

Camden 2025

Resident and partner engagement



Camden 2025 – resident and partner engagement

Background

The Camden 2025 engagement programme was established to provide Cabinet members with extensive resident and partner insight to assist them in the development of a new plan for the borough. Achieving the long-term vision for Camden will require the council, local organisations, community groups and residents to work together. In light of this, the engagement work aimed to develop a sense of shared endeavour and explore the roles organisations and residents can play in making Camden a better place for everyone to live in 2025.

Public engagement launched at the start of November 2017. Since then, we have had a wide range of conversations with residents from across the borough, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to have a say in what they would like Camden to be like in 2025. Our approach has been, and continues to be, extensive, recognising the political desire to strengthen how we engage and bring residents closer than ever to democratic and strategic decision-making.

New approaches to resident involvement, which create the space and opportunity for more deliberative discussions and encourage collaborative working, have been piloted. The establishment of Camden's Citizens' Assembly has enabled us to engage with a broadly representative group of residents over a longer period of time (three months), allowing us to begin to explore some of the tough challenges facing the borough and the role of the council, residents and other organisations in overcoming them.

As part of the borough-wide conversation, we worked with local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, holding a series of joint open engagement events in January 2018. The VCS organisations have also recruited a number of volunteers who have led conversations across their community networks. Opportunities to engage were available at our libraries, online and through our community researchers. We also undertook a survey, interviewing 620 residents over a four-week period.

We have engaged our partners and businesses across the borough by attending numerous events to speak about our work, including various board and group meetings to discuss their views and priority areas, and running an online employer survey. We also hosted a large community partner event, with over 50 partner organisations, to share our engagement findings and discuss our respective roles and responsibilities in achieving our shared vision for Camden. Appendix 1 summarises the range of engagement that took place.

We have now completed the first phase of our engagement programme. This paper sets out a high-level summary of the feedback we have gathered through the wide range of conversations and discussions we have had with over 2,000 residents and over 300 community partners and employers. This report covers the following:

- The borough's strengths, including a sense of shared values
- Challenges facing the borough, future areas of focus and roles and responsibilities
- Ambitions for Camden in 2025.



What are Camden's strengths?

Residents are generally positive about Camden as a place to live and its special identity. They are proud that Camden is such a diverse and multicultural borough, while also being tight-knit. Residents view 'Camden people' as a key strength due to their open and welcoming attitude and because so many of Camden's communities are supportive of each other. Residents also identified some 'Camden values', describing Camden as a progressive place, where people are open-minded yet proud of Camden's remarkable history, and they are keen to build on this. Residents said they felt able to talk to other local residents in a way that was not possible in other parts of London, which they put down to a 'Camden spirit'. Many residents are also happy that they know their neighbours and that different Camden neighbourhoods manage to retain their own sense of identity.

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It's a diverse borough, so you get to live with people from different backgrounds, which opens your horizons.

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Chalcots Estate event participant

This has been echoed through the findings of a Camden survey in early 2018, where 81% of respondents said that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, and 68% said that they feel like they belong to their neighbourhood. In addition, residents expressed a clear appetite to be more involved in their local communities, with 77% of respondents saying they 'would be willing to work together with others to improve [their] neighbourhood'.

Camden's employers also highlighted Camden's strong sense of character and diversity, and frequently mentioned creativity, excitement, 'buzz' and character when referring to Camden's identity. Employers said that Camden's creativity was a particularly important part of Camden's economy and wanted this aspect to be supported and developed.

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There is nowhere else in London or other parts of the UK like this.

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Employer survey respondent

Residents, employers and community partners strongly believe that Camden is a very special, dynamic and unique place, with something for everyone, and they do not want to lose what is good about it. This includes Camden's wide range of arts and cultural events, its transport infrastructure, its range of parks and green spaces and the mix of fun and educational places to visit.

What are some of the challenges?

Although Camden has many strengths, residents also identified challenges and concerns that they want to be tackled by 2025. For many residents the key challenge is retaining what they currently have in their area. Residents want to preserve what is good about Camden and this includes its diversity, its supportive communities and the facilities and services that currently exist. When asked what they wanted Camden to be like in 2025, one Shout Out event participant simply said, "things to stay the same".

Residents and community partners are also very concerned about ongoing austerity, welfare benefit changes and funding cuts. For some residents the impact of benefit cuts has been extremely harsh, meaning it is hard for them to visualise the future as they are struggling with their day-to-day lives. Others were concerned about the impact cuts have already had on public services and what the challenge of further cuts will bring.

Camden residents identified inequality as a big challenge. Some described Camden as a "borough of two halves" – a place where affluent areas enjoy wealth and poorer areas struggle to get by. Some people said that the affluent areas of Camden were cleaner, greener and nicer to live in

than poorer areas. They also discussed how some people manage to get high-quality care, education and jobs while others are left behind.

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There are now extremes of ‘have’ and ‘have nots’ and it’s becoming more obvious.

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Participant at focus group for people with a mental health condition

Residents are concerned that housing is too expensive and that conditions in the private rented and social housing sectors are sometimes poor and unsafe. People are worried that because of this, and the high cost of living, families will be broken up, as young people will be priced out of Camden. Camden’s employers were also concerned with rising rental costs and unreliable landlords, and said that business rates are putting a strain on local businesses.

Residents and our community partners also talked about Brexit and its potential impact on Camden. They were concerned that Brexit could cause residents to leave, which would affect Camden’s diverse and multicultural identity, and that it could have an impact on businesses by restricting their growth and opportunities.

Pollution was also a key concern. Residents and employers said that streets are often dirty with too much rubbish. They were also worried about the impact of air pollution, especially from train stations and cars, and the impact that noise pollution has on their lives.

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Camden has some of the worst air quality in the UK. Our kids are growing up choking in traffic pollution, with detrimental effects on their long-term health. We need bold actions!

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Participant at focus group for people with a mental health condition

These are some of the key challenges that residents said must be tackled by 2025. However, as outlined earlier, these are not challenges that residents want or expect Camden Council to tackle alone. Residents want to be more involved in improving their neighbourhoods, however, only 31% of residents currently feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area. Therefore, a key challenge will be supporting residents to become more involved by finding ways to harness their desire to do more to improve their local neighbourhoods, and by ensuring they feel able to influence local decisions in the future.

What do residents want Camden to be like in 2025?

When we asked residents what they wanted Camden to be like in 2025, they said they wanted to retain the features that make Camden so special now. They also wanted to see positive changes so that Camden becomes a place where people are treated fairly and equally, and where people have access to the same opportunities, wherever they live.

Five key ambitions have emerged from the engagement. Residents said that they want Camden in 2025 to be a place where:

Everyone has a place they call home

Residents want everyone to have a home where they can feel safe and happy, and they want housing to be more affordable. By 2025, they also want those in privately rented accommodation and social housing to feel secure, and they do not want anyone sleeping on the streets because they do not have a home.

Everyone can get the jobs they need to feel financially secure

Residents want jobs that pay enough so that they can afford to live in Camden without struggling. They also want young people and adults to have access to high-quality education and learning opportunities throughout their lives to help them do well.

Camden 2025

Everyone feels part of a safe, strong and open community

Residents want everyone to feel safe when they are at home and when out and about in Camden. They want residents to look out for each other and to be welcoming to newcomers. They also think there should be more community initiatives that bring people together, and that no one should be lonely, isolated or without a voice.

Everyone values and respects Camden as a place and its environment

Residents want Camden in 2025 to continue to be a creative and dynamic place. They want people to come and enjoy our parks, have a great night out and visit our independent shops and markets. They want Camden to be clean but “not sterile”, and rubbish-free. Air pollution also needs to be reduced dramatically.

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Not completely gentrified like Borough Market, good transport, affordable housing. Still Camden in the fact that it has its culture and its markets, etc.

Shout Out event participant

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Everyone in Camden is able to live a healthy, active and happy life, remaining independent for as long as possible

Residents want everyone who lives in Camden to have a healthy, happy life and be able to remain living independently in their local neighbourhood for as long as they want to. They also want people's strengths and capabilities to be recognised, and they do not want people with an illness or disability to ever suffer abuse or be embarrassed.

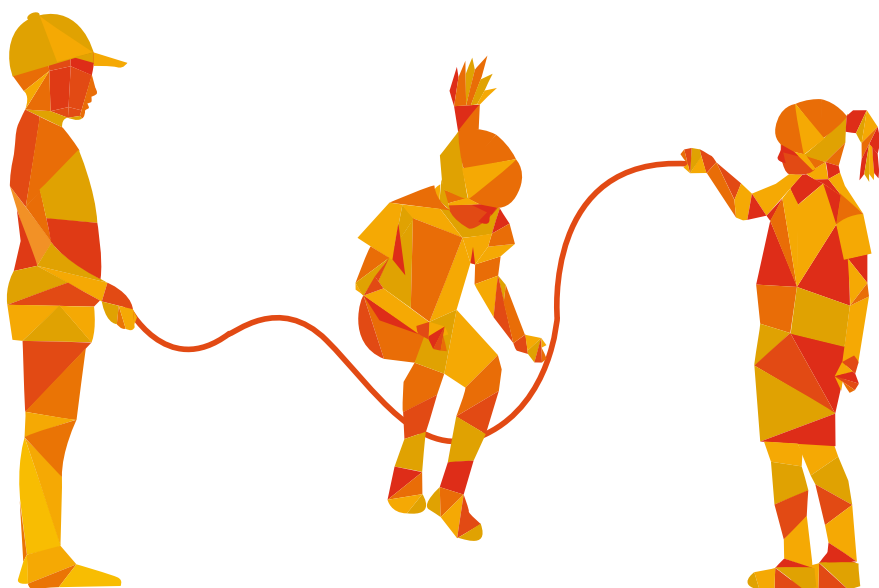
However, residents do not think that any one organisation is responsible for delivering the changes that they want to see. A recurring message has been that people and organisations need to take more responsibility for their actions and work together to make Camden better for everyone who lives, works, studies in and visits this special place. Residents who attended the Citizens' Assembly called for everyone to work together with the public sector, businesses, the voluntary sector and charities to deliver positive change.

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I want a closer community where people help each other and volunteer more.

Shout Out event participant

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The next section of the engagement report contains more detailed feedback on each of the five ambitions.

Ambition one: Everyone should have a place they call home

By 2025

- Everyone should have a place to go home to where they feel safe and happy.
- Getting on the housing ladder should be more affordable, and people in rented accommodation and social housing should feel secure.
- No one should be sleeping on the streets.

What are the issues?

People said there were many things to celebrate about Camden's housing, like some of its unique architecture, the relative lack of skyscrapers, and the wide social mix of people.

However, the main focus of all housing discussions so far has been the housing crisis and the affordability of housing in Camden. Residents said that there need to be fundamental changes to make housing more affordable and identified different elements to the housing crisis. These were: the private rented sector is poorly regulated and too expensive; getting on the housing ladder is very difficult; there is not enough appropriate housing for low-income groups and people with additional needs; and adult children of Camden residents cannot afford to live in Camden. Young people in particular questioned whether they could have any realistic expectation of living in Camden in the future.

Everyone should have a place they call home

In surveys, residents consistently identify the provision of affordable, decent housing as the issue most in need of improvement in Camden. Residents expressed the worry that house prices and rents are increasing faster than wages. More specifically, residents are concerned about the lack of affordable and suitable housing for certain groups, including young people, key workers, people with disabilities, and elderly people at risk of loneliness. Citizens' Assembly members said there should be more affordable key worker housing to ensure that workers serving local communities (for example, in hospitals and schools) are able to live in Camden.

Residents are worried that socio-economic groups who previously relied on social housing are now being pushed out of Camden because there is not enough social and council housing. Some Camden survey 2018 respondents said they were worried that a lack of affordable housing in Camden is leading to "fragmented communities". Many young people feel "Camden may now be too expensive for me to live in". Different ideas were suggested to tackle this, including having a target of 50% minimum social housing when new developments are built, and halting the depletion of social housing so that no social homes are lost.

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[We need] affordable homes, housing for children who have grown up here like mine and have to move out of their home borough because of all the unaffordable homes that are being built for the wealthy.

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Online respondent

Many residents with a health condition or a disability said they wanted more help with home adaptations and repairs, so that they could remain in their homes, in both the private rented and social housing sectors. Adults with a learning disability said they need greater support with housing repairs and help to understand how social housing is allocated. Other residents said they were dissatisfied with the council's housing repairs service in terms of quality and the length of time repairs take. People also want social housing providers to ensure that social housing is safe for its residents to live in.

Many residents acknowledged that the council would only be able to make a limited impact on the housing challenge, as it is largely influenced by external and market forces. However, Citizens' Assembly members felt that the council should consider increasing its targets for affordable homes, and revise the definition of affordable housing so that it reflects affordability more accurately.

Residents also wanted to make sure that under-occupancy and overcrowding in social housing is tackled, as this could help to reduce social housing waiting lists. They also thought that housing space could be used more intelligently and efficiently. Older people and carers mentioned Homeshare as a scheme that benefits younger people needing a room, and tenants and homeowners with spare rooms who need some additional support.

Helping people to get on the housing ladder

Most residents agreed that there needs to be much more affordable housing and many believe that people are now leaving Camden because of this problem.

Many residents think that there are too many private developments being built in Camden, which are only within the means of top earners and do not offer enough affordable housing. There was also concern that housing developments are seen as a great way to make money by investors. Some said residents need to be more vocal about this and make the case for "homes for people, not profit". Some residents think the level of housing development in Camden is intrusive and unnecessary, and want planners to restrict development opportunities unless developers promise to build more affordable homes.

However, people did recognise how hard it will be to increase the amount of affordable homes in Camden. Some ideas that residents had were that, as a minimum, the council should meet its affordable housing targets in future, more shared ownership schemes should be developed, and new ideas for building affordable housing should be considered. They also thought that if more was done to bring empty properties back into use, house prices might come down.

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Stop developers tearing apart neighbourhoods and communities with 'luxury' developments and ensure enough affordable housing for mixed communities.

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Postcard respondent

Improving the private rented sector

It was felt that although there is good rental accommodation on offer and many good landlords, many tenants experience significant problems in the private rented sector. This was put down to poor regulation of landlords, poor conditions in the sector, and increasingly unaffordable rents. Some said that the affordable private rental housing that is available is often prone to overcrowding, insecure tenancies and poor maintenance.

Suggestions to change this were for tenants' rights to be better protected, landlords better regulated and standards improved. It was also suggested that a cap on private rented sector prices should be introduced.

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Control landlords. Need the law to make them keep higher standards, so they can't exploit people who don't know what they're entitled to.

Chalcots Estate event participant

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Tackling homelessness

Many Camden residents said the rise in homelessness was a key social problem. Citizens' Assembly members said “everyone should have access to a home”, recognising that homelessness can be caused by factors other than unaffordable housing, for example mental health and substance abuse. Residents thought that successful businesses could do more to help by helping to get homeless people into homes. One idea that was suggested was an “Airbnb for homeless people”, and another was encouraging gyms and community centres to open up to homeless people so they can use their facilities, such as showers and kitchens.

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The level of homelessness needs to be tackled by the council, big businesses, and NHS. More and more people are sleeping rough, many by circumstances not choice. They need support.

Camden survey 2018 respondent

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Camden survey 2018

The issue residents identified most as in need of improvement to make Camden a good place to live was ‘affordable, decent housing’, selected by 68%.

After affordable and decent housing, the issue residents felt was in most need of improvement was the level of homelessness, which was identified by 38% of residents.

64% of residents thought that the council had the most important role to play in ensuring that getting on the housing ladder is more affordable, and that they should be strongly supported by local businesses and other public services.

60% of residents thought that the council had the most important role to play in ensuring everyone has a home where they feel safe and happy, with support from other public services and local people.

72% of residents thought that the council has the most important role to play in ensuring no one is sleeping on the streets, followed by other public services (47%) and community organisations (37%).

Ambition two: Everyone can get the jobs they need to feel financially secure

By 2025

- People want to have good jobs with decent enough salaries so they can afford to live in Camden without struggling.
- Young people and adults should have access to high-quality education, training and career development opportunities to help them get on in life.
- People want to be able to benefit from Camden's changing job market.

Camden survey 2018

When asked how they were managing financially at the moment, 58% of residents said they were comfortable or doing alright, 24% were just getting by, and 12% were finding it difficult or very difficult.

In 12 months, 19% of residents thought they would be better off and 23% thought they would be worse off, while half thought their finances would remain unchanged.

58% of residents thought that the council had the most important role to play in ensuring everyone can access high-quality education and employment, followed by other public services, such as the NHS and the police (25%) and local people themselves (18%).

What are the issues?

There was widespread agreement that not everyone benefits equally from Camden's local economy. Some people are in well-paid jobs, but many struggle to find good employment. Residents said they want everyone to benefit from Camden's economic growth.

Helping people find better, decent work

Residents thought that one way to help people get good jobs was to improve routes into work. Residents thought that no one organisation should be responsible for this, but that everyone would need to play their part.

Residents said that successful Camden-based companies could do more to help all Camden residents, not just the lucky few. Some ideas were suggested to help build stronger links between thriving businesses and the local community. These included encouraging big businesses to hire local residents, by introducing quotas for local communities and providing more apprenticeships.

Residents want local businesses to invest more in young people and provide them with more opportunities, for example by helping them develop tech skills. Residents also wanted big companies to make a more concerted effort to reach out to disadvantaged groups. People also wanted Camden employers to pay their employees the living wage to give them financial security.

Residents' views were echoed by Camden's employers, who said that providing local skills and employment opportunities were where they could have the biggest impact. Suggestions they made included: offering more part-time roles; employing local people; mentoring school pupils; creating apprenticeship opportunities; and being better connected to local schools and colleges. To make this happen they wanted the council and others to help them to make connections with local residents, schools and colleges.

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Business should be embedded within the community, offering more jobs to local people but investing in skills, training and educational support.

Camden employer survey respondent

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Adults with a disability said that it is very hard to get a paid job in Camden and wanted more

training, more apprenticeships, and more support when they are in work, including training for employers. Some residents also thought Camden-based businesses should do more to support residents with a disability.

People were concerned about those who have been unemployed for a long time and wanted better signposting towards available jobs to tackle this. In addition, residents wanted the training and advice job centres give to improve, as they think it is often low quality.

Residents wanted a better network of careers advisers, so that people know the range of opportunities available to them, and because they can help people to develop other skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership. They also want careers advisers to support people who want to change careers.

Access to high-quality education, training and career development opportunities to help people get on in life

Residents want high-quality schools across the borough for all children and young people. Adults with a learning disability said there should be more special school provision as some children find it hard in a mainstream school. One resident suggested that there should be no more academies and fewer private schools.

Residents and employers felt that schools, colleges and universities need to do a better job of preparing young people for work so they leave school feeling valued and a part of society, and “have opportunities suited to their skills and ambitions”. Ideas proposed to help achieve this included: encouraging schools to develop networks of former students; mentorship schemes; after school apprenticeships for 13 to 17-year-olds, training on softer skills, such as communications; and local employers working with young people to help them develop work skills. Young people also want schools to

provide more support with mental health and the pressures of life, for example, exams.

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Pressure to do well in exams. Not being lonely and having someone to confide in. Being popular can be more of an issue than doing well in exams... It's rather challenging to find out what you're going to do after leaving school and GCSEs.

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Shout Out event participant

Residents want Camden-based universities to do more work with the local community to encourage a broader range of young people to go to university. However, residents do not think that going to university is the only way to get on in life. They viewed other routes into local jobs such as apprenticeship schemes as very important. Residents want better advertising of apprenticeships and big companies to do more to help young people gain new skills.

Making the most of future changes to the job market

Residents said that future changes to the labour market would present challenges and opportunities. People thought there would be more flexible working, which would help people who cannot or do not want to work full-time. They also felt that remote working would provide extra job opportunities. However, others thought that these types of jobs were often financially insecure.

Residents talked about the opportunities that new technology will bring, but also discussed the possibility that automation will lead to job losses, for example, the introduction of driverless cars could mean that there will be less jobs for drivers. As a result, residents said that we need to find ways to “future-proof the workforce”, and suggested that one way to do this would be for education to focus more on “coding than literacy”.

Many employers highlighted digital connectivity as an issue, and emphasised that it will be vital to local businesses' success in the future. Some respondents expressed the view that digital connectivity in Camden could be improved.

Businesses mentioned the need for suitable workspaces 'fit for the future' a number of times. They are keen to see a diverse range of spaces, including light industry (for example, food and beverage manufacturing) spaces, creative spaces, wet labs, high-technology facilities, incubators, grow-on spaces, and co-working spaces.

Being close to other institutions was the reason many businesses gave for establishing themselves in Camden. Universities, hospitals and life science institutions were mentioned specifically. Employers said that being able to collaborate with these institutions and other businesses was vital to their success. Some employers suggested an online forum or portal, through which local businesses could connect, advertise their services and their business needs, would help collaboration. Others were more interested in a regular physical forum for local businesses to aid networking and encourage local connections.

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Create space for smaller enterprises to flourish as well as space for larger commercial employers in the borough, and reduce the burdens on them so that they can concentrate on job creation and growth.

Camden employer survey respondent

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Ambition three: Everyone should feel part of a safe, strong and open community

By 2025

- Everyone in Camden should feel safe from crime in their homes, on the streets and in their communities.
- People of all ages and backgrounds should mix safely, and be open and welcoming to newcomers. This means no one should be lonely or isolated and no one should be without a voice.
- Everyone should take responsibility for their actions and work together to make Camden a better place for everyone who lives and works here.

Camden survey 2018

82% of residents feel safe when out and about in their local area during the daytime and 62% feel safe when out after dark.

67% of residents think that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. 57% of residents think their local area had a good sense of community.

77% of residents said they would be willing to work with other residents to improve their neighbourhood.

68% of residents said that the friendships and associations they have in their neighbourhood mean a lot to them, and 65% of residents agreed that they 'regularly stop and talk to people in my neighbourhood'.

Camden survey 2018

49% of residents thought that the council had the most important role to play in ensuring no one feels isolated, followed by other public services and local people, both selected by 40%.

62% of residents thought that public services such as the NHS and the police had the most important role to play in ensuring everyone feels safe on the streets and in their communities, followed by the council at 50% and then local people at 33%.

What are the issues?

Although residents said that many neighbourhoods feel safe, there were concerns that some communities were not as safe as others were. Residents and employers were concerned about low-level 'petty' crime, levels of antisocial behaviour, and serious crimes like knife crime. There was also a feeling that there were not enough police on the streets. Many residents mentioned times when Camden residents had helped strangers out, and said that more should be done to nurture good citizenship among neighbours, and to make sure that no one feels alone. People also think that Camden residents should take more responsibility for their actions and do more to make Camden a better place.

Feeling safe from crime

Feedback from residents, employers and community partners highlighted lots of different types of antisocial behaviour such as aggressive begging, cat calling, drunken behaviour, drug taking and dealing, acid attacks and moped crime. Young people talked about the threat of gangs, bullying and knife crime. Some residents expressed concerns about hate crime and 'mate' crime towards vulnerable people. For example,

focus group participants talked about times when they had experienced hate crime or had been a victim of fraud. Some residents said there needed to be a "culture change" in Camden and that people should directly confront antisocial behaviour and hate crime when they see it.

A number of residents were concerned about the amount of crime taking place on housing estates and some wanted those responsible to be evicted from estates. Some also wanted access to estates to be restricted so that people cannot use estates to commit crimes such as drug dealing.

Young people stated that they need more places to go to safely meet others. They also wanted education and support to feel safer, for example self-defence classes. Many residents also raised concerns about closures to youth clubs and the future of youth services.

Community partners said that some Camden residents see being a victim of crime as a part of life in Camden and wanted to know how we can all work together to change this.

Ideas to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour included: more fines and more wide-ranging punitive measures for authorities to use; reopening safer neighbourhood schemes that have closed down; a portal for submitting photos of possible antisocial behaviour or crimes; more activities for young people; investing more money to help people addicted to drugs and to tackle dealers; and more direct support and outreach on the streets.

Some residents also felt that people and businesses could do more to tackle antisocial behaviour, for example: businesses could support more sensible drinking; clubs and pubs could do more to help drunk people; more shops and businesses could be identified as safe havens for vulnerable people who need help; and people could take more care when using mobile phones in public. A number of people also asked for more lighting on streets and less dimming of street lights, and many residents thought that more CCTV would help tackle crime.

Residents were concerned about cuts to policing and said there were not enough police and community support officers in their local area. Some residents recognised that cuts to public services meant that giving more money to the police would be difficult. With this in mind they wanted the police to ensure that existing police officers have the right skills to deal with crime effectively. However, some Citizens' Assembly members argued that more funding for policing was essential, despite the fact that resources are scarce. Young people also wanted to see more police and more respectful policing, as they said they can feel threatened by the actions of some police officers.

Some Citizens' Assembly members said that regardless of funding the police must protect the safe and vulnerable, make sure serious crime is properly investigated, and that "all crimes are treated seriously and efficiently".

Other ideas suggested drawing on additional resources to help tackle antisocial behaviour and less serious forms of crime. Examples given included setting up a volunteer scheme to increase the presence of community support officers, and taking opportunities to work in partnership with the police to make areas safer.

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I am no longer frightened or scared where I live. It has been transformed by the police and the council working with residents. It is important that it is a grassroots/bottom up approach. St Martin's Gardens was being overrun with street drinkers and people using drugs. We redesigned the park by moving seating and other things. It is now an attractive, well-used park.

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Carers' focus group participant

Building a sense of belonging and stronger links between communities, ensuring no one feels lonely or isolated

It was widely felt that there is a strong sense of community in Camden and that Camden's residents are often supportive of each other. Citizens' Assembly members said that "knowing your neighbour" was everyone's responsibility, and that more should be done to build links between communities. Some Assembly members mentioned organisations that were helping to build links. For example, Abbey Community Centre was described as a local asset in Camden because it "allows social interactions and workshops for elderly people and those with children".

However, some residents said that ensuring an area has a sense of community has to be worked on, and that people need to make an effort to engage with others, and get involved with what is going on locally.

Young people attending Camden's Takeover Day said that they can be part of many different communities such as choirs, sports teams, social media groups and schools. They said that these communities help them to develop their life skills and make new friends. They want their communities to be safe places that provide a secure environment to grow up in – in both their real and online worlds.

Young people frequently mentioned that they want to be acknowledged. Those attending the Shout Out event said they wanted to live in a diverse place where they are listened to and acknowledged by others. Primary and secondary pupils involved in the Takeover Day said that they wanted to grow up in a place where they feel safe, healthy and acknowledged.

Older people and carers attending focus groups said that they were less likely to know their neighbours now than in the past, as people move on more quickly, which can lead to loneliness.

Some wanted sheltered housing schemes to do more to tackle isolation, but appreciated social isolation projects being run by voluntary organisations, such as Ageing Better in Camden. Others mentioned older residents who may be housebound, and said they should be given more support to get out.

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There is a stigma attached to loneliness so people do not like to own up to it. You have to provide options that will take people out of their isolation and help them focus on the positives. Change has to start somewhere.

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Older people's focus group participant

Residents who are deaf or hard of hearing said that residents and businesses, including public services, need to be much more deaf aware to improve the way they communicate with the deaf community and to break down barriers. They asked for the needs of the deaf community to be taken into account more when planning events or designing services to ensure they can join in more easily.

District Management Committee (DMC) members said that more and more public services are being offered online, “which can sometimes be an alien concept” for older people, and said that services should continue to be contactable in other ways.

A range of ideas designed to build a sense of belonging and stronger links between communities were suggested by residents. These included: events and opportunities to meet neighbours; activities to bring people together such as “tea and bun mornings”; more public benches; intergenerational projects such as “digital inclusion techy tea parties/tea toast and t’internet sessions in day centres and sheltered housing with young people helping older people get to grips with accessing the internet, YouTube etc.”; more low or no cost courses and events; and a scheme like “borrow my doggy” to link isolated people with others. Employers identified that Camden’s high streets have the potential to bring communities together and reduce social isolation.

People also suggested ideas to help keep residents informed and connected such as: a door knocking campaign so people get to know their neighbours’ names; neighbourhood Facebook pages; publicity and advice on how to support vulnerable people in the community; and better signposting to what support is available at a neighbourhood level.

Community partners also discussed how to direct people to the right information and support, and suggested the idea of a ‘single front door’. This would mean that if someone needed information or support, they would only need to approach one organisation or access one website.

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There’s a lot to do in Camden but it’s hard to find out what is on and where it is on until too late.

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Adults with a learning disability focus group participant

Taking responsibility for our actions and working together to make Camden a better place

When discussing their ambitions for Camden in 2025, residents constantly mentioned the need for residents, employers and Camden’s partners to take responsibility for their actions and do more to make Camden a better place. Some of the actions residents suggested have been included in the summaries for each ambition, for example: people walking and cycling more to reduce air pollution and improve their health; people volunteering to increase the numbers of community support officers; and local employers working with young people to help them develop work skills.

Citizens’ Assembly members suggested that “communities should know respect and responsibility”, and Japan was given as an example of a country where there is “more of a sense of duty”. Some felt that a “cultural shift”

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was needed to ensure that residents become more accountable for their actions.

Camden's community partners were extremely positive about taking responsibility for making Camden a better place. They suggested looking at the resources and services that public services, charities, faith communities and community centres currently provide compared to what we are trying to achieve here in Camden. This could lead to more joint working, and enable us to develop a directory of services that could then be widely communicated.

Community partners said that people are willing to volunteer but that some do not know how to get involved. They suggested that people could be connected through local events, but said that we also need to find other ways to connect people to their local neighbourhood. Some community partners mentioned that they give their employees paid volunteer days. These are days off which give employees the opportunity to volunteer in their local community. They said that this idea could be adopted by other partners and employers and used to make Camden a better place.

Ideas suggested to help encourage residents and organisations to take more responsibility included: schemes to raise awareness of and encourage more volunteering; intergenerational schemes; making sure Camden schools teach young people to be engaged citizens; and setting up a scheme for residents to learn from places where neighbours are especially well connected.

“

It would be great if there was a scheme through which, duly accompanied by adults, children could help those in need by visiting elderly people or providing services to homeless people.

”

Online respondent

Ambition four: Everyone values and respects Camden as a place and its environment

By 2025

- Camden's history and unique identity has not been lost. It remains a creative and dynamic place with lots to offer people who live, work, study or visit here.
- People are still able to visit Camden's beautiful green and open spaces, enjoy a fun night out, spend money in our quirky shops and markets, or participate in cultural events.
- Camden's streets will be clean and free of rubbish but not “sterile”.
- There will be less air pollution in Camden. People will be walking and cycling more and using their cars less. There should be less noise so that residents can enjoy peace and quiet in their homes.

What are the issues?

Many people were very positive about Camden's parks and open spaces and wanted to preserve them. Residents and employers also valued the range of cultural and arts activities in Camden. However, many also mentioned litter and rubbish dumping and wanted to improve recycling rates. Residents and employers mentioned the necessity of reducing air pollution and were very concerned about its impact on their health.

Overall, the 2018 Camden survey found that 40% of residents think that their area will become a better place to live in the future, and 26% think it will get worse.

When discussing Camden the place and its environment, residents and employers referred to the importance of their role in protecting Camden's environment. For example, Citizens' Assembly members came up with a range of ideas for involving residents in environmental protection.

These included: residents making a personal pledge to recycle or reuse more; people taking a lead in keeping parks tidy; more community initiatives like park runs; and residents choosing more sustainable transport, such as walking or cycling.

Protecting Camden's unique identity and special places

There was widespread agreement that Camden's green spaces and parks are one of the borough's key assets, and that the amount of green space needs to be maintained or, ideally, increased. Residents said that parks and open spaces are a great place to meet others, relax and exercise and are good for both physical and mental health.

Citizens' Assembly members suggested some ideas to build more green community initiatives including: starting up new "small garden initiatives maintained by volunteers, similar to the Green Gym scheme", planting more trees and ensuring there are green spaces, such as allotments, close to housing. Green Ribbon was also mentioned as an innovative scheme where residents adopt a green space or a tree and commit to protecting and maintaining it.

Camden's Chairs of Parks Friends Group were concerned about the volume of development taking place and its potential impact on Camden's green spaces. They emphasised the health benefits of green space and suggested that new developments should be required to provide growing space.

Many residents are proud of the range of cultural opportunities and excellent music venues that exist in Camden but others think that there is now less available due to gentrification.

“

Camden was a vibrant place in the past. The market was good and there were good music venues and attractions. But it has fallen victim to the general gentrification of London.

”

Participant at focus group for adults with a mental health condition

Postcard respondents highlighted the importance of retaining libraries and public open spaces. Libraries in particular were identified as providing a safe and warm environment for people in poor housing, and as place to relax and spend time browsing. DMC members also highlighted the importance of libraries in helping older people learn to access the internet.

“

People need places like libraries to be kept open – they're not only for learning, there are people with cold or damp housing who just need places inside to sit during the day. Social not just economic side to decisions.

”

Postcard respondent

Improving the cleanliness of our streets and reducing rubbish

Many residents mentioned littering and fly-tipping as problems. Residents said there were not enough rubbish bins. Carers and people with a visual impairment said that people dumping rubbish, or leaving bins, on streets caused problems for those with a disability. Citizens' Assembly members wanted a bin "on every street" and "residents [who litter and fly-tip to] be held to account" with heavy fines. Residents want people to be more accountable, "use litter bins, pick up [dog mess], use public transport, contact the council when you see fly-tipping". Some felt heavier fines were needed, while others thought people could be encouraged to be more responsible, for example through publicity campaigns and education to raise awareness. Many residents had concerns about the recent change to collections and street cleaning, while some suggested more community cleaning initiatives.

When asked what kind of a role different organisations and groups should play in ensuring the streets are clean and free of rubbish, 78% thought the council had the most important role to play, followed by local people and local businesses

(selected by 47% and 42% respectively).

Employers recognised the influence that physically attractive public places and streets have on the local economy and that they have a key role to play. High streets, in particular, were identified as priority areas where waste collection, street cleaning, upkeep of greenery and fly-tipping need to be addressed. Camden employers suggested that local businesses could play a part when it comes to environmental issues by committing to carbon reduction and joining the Camden Climate Change Alliance.

“

Keep the environment to a high standard and keep streets safe and let businesses thrive.

Camden employer survey respondent

”

There was broad agreement that Camden's recycling rates need to improve, and Camden must make it easier for people to recycle and “continue to be a leader” in this area. Some people said they find the council's new recycling scheme confusing and want more support, such as clearer and easy to read information, and more advice on food waste. The Citizens' Assembly discussed food waste recycling and some thought the council or a business-run food redistribution scheme should be set up so that businesses who have too much food could donate it to food banks or homeless people. Another suggestion was for the council to set up a recycling awards scheme, recognising businesses who promote and facilitate recycling.

Assembly members discussed the possibility of stopping the use of plastic packaging and using cardboard and paper instead. Some residents said they wanted Camden to become a “low packaging borough” that phases out plastic, and thought businesses would be central to achieving this aim.

“

It's fine on my estate but I've seen a lot of rubbish elsewhere. People don't care about where they live and they drop rubbish everywhere. Try and stop them.

”

Participant at Chalcots Estate event

Tackling air pollution and helping citizens have a healthier, more active lifestyle

There was a lot of concern about the impact of air pollution, and residents suggested a number of ideas to tackle this. These included: having more electric cars and more charging points; bringing in more incentives for greener vehicles; reducing or banning higher polluting vehicles; tackling under-occupancy of cars; making people turn off engines when their vehicle is stationary; taxing people who have additional cars; making green spaces more integral to built up areas; and banning lorries from roads at busy times to tackle congestion.

Many residents wanted cycling and walking to be encouraged to help tackle air pollution and promote healthier, more active lifestyles, and some people spoke positively about the Mayor's Healthy Streets for London programme. Citizens' Assembly members said there should be: “cycle lanes everywhere possible”, “more cycle incentives” and “more pedestrian space”. They also thought children and young people should be given “activities and information on wellbeing”, and encouraged to walk and cycle to school. However, people also wanted action to be taken against cyclists who do not cycle responsibly, for example those who cycle on pavements or ride without lights.

Many residents appreciated Camden's public transport and said that more public transport would help to tackle air pollution. Residents with limited mobility also said that more accessible public transport would improve their lives.

The 2018 Camden survey showed that 64% of residents think that the council has the most important role to play in ensuring there is less air pollution and noise, followed by local businesses (selected by 43%), then local people (selected by 38%).

Ambition 5: Everyone in Camden is able to live a healthy, active and happy life, remaining independent for as long as possible

By 2025:

- Everyone should be able to access the range of services they need to be healthy.
- Everyone should have the information and support they need to take responsibility for looking after their own health. No one should be made to feel ashamed because they have an illness or disability.
- Everyone should be able to live independently in their own home for as long as they want to.

What are the issues?

Camden residents value the health services that are available locally, including social care services. For example, one adult social care user talked about how important the six-week reablement service had been as it had helped him to “get back on [his] feet after a spell in hospital”. Residents recognise that there are many things they can do to keep themselves healthy. However, there were concerns that government cuts have had an impact on health and support services, and that some are not as readily available as they used to be.

“

Health initiatives for the elderly seem to be off the radar.

Carers’ focus groups participant

”

54% of residents think that public services such as the NHS have the biggest role to play in ensuring people are healthy and enjoy a good quality of life, but that the council (36%) and local people themselves (35%) also have a very important role to play.

Ensuring everyone has access to the services they need to be healthy

As previously mentioned, many residents are concerned that cuts or changes to services could mean that residents will not have access to health services when they need them. For example, some residents mentioned long waits to see a GP or changes to their GP practice. Others mentioned that there is less continuity of care than there used to be so they have to explain their health problems “again and again”, or they have to deal with many different agency care workers.

Some residents said that, due to cuts, they are having to rely increasingly on unpaid carers or family members for support. For example, one person said their partner had to help them to use specialist gym equipment, as there were no professionals available to help him.

“

There are fewer support services for those who misuse substances, not just in Camden but nationwide. We need to put pressure on central government to ensure that drug dependency units are kept open and well-funded.

”

Carers’ focus group participant

Some young people mentioned cuts to mental health services as a concern and wanted support services to be easier to access. When asked what would make Camden a great place to grow up in, one young person said, “If people paid attention to mental health, children in care, and people who have faced scary changes in their lives”. Another said it was a “big emotional step to contact a service”, and the “solution is to have it easier to

go to and more relatable services along the model of Childline”.

Supporting people to look after their own health

“

I think government cuts to healthcare services have affected Camden though. If more money is spent on keeping people within the borough healthy now, then that saves a lot of money later down the line. In the future I would like to see more proactive, radical measures to encourage people to be more active.

”

Citizens' Assembly member

Community partners said their experience has been that residents are very interested in their health and keeping themselves healthy, and that this is especially the case among young people. They said that to help people improve and maintain their health, facilities such as leisure centres need to be accessible and at the heart of the community.

Residents also acknowledged that they have a responsibility for keeping themselves healthy, when possible, and many mentioned things they can do, such as eating well, walking and cycling more, driving less and taking more exercise.

Residents recognise the contribution that outdoor activities can make to mental and physical health and were very keen for more activities to be provided in Camden's parks and open spaces. Some of the ideas suggested included: outdoor boot camps; more park runs; a fitness scheme pairing trainers with older residents; an app to help people find exercise partners; and more outdoor play spaces. One resident mentioned Stockholm's piano stairs initiative – overnight a flight of stairs was turned into a piano keyboard. This radically increased the number of people using the stairs instead of the escalator and they thought it could be tried in Camden.

Some organisations in Camden have already pledged to tackle obesity, as part of the Camden Can initiative. For example, Origin Housing provides low-cost physical activities for their residents, such as table tennis, Zumba and Bollywood dancing. Gospel Oak Action has pledged to provide alternatives to fast food shops by providing young people with free food in the holidays and running cooking sessions.

“

Improved health, predictable journey times, pleasure... walking has so many benefits.

”

Online respondent

To help improve and maintain their health, residents want organisations to take responsibility for things that are largely out of their own control. For example, they asked for: radical action to tackle air pollution in Camden; more cycle lanes; food growing opportunities for people without gardens; and more information on where they can get help and advice to improve their health. The need for more information was supported by community partners who said that signposting people to relevant health information was an area they could work together on with other organisations.

“

Combined with other sensible measures, increasing the number of substantial trees in Camden will improve air quality as well as our physical and mental health.

”

Online respondent

Finally, to help residents take responsibility for their own health, some residents said it would help if health professionals spent more time building relationships with them so that they understand their strengths and capabilities. This included wanting to “have the same person or people so that they know me”.

“

I was terrified of social services, I thought ‘Oh my goodness, I’ll lose my kids’, however social services have been incredibly open-minded and helpful. We are forging a path together.

”

Carer supporting a partner with very early dementia

Ensuring that no one with an illness is made to feel ashamed

Many of the residents that we talked to in focus groups spoke about occasions where they had been bullied or abused because of a physical or mental health condition, or mentioned occasions when they had witnessed these kinds of incidents.

“

My autistic son received nasty comments from a woman in a local park when he wasn’t with his carer.

”

Carers’ focus group participant

Residents wanted there to be more information and awareness raising so that people have a greater understanding of different illnesses and conditions, and they wanted this training and education to begin in schools. They were also concerned that there were not enough police officers with an understanding of hate and ‘mate’ crime to tackle issues when they arise.

“

There are not enough police – the police must be trained about hate and mate crime that people with learning disabilities experience.

”

Adults with a learning disability focus group participant

Helping people to live independently for as long as possible

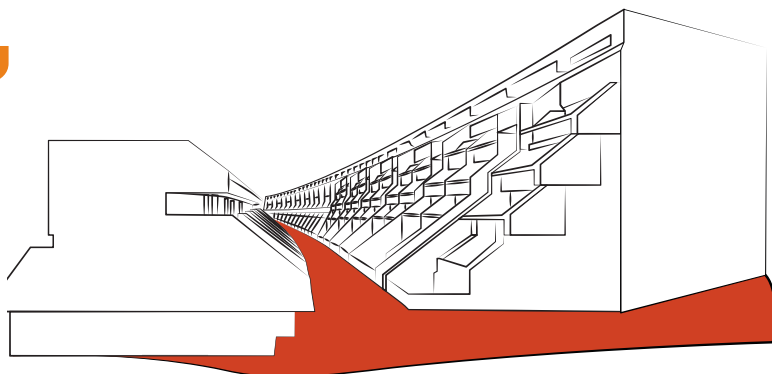
Residents said that they wanted to live independently for as long as possible in their local neighbourhood, and discussed what support they might need to make this possible. Some residents with limited mobility mentioned that receiving help with home adaptations would enable them to live independently for longer. Others requested more accessible transport to help them get out and about. Some vulnerable, working age residents said that support with job hunting would help them to become more independent. For some residents loneliness was a barrier to remaining independent, so help to tackle this issue was needed.

“

My husband had a stroke and is now a wheelchair user. We want to stay in the area but struggle as we are on the first floor of the block. We need help but want to stay in the neighbourhood we have known for a long time.

”

Carers’ focus group participant



Further engagement

The first phase of our Camden 2025 engagement programme is now complete and has exceeded all our expectations. Residents have talked passionately with us about Camden's strengths, shared some of the challenges of living in Camden, and revealed their vision for Camden in 2025. Residents, employers and community partners have also talked enthusiastically about their desire to work together to tackle the challenges Camden faces.

However, this is not a one-off engagement exercise and our dialogue with residents, businesses and partners will be ongoing. We want residents to have a real opportunity to be involved in shaping Camden's future and influencing the local decisions that affect the local areas where they live, work, study and visit. We also want to have more in-depth discussions about the roles and responsibilities different stakeholders could have in achieving the Camden 2025 ambitions.

The vision that residents have for Camden is ambitious and far-reaching and can only be delivered if the council, residents, partners, and businesses, all work together in a spirit of shared endeavour.



Appendix 1: summary of engagement methods

The Camden 2025 engagement programme comprised of the following activities:

- **The Camden Citizens' Assembly:** a group of around 70 residents, who have met three times so far for in-depth discussions. The Assembly is broadly representative of Camden's residents, including those who do not normally get involved in council activities.
- **A face-to-face survey** of 620 Camden residents
- **Focus groups** with residents with a disability or additional needs
- **Ward walkabouts** with councillors
- **Conversations** conducted by volunteers recruited by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations
- **Local events at eight community venues** across Camden, held in partnership with VCS organisations. This gave residents the opportunity to discuss their aspirations for the borough in 2025 with Camden's Cabinet members
- **Community researchers** out and about across the borough speaking to local people
- **The Camden 2025 website**, which hosted a number of questions based on some of the areas of focus identified through discussions with residents
- **Social media**, where residents were invited to follow the Twitter feed **#camden2025** and post or retweet comments. They could also follow and post on the Camden **Facebook** page
- **Residents could email their ideas** to a dedicated email address **camden2025@camden.gov.uk**
- **Local Camden libraries:** Comment boards were set up in all nine of our local Camden libraries, where residents could post their ideas
- **Attended partner meetings**, including: Health and wellbeing board (9 November), Community Safety Partnership Board meeting (21 November), Chairs of Parks Friends Group (5 December), Employment and Skills Provider Network (6 December), Business Board (31 October), Business Awards (30 November)
- **Attended resident events** to gain feedback and ideas, such as the Chalcots Estate event (31 October), Camden Shout Out event (6 November), Faith Forum (16 November), Youth Question Time (20 November), Takeover Day (24 November), event for District Management Committee members (7 February)
- **Community partnership event** where we shared the emerging engagement findings with the aim of continuing to develop a shared endeavour and explore roles and responsibilities (attendees included VCS, housing association, DMC chairs)
- **Employer survey**, sent to businesses in Camden.

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