interventions as is the Council's ambition.

Income

During the month of April, the team rolled out new officer account patches, completed most of the recruitment, and fully implemented the new structure. By the end of September, rent arrears had reduced by £1.5 million, reflecting the impact of improved processes, better resource alignment, and focused interventions. These results show that the changes they have made are working and delivering real impact.

Leaseholder Service

In September, the Team worked with the IT department to design a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, this is now in its final testing phases and will be in place by the end of the year. The system will allow staff to monitor cases and will flag those that are awaiting responses. This system will be key to improving the team's customer service satisfaction as one of the most common complaints is the length of time for a response and having to make multiple contacts to receive one.

Neighbourhoods

Despite Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) showing that Camden tenants on average feel safer in their home than the national average, satisfaction with the approach to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) (46.3%) was below the London average (54.6%). Residents were asked at the Council Housing and Property Residents Panel and through door-knocking exercises what they would like to see change, and as a result developed a Council-wide approach to tackling ASB across the borough, including the creation of an ASB taskforce, recruitment of five ASB officers dedicated to tackling ASB on housing estates and training for Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) based on a new cross-council ASB Policy and Procedure. This has already demonstrated better outcomes for residents, such as an 11% increase on tenants' satisfaction of the handling of ASB in this year's TSMs. This will continue to be embedded moving forward.

4. Property Management

4.1 *Challenges*

The Council is working hard to contain pressure on the revenue budgets with sustained demand placed on them by the remaining fire risk assessment actions, disrepair legal fees and proactive management of damp and mould casework. It is noted that the volume of disrepair cases reduced during the previous financial year

and the number of cases received remains steady with a slight increase in cases being managed at the end of Q2 compared to Q1.

Extensive work was carried out in this quarter to prepare for the implementation of Awaab's Law on 27 October. This included the development of new IT functionality to manage casework in line with this new legislation, whereby 'Category A' safety hazards need to be mitigated within 24 hours, and timescales for investigations, reports and remedial works all set out in law. Adaptations have also been made to how operative teams are configured to make sure appropriate action can be taken should hazards be confirmed. The Q3 report will reflect on the impact of Awaab's Law and the learning from any case work that meets the statutory criteria.

More broadly the repairs team has placed a clear focus on budgetary control, management of "Work in Progress" (WIP) and reducing the level of agency personnel and sub-contracting. Added to this is the positive impact of new systems such as Madetech and ROCC which provide greater visibility and functionality to residents when ordering repairs, but also more visibility and control to repair managers when managing their budgets and tracking completion of works orders. It has been noted however, that the implementation of ROCC has led to a lower than expected reported percentage of emergency repair orders attended to in target time and this highlights the need for additional interfaces and process adaptations to allow real-time completions to be recorded out of hours and by the mechanical and electrical (M&E) contractors – e.g. for heating and lifts. These interfaces will be developed and in place for the new M&E contracts due to be let in April 2026.

At any one time the Council will have between 4,500 and 5,500 works orders to be delivered, with 5,061 orders outstanding at the end of Q2. This reflects the expected level of works order volumes – with just under 60,000 repairs orders received each year and the service is focussed on making sure older orders are closed out. Noting that a lot of demand on the service relates to elements and infrastructure that is older and is in need of investment or replacement. Despite these challenges, satisfaction with completed repairs has remained consistent at 86% for building repairs and 82% for M&E repairs in Q2.

As set out in the Housing Investment Strategy, the Council is aiming to commission £670m in capital works to help reduce the pressure on repairs and provide better homes for residents. This investment will particularly relieve acute operational issues on some of the larger heating networks with large scale planned replacement works being commissioned at Rowley Way, Maiden Lane and Mayford estates, along with miscellaneous plant room upgrades and retrofit projects such as the installation of a communal heat pump system at Lyminster Road.

The Council is proactively adapting to the new Gateway processes introduced by the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) which requires regulatory approval for most works to

tall buildings, of which the Council has 188. There are in excess of 80 applications underway at present, all requiring structural and fire engineering advice. The Council continues to make representations to the Ministry and the Building Safety Regulator to discuss how the Gateway process could be adapted so that works can progress more easily.

4.2 *Opportunities*

The emphasis on channel shift has continued, and 86% of repairs were raised online or through messaging services. It is expected this transition to continue with the introduction of the Madetech system, which allows residents to book repairs easily and manage their appointments online, with status updates also now provided. This work means that phone lines remain free for emergency repairs or for those who need additional support. The new IT introduced for Awaab's Law may also lead to wider service improvements, with the system using AI to generate written updates for residents based on notes provided by surveyors and supervisors, with updates also generated at fixed time intervals. If successful and effective, it could help the Council provide timely updates to residents across the wider repairs service, improving communications and reducing the number of complaints about a lack of information or updates.

The Council has strong arrangements in place to respond to the BSA (and regulations under the Fire Safety Act 2021), and the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry report phase 2. It has a well-established team which is developing the Building Safety Cases (BSCs) required for 188 of the Council's tall buildings. The Council has submitted 13 BSCs in response to requests from the Regulator. The safety cases will further improve their approach to managing their tall buildings and keeping residents safe; this through works undertaken, regular inspections and information made available. At the time of writing, the Regulator had issued a Building Assessment Certificate (BAC) for four of the buildings covered by the 13 BSCs submitted so far, the BAC determines that the Council is compliant with the law with regards its management of the building. The Council was only the second London borough to have a BAC issued and to date just 45 have been issued nationwide.

As outlined above, the new Housing Investment Strategy, approved January 2025, provides a significant opportunity to invest additional capital resources in the Council's housing stock – adding £350m to the existing programme of £320m. It also enables the Council to proactively manage its assets and make best use of resources. This is a significant step towards maintaining compliance with the Consumer Standards and maintaining a sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. Good progress is also being made on its internal surveys with 64% of tenanted homes now having internal condition data from within the last five years, this to augment the 100% external and communal data gathered in the 2023/24 survey.

In Q2, the Council completed the restructuring of its front-end customer service teams and minor changes within the repairs service. The new structure will mean that the case management team will become neighbourhood-based, with case management officers handling cases within their area and collaborating with tenant participation and resident liaison functions. The changes also make sure support for Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs) and panels is in one place and the Council can co-ordinate its engagement activity and track outcomes. This includes additional activities such as the Neighbourhood Action Days which are being rolled out in 2025/26. Within the repairs structure the Council has introduced a new senior Commercial Manager role and made permanent its operational arrangements for the management of damp and mould.

4.3 *Learning*

The Council continues to work closely with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) on its response to the Regulatory Notice issued July 2023. All historic high-risk Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions have been addressed, and good progress continues on remaining medium and low-risk actions. Progress is posted online monthly, and reports considered at the quarterly Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel with residents, members and the London Fire Brigade. The aim is for most fire actions to be completed by December 2025, with those remaining subject to the Gateway processes outlined above or due to non-access procedures. It is noted that now that a large number of fire alarm systems have been installed, the Council will get a handful of newly arising high risk actions in any given month. The Council has a target of 10 days to address these and this can include access to dwellings which can take a bit of time.

As part of its customer service team changes, the Council has recently appointed a second Lessons Learned Lead as part of the work to tackle root causes and prevent repeat issues where this is possible across repairs and neighbourhood services. This will also support the work in delivering the Council's action plan responding to the Housing Ombudsman's (HO) report. The HO wrote to the Council in July 2025 confirming it was satisfied with the Council's work to address all of its recommendations. Additional work is being progressed, for example the Council is improving its systems and introducing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) maintain a holistic view of residents and their requirements and help manage casework.

From the complaints analysis, it is clear some of the most challenging cases relate to complex issues such as structural work. Such cases may also require residents to be relocated. As well as looking at the process improvements required for such work, the Council needs to reduce its exposure to this risk through the Housing Investment Strategy and related work such as the Family Friendly Housing Purchase Programme, where high-cost / high-risk homes, and some smaller homes, have been disposed of and proceeds used to buy suitable purpose-built homes for families.

5. **Finance Comments of the Director of Finance**

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

6. **Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

7. **Environmental Implications**

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

8. **Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A: ILI Q2 25-26 Data Dashboard - Housing Scrutiny

REPORT ENDS