



Camden Conservatives

**Alternative budget
2020/21**

**Safer streets, cleaner air, and
a brighter future for Camden**

Camden Conservative Alternative Budget 2020/21

For the last decade, Camden Labour have blamed every reverse, every decline, and every failure on anyone but themselves.

- Camden has among the smallest networks of electric vehicle charge points and among the lowest levels of cycling in Inner London, despite empty words on the climate emergency.
- Camden has been almost alone in ending weekly bin collections in Inner London, despite having the second-highest council tax in Inner London.
- Camden's schools are declining relative to other boroughs and record numbers attend private schools, despite having the 5th-most schools funding of any council in England.
- And most grievously, Camden has refused to think innovatively on how to stop crime, despite the Government putting 70 extra police officers on Camden's streets in the last six months alone.

There must be a choice and an alternative, based on accepting responsibility, rooting out waste, and focusing on residents' priorities. With Camden now receiving £10m more funding in real terms than it did last year, there is no excuse for Camden not to.

Make Camden safe – the most anti-crime budget in Camden's history

Keeping residents safe is our foremost priority. For the last 7 years, Camden Conservatives have proposed hiring more police officers, which has repeatedly been voted down by other parties.

Fortunately, in the absence of action from Camden, the Government has begun the largest recruitment drive for officers in British history: hiring 20,000 officers. Already, that's meant 70 new officers in Camden in the last six months.

This allows Camden Conservatives' alternative budget to be the most anti-crime budget Camden ever, allowing more resources to be put into priorities to make Camden safer:

- Open police bases in Hampstead and Swiss Cottage to give police a local base to operate from and a contact point for residents to approach the police.
- Make Camden a burglary-free borough by deploying traceable anti-burglary liquid across the borough, installing CCTV at crime hotspots, and helping residents and businesses use CCTV.
- Halt the circle of crime by renewing the Met Detention ENGAGE scheme at Holborn, and encourage people to be Special Constables by giving them a Council Tax discount.
- Create separate Environment and Policing & Communities committees, to ensure both subjects receive the scrutiny they need.

Make Camden green – making Camden London's greenest borough

We are also committed to making Camden the most environmentally-friendly borough in London, and do its part in addressing the climate and ecological emergency:

- Fund the teaching of cycling in PE in Camden schools, to reverse the decline of cycling in Camden over the last decade, and end school run congestion by using technology to encourage car-pooling and supporting school bus services.

- Install 2,000 electric vehicle charging points over the next two years, so Camden leapfrogs from a laggard to a leader when it comes to emission-free cars.
- Promote biodiversity and animal welfare by ending the use of glyphosate herbicide by Camden Council – currently the country’s second-biggest user – and provide free pet microchipping.

Cutting waste and investing in services

Last year, the collapse of Camden’s shared digital programme with Haringey and Islington councils cost Camden the opportunity to save millions of pounds. Despite Labour’s belief that going it alone – with high overheads and isolated from other boroughs – we agree that shared services offer significant advantages as well as savings.

Fortunately, in the absence of Haringey and Islington being able to offer savings, Camden sits next door to the UK’s most successful shared services scheme, between Westminster the Kensington & Chelsea, which has reduced costs by £50m.

We therefore continue to propose shared digital and other back office functions with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, so that Camden can invest in making its streets safe, its air clean, and its services better for all residents.

Reducing Council Tax

Camden has the second-highest Council Tax of any borough in Inner London. Its Band D Council Tax is three times the level in Conservative-run Westminster or Wandsworth, and £220 a year higher than the most deprived borough, Tower Hamlets.

This alternative budget therefore sets Camden on a path of real-terms reductions in core Council Tax, and commits to amend the Council Tax requirement to cut it by 1%. Just as the savings from collaboration with other boroughs will increase as years go on, so will the advantages to residents of carefully reducing Council Tax year on year – as Westminster and Wandsworth residents will attest.

Due to the rising ageing population, there are significant pressures on adult social care across the developed world. Money cannot be the answer alone, but we recognise the importance of funding adult social care, and welcome the £3.5m additional funding from the Government via the Better Care Fund. We further support increasing the Council Tax precept for adult social care as part of our budget proposals, alongside the need for long-term reform.

A clear alternative

This Conservative alternative budget identifies clear areas where Camden can deliver sustained savings to reinvest into services. Sharing digital services allows it to reopen two police bases, make Camden a burglary-free borough, invest in CCTV, and turn lives around.

Reducing spending on back office expenses allows Camden to invest record sums in promoting cycling to all children, improving our schools, teaching coding in every school, and making Camden’s streets ready for electric cars.

Letting out under-utilised office and parking spaces lets the Council reduce Camden’s overwhelming tax burden and invest in making services more user friendly and its technology more usable.

This alternative allows Camden to improve its services and put residents’ priorities first: safer streets, cleaner air, and a brighter future for everyone.

Budget amendment policy proposals

Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

The Executive Director Corporate Services confirms that, should the amendments be agreed, the assurances required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 with regard the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the estimates have been met and, therefore, that this still constitutes a balanced budget for 2020/21. The Executive Director Corporate Services or other officers have not been able to give these proposals the depth of consideration and due diligence to be able to recommend this as a course of action. It has not been possible to make a full and comprehensive assessment of the impact of these proposals (such as those linked to the future use of our buildings or the impact on the existing workforce) and the associated implementation issues and risks.

Making Camden safer

Proposal	£000
Open a police base in Hampstead	300 ^A
Open a police base in Swiss Cottage	300 ^A
Fund deployment of SmartWater across the borough	160
Renew the ENGAGE intervention programme at Holborn station	134
Install CCTV in crime hotspots	95
Give Council Tax Reduction to special constables	45

^A £100,000 of which is recurring, and £200,000 is a one-off cost for 2020/21 and not recurring

Making Camden greener

Proposal	£000
Install 1,000 electric car charging points per year for next two years	478 ^A
End use of glyphosate and use hot foam instead	385 ^B
Expand HomeRun app to all state schools in Camden	76
Provide grant to Green School Runs to restore its school bus service	50
Create an Environment Committee, separate from a new Policing & Communities Committee	66
Engine idling fines increased to £80	(1)

Double spending on enforcement of engine idling prohibitions	0 ^c
Free microchipping of all cats and dogs	25

^A One-off cost for 2020/21, with a further one-off cost for 2021/22, not a recurring cost

^B £60,000 of which is recurring, and £325,000 is a one-off cost for 2020/21 and not recurring

^C Costs and receipts net out to zero

Making Camden cleaner

Proposal	£000
Restore weekly bin collections	886
Make garden waste collection free of charge	245
Provide separate nappy collection bins	20
Sponsor the development of web tools to improve recycling	50 ^A
Open Regis Road reuse and recycling centre for one evening a week	12
Increase fines for fly-tipping to the legal maximum and early payment to 75% of the maximum	(20)
Increase fines for littering to the legal maximum and early payment to 75% of the maximum	(80)
Introduce fines for littering from a motor vehicle	0 ^B

^A One-off cost for 2020/21, not a recurring cost

^B Costs and receipts net out to zero

Supporting Camden's future

Proposal	£000
Make cycling part of PE lessons in every school	284 ^A
Roll out coding clubs in every state school and cut cost by a third	120
20% increased funding for school improvement services via Camden Learning	347
Make Camden's swimming pools free for children during holidays	36
Extend Swiss Cottage Library opening hours and open on Sundays	57
Make annual grants of £50,000 in Camden's community libraries	50

^A £117,000 of which is recurring, and £167,000 is a one-off cost for 2020/21 and not recurring

Supporting Camden's communities and businesses

Proposal	£000
Pay for a HomeShare scheme to let young people rent older residents' spare rooms	60
Install 10 publicly accessible defibrillators	16 ^A
Give 30% discretionary business rates relief to all ACVs	103
Grant 100% discretionary business rates relief to all music venues run by non-profit community interest companies	0 ^B
Maintain scratch-card style parking permits	30
Send information packs to residents when they move in	80
Resume postal notifications of planning applications	30
Introduce a specific street licence for trading from red phone boxes	37

^A £1,000 of which is recurring, and £15,000 is a one-off cost for 2020/21 and not recurring

^B There are currently no CIC music venues in Camden, so no cost in 2020/21, but costs could occur in future

Maximising revenue and reducing fraud

Proposal	£000
Renting out top two floors of 5PS	(500)
Use two-thirds of unused (void) parking spaces on estates for paid-for parking and transfer £500,000 to the Housing Revenue Account	(1,500) ^A
Investment in fraud detection	0 ^B
Income from film service to double	(105)

^B In addition, transfer £500,000 to the Housing Revenue Account budget

^B Net savings expected to be realised in 2021/22

Making Camden more efficient

Proposal	£000
Fix Camden's website	60 ^A
Develop a consolidated Camden app	50 ^A
Shared digital with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea	(1,500)
Shared HR services with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea	(195)
Shared legal services with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea	(230)

Shared strategy and change services with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea	(310)
Shared procurement services with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea	(130)
Additional reduction in agency and consultancy spend	(200)
Reduce spending on Camden's external communication department by 50%	(665)
Reverse increase in Cabinet members' allowances	(104)
End funding for trade union facility time	(149)
Scrap Camden magazine	(138)
End grant to Love Camden	(15)

^A One-off cost for 2020/21, not a recurring cost

Cutting Council Tax and balancing the budget

Proposal	£000
Sum of budget adjustments	(1,154) ^A
Cut core Council Tax by 1%	1,150
Transfer to reserves	4
Budget deficit	0

^A Of which, one-off costs account for £1,640,000, so the recurring surplus is £2,824,000

Proposed by Cllr Andrew Parkinson

Seconded by Cllr Oliver Cooper

Explanatory notes

Open a police base in Hampstead – Fortune Green Road station is becoming crowded with more police officers due to the national government’s recruitment drive, yet is not convenient for most residents that its officers patrol to visit. We would therefore provide a grant under the Police Act to the Met to open a new police base in Hampstead. This would host the Safer Neighbourhood Team and provide a contact point, in Hampstead Village, where Camden is a large freeholder of commercial properties. If a unit is not available, a base could alternatively be opened at the Royal Free Hospital, which is open 24/7 and has already offered use of currently-unused space for free.

Open a police base in Swiss Cottage – As above, we would provide a grant under the Police Act to the Met to facilitate the opening of a police base in Swiss Cottage. This budget is sufficient to open a base in a commercial unit at Swiss Cottage, but there is a suitable location at Swiss Cottage civic centre, which is preferred and would be cheaper.

Fund deployment of SmartWater across the borough – When more than 50%-55% of homes in an area use SmartWater, as the Met distributes under the MetTrace programme, burglaries can be reduced by over three-quarters. However, the Met has only budgeted to provide 440,000 across London, or just 12% of London homes, which would be insufficient to eradicate burglary. We would provide a grant under the Police Act to distribute SmartWater more widely and get as much of Camden as possible above 50% saturation, and thus make Camden a burglary-free borough. This programme would be provided for five years.

Renew the ENGAGE intervention programme at Holborn station – The ENGAGE pilot provides a youth worker to engage with children admitted to the custody suite at Holborn police station to help break cycles of criminality. It has had very successful results, including intervening in cases involving over 200 children, reducing re-arrest rates by a third, reintegrating four children into Camden schools after long exclusions, and breaking up county lines gangs. We would provide for funding to be renewed when the pilot ends in April.

Install CCTV in known crime hotspots – While Camden has spent considerable sums on a new CCTV control room, it is largely unused except for CCTV on housing estates. We would progressively install CCTV – linked to the control room – in known crime hotspots, in addition to making the control room’s functions available to residents and businesses for a small sum to reduce the cost of them maintaining CCTV.

Give Council Tax Reduction to special constables – Special Constables have the same powers as police officers and are a valuable tool to support officers. They currently receive free travel on London transport, but otherwise no financial incentive, making them a cost-effective part of the force and a means of keeping the police workforce grounded in the Peelian tradition of local civilian policing. We would provide a 50% reduction in Council Tax for special constables. This would both incentivise and promote the scheme, and thus lead to more sign-ups and more policing resources.

Install 1,000 electric car charging points per year for next two years – Camden has one of Inner London’s smallest networks of electric car charging points, with half as many chargers per capita as Wandsworth and Kensington & Chelsea, and one third as many as Westminster. Within two years, we would install 2,000 ordinary speed charging points in lampposts to facilitate charging in large

numbers of residents' parking bays (which would, because they would be widespread, be able to be retained as residents' parking bays accessible to all vehicles). These figures reflect costs after grants were received by other councils, including London boroughs and Brighton & Hove.

End use of glyphosate and use hot foam instead – Camden spends more on glyphosate herbicide than any council except Norfolk. Use of glyphosate has been connected to cancer, which has caused manufacturers and municipalities in the United States to pay hundreds of millions in damages. It also harms the environment, including to wildflowers – and therefore to bees and the wider ecosystem. We would adopt the hot foam model used in Hammersmith & Fulham, which would cost £200,000 a year instead of the current £140,000 a year. We do not factor in potential cost savings from avoiding legal costs.

Expand HomeRun app to all schools in Camden – School run traffic has been reduced by a third in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire by the use of the HomeRun app – developed by Camden residents – which both facilitates car-pooling and gives schools the data to encourage parents to stop driving to school. Use of the HomeRun app by South Hampstead High School and University College School has cut use of cars for the school run by a third, too, but its effectiveness would be higher if it covered all schools. We would contract with HomeRun to deploy it across every school in Camden.

Provide grant to Green School Runs to restore its school bus service – Green School Runs launched a bus service for schools in Hampstead and Highgate to reduce the number of cars on the road, but this was not financially viable. We would provide a grant to sustain this school bus scheme if each school underwrites the rest to ensure it returns to viability.

Create an Environment Committee, separate from a new Policing & Communities Committee – The current Culture & Environment Scrutiny Committee is overstretched – including being responsible for scrutinising the work of four Cabinet positions. We would therefore create a separate Environment Committee, and thus enable the remaining workload to be scrutinised by a Policing & Communities Committee: thus improving scrutiny of both the environment and policing.

Engine idling fines increased to £80 – While Camden issues fines of just £20 for deliberate engine idling, Westminster imposes £80 fines using a road traffic order – and due to the success there, other councils are following suit. This is not intended as a revenue-raising proposal, but it is likely that a small surplus would arise.

Double spending on enforcement of engine idling prohibitions – Investment in catching deliberate engine idlers, especially in the vicinity of schools is money well spent. Together with the increased fines, it would not cost anything (net) to increase enforcement in known hotspots.

Free microchipping of all cats and dogs – All dogs must be microchipped by law and compulsory microchipping of cats is likely to be introduced soon, but when strays are found, councils have found that a third of dogs aren't microchipped. The proposal to offer free microchipping was removed from Camden's draft Animal Welfare Charter due to cost (£10-£15 per pet). We propose facilitating free microchipping or updating of microchips. Much of the cost will be recouped by not having to handle as many strays, as microchipping halves the number of strays that are passed from vets to local authorities, as they can be reunited with owners before reaching the council, but this saving is not factored in here.

Restore weekly bin collections – Camden is almost alone in London in collecting many residents' bins less than once a week – indeed, most residents in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, and Islington have theirs collected more than once a week. Camden's dirty streets – with the second-most fly-tipping incidents of any council in the country – are testament to the results. Despite claims that it would boost recycling, recycling has still not returned to the levels it was at in 2010, when bins were collected twice a week. Furthermore, the cuts to bin collections in 2017 has been followed by a quadrupling of costs associated with cleaning up fly-tipping: now £600,000 more than two years ago. Restoring weekly collections for all residents would substantially reduce this cost, but this saving is not factored in here.

Make garden waste collection free of charge – Camden's charge for garden waste is among the highest in the country: twice the national average. Because charging to collect garden waste reduces recycling rates and discourages good environmental stewardship, the Government is consulting on banning councils for charging for garden waste collection. We would scrap the charge for garden waste collection and make it free again.

Provide separate nappy collection bins – Residents are not issued with separate bins for nappies: forcing some parents to keep them unhygienically. We would provide nappy bins to all parents that take up the service.

Sponsor the development of web tools to improve recycling – We would invest to facilitate the existing database of what can be recycled to be accessed by a form on the website, via an app, via Alexa and other virtual assistants, etc, so that users can easily find out whether any given item can be recycled. In future years, this can then be licensed across other areas to raise money and more than make up the cost and generate a trading profit to reinvest in prompting recycling.

Open Regis Road reuse and recycling centre for one evening a week – Regis Road recycling centre is open only until 4:15pm every day. This can make it difficult for non-professionals to use it. We would open the recycling centre one evening a week to make it easier to use it. Savings from reduced fly-tipping are not factored in.

Increase fines for early payment of fly-tipping fines to 75% of the maximum – Camden is one of very few councils in the country to discount fines for fly-tipping so heavily when paid early: effectively making the fine £200 for most fly-tippers, not the maximum £400. Barnet and Haringey do not discount at all for early payment, which is the ultimate objective, but until fuller impact analysis can be done, we propose increasing the discount for early payment to £300 instead of this unwarranted leniency.

Increase fines for littering to the legal maximum and early payment to 75% of the maximum – Camden imposes fines of just £100 for littering, rather than the £150 maximum. Westminster and Haringey impose the full £150 fine, and we propose Camden does likewise. We would initially introduce a 25% discount for early payment – in line with the fly-tipping fines – until further impact analysis can be done, but with a view to having no discount for early payment.

Introduce fines for littering from a motor vehicle – In 2018, councils were given powers to fine car owners if litter was thrown from their car, whether or not it could be proven that they were driving. Camden has not yet used this power, and we would introduce fines to clamp down on littering.

Make cycling part of PE lessons in every school – Despite political commitments to become the most cycling-friendly borough, the proportion of Camden residents cycling every week has fallen since 2010. Compared to other London boroughs, Camden has slipped from having the 5th-most people cycling every week of any borough to the 11th-most. This proposal would fund the teaching of cycling as part of PE in every school to build up competence, social norms, and commitment to cycling.

Roll out coding clubs in every state school and reduce the cost – Camden committed in 2014 to having a coding club in every school, but it does not yet. Moreover, take-up of coding club places by low-income households is reportedly limited because of the cost to parents. This proposal would create a coding club in every school and reduce the cost of places by a third for children in receipt of free school meals.

20% increased funding for school improvement services via Camden Learning – We are concerned by Camden's continued fall down the league tables relative to other London boroughs, including being last in London for phonics and maths at age 7 and 26th out of 32 in London for progress between ages 11 to 16. This decline relative to other boroughs shows that it is due to factors in Camden, not further afield. We would therefore provide a grant to Camden Learning equal to 20% of its receipts from Camden schools to increase its capacity for school improvement.

Make Camden's swimming pools free for children during holidays – We recognise the importance of physical activity and the cost to parents – especially on low incomes – of activities during holidays. We would provide for free swimming pool access during school holidays to children resident in Camden and attending a Camden school.

Extend Swiss Cottage Library opening hours and open on Sundays – Swiss Cottage Library is by far Camden's largest and most used library, but is not open on Sundays and is open much shorter hours than Pancras Square. We would extend its hours to match Pancras Square (8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday) and open it on Sundays.

Make annual grants of £50,000 in Camden's community libraries – We would make available £50,000 of grants to the three community libraries within Camden – Belsize Community Library, Primrose Hill Library, and Keats Library in Hampstead.

Pay for a HomeShare scheme to let young people rent older residents' spare rooms – HomeShare schemes facilitate the placement of private renters in unused rooms of older residents: offering pre-vetted renters discounted rent in exchange for an average of 10 hours a week of company and housework. HomeShare reduces pressure on social services and social housing by offering, which together usually amount to thousands of pounds per year per match.

Install 10 publicly-accessible defibrillators – Camden has one of the smallest networks of defibrillators in the country, with just one publicly-accessible defibrillator in the entirety of the north of the borough. We would fund their installation at convenient locations. We would further support use of DMC or HRA funds to install them in TRA Halls where appropriate.

Give 30% discretionary business rates relief to all ACVs – When the Localism Act 2011 gave councils the power to grant discretionary rates relief, the government singled out pubs and community

venues as prime recipients. Camden has a number of such ACVs, and we would reduce their Business Rates by 30%: saving each ACV thousands or tens of thousands each year.

Grant 100% discretionary business rates relief to all music venues run by non-profit community interest companies – The government has just introduced a 50% reduction in business rates for small music venues, while Westminster City Council just introduced 100% Rates relief for music venues run by community interest companies (CICs). This proposal would mirror Westminster's policy. There are no CIC music venues in Camden, but we expect favourable tax treatment to encourage some take-up in future years.

Maintain scratchcard-style parking permits – Scratchcard-style visitor permits are preferred by a large number of residents, for whom they are more convenient, flexible, and accessible. The withdrawal of them would hit protected groups – including the elderly and the disabled – harder than other people. We would maintain the existing system.

Send information packs to residents when they move in – When people move (as detected by new registration for Council Tax), residents would be sent an information pack that would be automatically tailored to their circumstances, and incorporating key information. This would include local amenities to their home, key contacts in the council, their local police contact, when and how to leave out waste, how private tenants can enforce housing rights, and how to download relevant apps and sign up to relevant email mailing lists.

Resume postal notifications of planning applications – The ending of postal notifications left residents unable to respond to consultations. The service could be automated and fulfilled through a commercial mail room to reduce costs. The net cost that could be achieved is £30,000 more than the cost of street signs, which the council has to erect if it does not provide postal notifications and which are often vandalised or removed and generate far fewer responses from relevant neighbours.

Introduce a specific street licence for trading from red phone boxes – Camden has been inconsistent with its licensing for people trading from repurposed red phone boxes, with some traders expected to buy a full street trading pitch licence, rather than a kiosk licence. This threatens the viability of trading from red phone boxes: thus expediting the loss of these heritage assets. This amendment creates a new class of kiosk licence specifically for red phone boxes where no goods are stored or displayed outside the box: ending this lack of clarity and creating flexibility in the setting of different terms and conditions.

Renting out top two floors of 5PS – Much of the prime office space within 5 Pancras Square remains underutilised, and space within it, especially within hotdesking, could be consolidated to create space for a commercial tenant unless and until that space is needed again.

Use two-thirds of unused (void) parking spaces on estates for paid-for parking and transfer £500,000 to the Housing Revenue Account – Currently, 2,191 spaces on housing estates are never used: leading to recent proposals by the council to create a presumption in new planning guidance that they be removed in redevelopment. However, unless and until they are, these assets should be used. We would grant a concession to a full parking operator (e.g. JustPark) for two-thirds of the empty spaces, so there remains a surplus of spaces for infrequent use. From the estimated £2,000,000 net income from this, £500,000 would be granted to the Housing Revenue Account for

capital investment on estates, e.g. CCTV and electric vehicle charging, although the exact allocation of that is out of scope of the General Fund budget.

Investment in fraud detection – Housing fraud costs Camden £238 per annum per household in the borough. However, Camden recovers just a third as many council houses due to fraud as Southwark does. An increase in Housing Investigations Team resources to detect fraud, recover social housing, and recover Proceeds of Crime would yield millions of pounds in revenue and recovered social housing. It is considered to be revenue neutral in year one, but raise several million a year by the end of the three-year period.

Income from film service to double – The current film service is delivered by a contractor that – based on the tendering process – performs poorly on keeping down the cost of providing the service. This means that the vast majority of receipts by the Film Service is spent by the contractor on delivering the service, and not received by Camden. Other boroughs pursue a more profitable arrangement, and we would do likewise.

Fix Camden's website – We would hire a web consultant to address problems with the website, including restoring elements of the Camden website that have been deleted, adding more synonyms to pages' metadata to aid searching, and ranking pages more clearly so the pages deemed by Camden to be most important come higher up the search results. This would reduce further service delivery costs, although this is not factored in here.

Develop a consolidated Camden app – Camden has at least three apps – Clean Camden for reporting waste, Camden StreetSafe for reporting rough sleeping, Camden Recycling Rewards to encourage recycling – and others, such as RingGo and Libby, that it uses for service delivery. Use of these apps is limited because of the sheer number of them and the lack of any centralised location for them. We would consolidate services where possible into a single app, which would improve take-up. It would eventually also lower service delivery costs, although this is not factored in here.

Shared digital with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea – Camden aimed to share digital services with Haringey and Islington until 2019, before this collapsed due to Camden and their inability to share services. However, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea have had shared digital services for several years, and thus would be able to incorporate Camden. Their digital costs are considerably lower than Camden's, and sharing digital services would save Camden £1.5m a year.

Shared HR, legal, strategy and change, and procurement services with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea – In addition to digital costs, Camden should look to share back office services with boroughs that have done similar. Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea already share HR, legal, strategy and change, and procurement services, and Camden should look to join that arrangement.

Additional reduction in agency and consultancy spend – We would reduce spending on agency and consultancy by 1%, including through the capacity enhancements through other proposed amendments. For example, expanding own-resource capabilities at Camden Learning will reduce the need for agents, and sharing services with other boroughs creates economies of scale that mean occasional increases in workload can be managed within existing resources without needing agency or consultancy staff.

Reduce spending on Camden's external communication department by 50% – Camden spends more on its external communications department than almost any other council in the country. Given the thriving local press, this is not necessary. Savings of 50% would reduce Camden's expenditure to approximately the level of other London boroughs. There is scope for some of these services to be shared with Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea in line with above services.

Reverse increase in Cabinet members' allowances – We would reverse the increases last year to the Leader and Cabinet members' special responsibility allowances. Other allowances, including those received by committee chairs scrutinising the administration, would be unaffected.

End funding for trade union facility time – Camden spends more subsidising the internal administration of trade union activities than 94% of councils in England. We would end financial funding for this trade union facility time. This would not affect the performance of trade union duties, which relate to the job (e.g. negotiations, disciplinary matters, training for the trade union role) and are required by law to be paid for (and so not included within facility time, which primarily relates to internal union administration).

Scrap Camden magazine – Camden is fortunate to have two local newspapers and a number of microsites. It has extensive other opportunities for important information to be disseminated. However, its *Pravda* mouthpiece of the Cabinet is still published anyway. By ending this magazine, Camden would save taxpayers' money, support local newspapers, and ensure information was balanced, not skewed towards the administration.

End grant to Love Camden – Camden is blessed with among the most media coverage of its culture and events of any area in the world. Not only is a separate website a misuse of taxpayers' money, but it inappropriately competes with local newspapers: undermining their commercial viability. We would end this grant.