

## Health and wellbeing

- 4.1 Camden has one of the largest health inequality gaps between occupational groups in England for both men and women and there are stark geographical health inequalities in Camden. People suffering from poor general health, mental ill health and low life expectancy are generally concentrated in the borough's most deprived wards including St Pancras and Somers Town, Haverstock and Kilburn. In contrast, residents in the most affluent parts of the borough have longer life expectancy, better general health, and fewer mental health problems than the England average.
- 4.2 There is an important link between the physical and social environment in which we live and how healthy we are, both physically and mentally. This policy seeks to ensure that development in Camden considers local issues relating to health and wellbeing at an early stage of the planning process in order to positively improve outcomes for the people who live, work and visit the borough.

### Policy C1 Health and wellbeing

The Council will improve and promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities through ensuring a high quality environment with local services to support health, social and cultural wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

Measures that will help contribute to healthier communities and reduce health inequalities must be incorporated in a development where appropriate.

The Council will require:

- a. development to positively contribute to creating high quality, active, safe and accessible places; and
- b. proposals for major development schemes to include a Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

We will:

- c. contribute towards the health priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and partners to help reduce health inequalities across the borough;
- d. support the provision of new or improved health facilities, in line with Camden's Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England requirements; and
- e. protect existing health facilities in line with Policy C2 - Community facilities.

### Health and wellbeing in Camden

- 4.3 The Camden Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) brings together the NHS (Camden GP Clinical Commissioning Groups), local authority cabinet members, public health, other local authority directorates and Healthwatch, to plan how best to meet local health and care needs and influence the commissioning

of services. Camden's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2015-2018) sets out the following priorities: healthy lives; mental health and wellbeing; and continuing to strengthen the integration of health and social care. These priorities are underpinned by the Camden Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Consideration must be given to the actions identified in Camden's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- 4.4 The population make up of an area such as, age, gender, ethnicity and deprivation, can determine the likely health issues it may face. Camden's JSNA 2013 describes the borough's current and future health and wellbeing needs. In Camden the age and gender profile is very similar to London but younger than England with significantly greater proportions of younger adults. There are however, an increasing number of older people in the borough (over 75) with numbers expected to rise to over 50% during the plan period which will impact upon the demand for services such as social care and end of life care.



- 4.5 Chronic illness, lower life expectancy, and unhealthy lifestyles are often linked to high levels of deprivation. There are health inequalities within Camden by location, gender, deprivation and ethnicity. Men and women from the most deprived areas have a life expectancy of 12.9 and 8.4 years less respectively than those from the least deprived areas. Camden scores significantly worse than the national average, for hospital stays for alcohol related harm; drug misuse and acute sexually transmitted infections. Camden is also significantly worse than the national average for obese children; new cases of tuberculosis, early deaths (under the age of 75) from heart disease and stroke and road injuries/deaths. Cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease make up the largest causes of deaths amongst all age groups in Camden, apart from those under the age of 35.

## Role of planning in health and wellbeing outcomes

- 4.6 The creation of healthy environments for people of all ages across the borough will be a key consideration when the Council assesses planning applications. A healthy environment can promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and these are aided through good urban design, green open spaces and access to active travel choices such as walking and cycling. Other than the built and natural environment, there are social and cultural factors that promote good health and wellbeing – such as a variety of community groups, religious institutions, arts, culture and leisure facilities.
- 4.7 Planning can play a pivotal role in influencing key health determinants, especially towards improving long-term outcomes and addressing health inequalities. The determinants of health shown in the diagram below include the:
- social and economic environment;
  - physical environment; and
  - individual characteristics and behaviours.



The Determinants of Health (1992) Dahlgren and Whitehead

(Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1992)

- 4.8 To ensure that development promotes and positively contributes to a healthy living environment, development will be expected to consider health outcomes at an early stage, prior to the submission of a planning application. For major developments this will be evidenced through the submission of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Major developments are regarded as developments of 10 or more homes or a floorspace of 1,000 sq m or more, including student housing and non-residential development.

## Health Impact Assessments

- 4.9 The scope of a HIA will vary depending on the size of the development and its location. The HIA should identify the likely health impacts of the development and include measures to improve health outcomes and address negative effects and inequalities. HIAs for developments of 100 homes or more, including student housing will be expected to include details of the engagement they have

undertaken with local health and community stakeholders in the community and how their input has influenced the development. Further information on HIA can be found in our supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance 6: Amenity and the Mayor's Social Infrastructure supplementary planning document.

### Planning for all ages

- 4.10 Camden's high proportion of young adults, growing elderly population and outside visitors requires greater consideration of these groups in shaping places, to live, work and visit. It is possible to make the health outcomes of an area better by ensuring that development helps to promote active travel choices and physical activity through for example, enhancing the feeling of safety and security, creation of permeable and attractive street frontages, and areas where people can sit down, take part in sport, or socialise. If a person's day-to-day activities are limited, housing and places which enable such activity to be easier, will lead to better health outcomes.
- 4.11 It is important that developments consider the needs of occupants and users in terms of accessibility, space requirements and ease of movement. In consideration of Camden's growing older population, the Council strongly encourages the inclusion of dementia friendly design<sup>1</sup>. Design can have an impact on the ease to which people with dementia are able to navigate around or through an area by lighting (avoiding deep shadows), materials, clear signage, distinctive buildings and use of colour.
- 4.12 Child obesity is a problem in the borough and children who are overweight are more likely to remain obese into adulthood and develop long term health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Creating places that make it easier to take part in physical activity, access to healthier food choices, and safe and accessible spaces for play, sport and recreation will help to tackle this issue.
- 4.13 Environmental issues such as poor air quality and flooding/overheating events particularly affect the most vulnerable in society, namely young children, older people and those with physical and mental health problems. Policy CC4 on air quality seeks to ensure that sensitive uses (e.g. housing and schools) are not unduly affected by new development or located in areas of existing poor air quality unless acceptable mitigation measures are included. Given the existing poor levels of air quality in the borough, we will seek innovative measures to improve local air quality. Development should also consider the impacts of overheating and flooding on human health and should be designed so that they are adaptable in accordance with policies CC2 Adapting to climate change and CC3 Water and flooding.

### Integrated approach to health and wellbeing

- 4.14 Many measures set out in other parts of this Local Plan play a part in promoting health and wellbeing and addressing health inequalities, and should be

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<sup>1</sup> 'At a Glance: a Checklist for Developing Dementia Friendly Communities (Housing, Learning and Improvement Network, June 2012)'

addressed, where appropriate:

- **Housing quality** – there are a number of factors that contribute to the quality of housing, these include (but not restricted to), overcrowding, accessibility, space and layout, noise insulation, fabric energy efficiency, shading and ventilation. The cost of housing is a significant issue for residents in Camden, where increased cost can lead to difficult decisions between heating and healthy food. Residential developments will be expected to meet affordable housing targets set out in Policy H4 on maximising the supply of affordable homes.
- As part of the Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP) we are undertaking widespread estate regeneration and works to existing homes to ensure that tenants live in good quality accommodation that meets contemporary standards. This programme will also generate funds for the Council's 'Better Homes' initiative which refurbishes existing Council homes.
- **Access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure** – Policy C2 - Community facilities recognises that community facilities such as schools, community centres, leisure facilities and health centres are a vital part of the infrastructure supporting Camden's quality of life. We will seek to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of communities in Camden.
- **Access to open space and nature** – the benefits of open space are seen to be particularly important for physical exercise, relaxation and stress relief, reducing pollutants, cooling the urban heat island and providing areas for local volunteer groups and food growing (Policy A2 on open space). We will protect, maintain and enhance Camden's parks, open spaces and green corridors and seek to tackle deficiencies and meet increased demand for open space.
- **Air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity** – Policies CC4 Air quality, A1 Managing the impact of development, and A3 Biodiversity recognise that development can have a significant effect upon the amenity, health and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the borough. We will only grant permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity or/and would cause harm to air quality unless appropriate mitigation measures are adopted.
- **Accessibility and active travel** – active travel, such as walking and cycling, is one of the easiest and most cost effective means for people to achieve substantial health benefits. Our transport policies prioritise active travel choices and seek to improve the walking and cycling environment.
- **Crime reduction and community safety** – crime and fear of crime is a significant concern for many of Camden's residents and businesses and can undermine people's quality of life, health and wellbeing (Policy C5 Safety and security). We will require development to demonstrate it has incorporated design principles which contribute to community safety and security.
- **Access to work and training** – we want residents to benefit from the employment opportunities created by Camden's economic success by linking the efforts of the Council, schools and employers to provide local people with the skills needed to gain employment. We will seek to reduce inequality through training and apprenticeship schemes and affordable space for small

and medium enterprises (SMEs) managed by businesses, higher education institutions and the third sector.



- **Social cohesion and lifetime neighbourhoods** – Policy D1 Design notes the significant link between improving physical and mental wellbeing by creating streets, spaces and buildings which allow for and encourage healthy lifestyles.
- **Climate change and minimising the use of resources** – there are links between poor health and wellbeing and the ability to heat a home cost effectively, or in hot weather ensure that the property does not overheat. Policies CC1 Climate change mitigation and CC2 Adapting to climate change will seek to ensure that buildings are designed to be more energy efficient and to cope with changes to our climate system such as wetter winters and hotter summers.

4.15 Health should not be seen as an isolated topic when assessing planning applications, rather it should be integrated as per the areas noted above. This approach has been adopted in this Plan where we have considered the impact of our policies upon the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those living, working and visiting the borough.

### Health facilities

4.16 The location and accessibility of health facilities has a direct impact on the health of the population. The Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) recognises that in addition to advice on healthy living, appropriate health services, access and the quality of healthcare can prevent ill health and lead to better management of long-term conditions where these are identified early.

4.17 Camden has a wide range of health facilities, with four major hospitals, 36 GP practices and over 150 other facilities, such as dentists, optometrists, and pharmacists. As the population grows and ages, there will be a requirement for different models of health and social care provided closer to home, which

will need to be recognised in the development and alteration of health care premises. Policy DM1 Delivery and monitoring and Appendix 1 set out the infrastructure requirements for the borough over the Plan period, including many that relate to improving health.

- 4.18 Policy C2 on community facilities specifically states that we will resist the loss of community facilities (which include health), unless a replacement facility that meets need is provided or where evidence demonstrates that the facility, or similar facility, is no longer required. We will also require contributions towards supporting existing or providing for new facilities from developments that result in additional need for community facilities, such as those for health.

## Community facilities

- 4.19 A diverse range of community facilities helps to enhance quality of life and social cohesion, improve personal health and wellbeing, instil a sense of community identity and belonging and may help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. They can often support valuable services for the most vulnerable and least well-off in society.
- 4.20 Policy C2 sets out how the Council will ensure that there is provision of community facilities to meet the needs of a growing population and safeguard against the loss of viable community facilities. This is linked to the Camden Plan's aims of 'investing in our communities to ensure sustainable neighbourhoods' and 'creating the conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth'.
- 4.21 The term "community facilities" in this section refers to a wide range of social infrastructure that provides a service to the community. This includes childcare, education (include adult learning) and training, healthcare, police stations, youth provision, libraries, public houses, community halls, places of worship and public toilets. These facilities form a vital part of town centres and neighbourhoods and address the local community's needs. However, it is acknowledged that some facilities offer large-scale or specialist provision, in some cases for a specific community and serve a wider catchment. Camden is home to health, education, scientific and research facilities with global reach and impact, which in many cases enjoy links with the local community, including in the provision of services.



- 4.22 For the foreseeable future, many of these community facilities are expected to experience reductions in funding, increased levels of demand and rising expectations. The long-term sustainability of facilities is a particular concern as funding continues to decline. The Council's Community Investment Programme is helping to re-invest proceeds from the disposal and redevelopment of land



and buildings back into new and updated community facilities. For example, the Netley campus project has delivered a nursery, primary school and pupil referral unit, a multi-purpose hall and accommodation for the Adult and Community Learning Service.

4.23 Increasingly, complementary services are managed by a variety of different providers and are being brought together within the same site or building, improving accessibility, the user experience and helping to realise savings and efficiencies.

4.24 As technologies have developed, a far greater range of services are now capable of being delivered on-line. However, the presence of physical infrastructure will continue to be an important feature of service delivery in many cases. The Camden Infrastructure Study (2015) sets out the existing capacity and future need for social infrastructure in the borough. Its findings have informed the 'Infrastructure Schedule' in Appendix 1 to this Local Plan. Area/neighbourhood and site-specific infrastructure needs are also set out in other policies in the Local Plan, other development plan documents and neighbourhood plans.

## Policy C2 Community facilities

The Council will work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and reflect new approaches to the delivery of services.

The Council will:

- a. require development that increases the demand for community facilities and services to make appropriate contributions towards enhancing existing provision;
- b. expect a developer proposing additional floorspace in community use, or a new community facility, to reach agreement with the Council on its continuing maintenance and other future funding requirements;
- c. ensure that facilities provide access to a service on foot and by sustainable modes of travel;
- d. facilitate multi-purpose community facilities and the secure sharing or extended use of facilities that can be accessed by the wider community, except for facilities occupied by the emergency services due to their distinct operating needs;
- e. support the investment plans of educational, health, scientific and research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden, London and the UK. In assessing proposals, the Council will also balance the impact proposals may have on residential amenity and transport infrastructure;
- f. seek the inclusion of measures which address the needs of community groups and foster community integration;
- g. ensure existing community facilities are retained recognising their benefit to the community, including protected groups, unless one of the following tests is met:

- i. a replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of the local population;
- ii. the existing premises are no longer required or viable in their existing use and there is no alternative community use capable of meeting the needs of the local area. Where it has been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction there is no reasonable prospect of a community use, then our preferred alternative will be the maximum viable amount of affordable housing;
- h. take into account listing or nomination of 'Assets of Community Value' as a material planning consideration and encourage communities to nominate Assets of Community Value.

### Meeting the need for community infrastructure

4.25

It is important that the growth in Camden's population does not place unacceptable pressure on existing community facilities and there is sufficient provision to support new developments. It is also recognised that some community facilities serve a catchment extending outside the Borough boundary and the needs of residents in adjoining boroughs will be taken into account, where appropriate.



4.26

The Council began collecting the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April 2015. Over the plan period, this will provide funding towards community infrastructure alongside site-specific planning obligations to mitigate the impact of individual schemes. The CIL Funding List (sometimes referred to as the 'Regulation 123 List') shows which projects and infrastructure the Council intends will be funded from CIL. It will be updated in light of changing priorities and the availability of funding. It is expected that the ward-level element of CIL may be used to enhance local community facilities. When we use Section 106 agreements, we will take into account viability as a factor in determining

the types of facilities or services which are required and the timeframe in which these can be delivered. The Council will also use strategies relating to the accommodation requirements of the public and voluntary sectors when establishing need and local priorities for community infrastructure identified through consultation on neighbourhood and ward CIL spending.

- 4.27 The sustainability of the funding arrangements for new community facilities, including maintenance and management, is a serious concern. Where the Council is unable to enter into an agreement to meet the ongoing revenue costs of a facility itself, it will expect the applicant to demonstrate how the successful long-term future of the facility will be secured.
- 4.28 Providers of new community provision are encouraged to engage early in the development process with ward members and local communities, including Neighbourhood Forums where they exist. This ensures that local people can meaningfully input into a scheme's development.

### Ensuring facilities are accessible for their users

- 4.29 The Council will also assess the potential accessibility of a new or extended facility for its intended users. Where a facility is anticipated to generate a large number of visits, we would expect it to be provided within the Central London Area or the town centres of Camden Town, Kentish Town, Kilburn High Road, Swiss Cottage/Finchley Road and West Hampstead.
- 4.30 To help sustain community facilities and improve accessibility for our residents, we will expect opportunities to be fully assessed to co-locate different services or activities from one site or premises. The Council will also seek opportunities to improve access to facilities through agreements allowing the shared use of a facility by the wider community or increased hours of community access where this is practicable. A number of these arrangements already exist, e.g. schools allowing access to their premises out-of-hours. This provides a cost-effective and sometimes the only viable means of addressing deficiencies in provision and reduces the need to travel.

### Managing the concentration of community uses and addressing the needs of all sections of the community

- 4.31 There are significant numbers of health, education, scientific and research facilities in Camden. These facilities may perform a largely local role and function but there are many institutions in the borough with a national or international orientation. This is helping to deliver solutions for society's problems, for example new medical treatments and models of healthcare. These institutions contribute to the local and national economy by supporting enterprise and innovation, the generation of jobs and the procurement of goods and services. A cluster of research-based organisations is based around an area of King's Cross, Euston Road and Bloomsbury, known as the 'Knowledge Quarter'. Their geographical proximity and concentration is a catalyst for collaborative-based working. In order for these institutions and enterprises to meet changing standards and requirements and sustain their leading edge, there is often an ongoing need to update and modernise facilities. It is important this is realised in a way which balances the impact on residential amenity, local

transport infrastructure and the character of the local area.

- 4.32 The scale and intensity of use of some community facilities, such as schools, colleges and higher education facilities can lead to adverse impacts on residential amenity. This is principally related to the movement of large numbers of people at certain times of day, impacts such as noise and air pollution and the pressure on the transport system. The Council will ensure schemes satisfactorily address the impacts of changes to the balance and mix of uses in the area, including the cumulative impact of schemes with planning permission or awaiting determination. Hampstead and Belsize Park have a very high concentration of schools where significant issues exist concerning the 'school run'. We will refuse applications for new schools or the expansion of existing schools in these areas, unless it can be demonstrated the number of traffic movements will not increase. Policy A1 of the Local Plan refers to how the Council will manage the impact of traffic movements.



- 4.33 Some community facilities offer particular support for protected groups or communities which in turn contribute to Camden's diversity and social and economic wellbeing. The sometimes dispersed nature of minority groups means this benefit may extend far beyond Camden's administrative boundary. Under the Equalities Act 2010, we are required to assess the impact of policies against the 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex/gender and sexual orientation. We would expect proposals for new community facilities to take into account the particular disadvantages that can be experienced by individuals and groups with these characteristics. Paragraphs 4.34 and 4.41 provide further detail on facilities which are important in meeting the needs of protected groups.

### Child care facilities

- 4.34 There are a wide range of nursery education and childcare options in Camden. These include children's centres operated by Camden Council, those run by local primary schools and nurseries operated by the independent, voluntary and private sector. Childcare provision is an important means of tackling the Borough's inequalities as a lack of childcare can prevent our residents from taking up employment opportunities or restrict parents to part-time work close to home. The Council will, therefore, encourage non-residential developments to include provision for child care facilities.

### Schools and colleges

- 4.35 As part of its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient places within the Borough, the Council undertakes annual place planning for primary and secondary schools. This takes into account the current capacity of schools, the projected future demand for places, variations in demand across Camden, housing developments and proposed changes in other boroughs. Capacity from year-to-year can fluctuate rapidly due to factors such as parental choice and housing developments.
- 4.36 The 2014 primary school assessment identified a high need in the north-west of the Borough, which the expansion of Kingsgate school (with 2 forms of entry) is expected to help address. Provision has also recently increased through the opening of free schools. The 2014 secondary school assessment notes there is capacity for two further forms of entry at Regent High School. This is considered sufficient to meet needs to 2022/23 although further expansion will be needed over the longer-term.

### Faith facilities

- 4.37 Camden has many meeting places, churches, synagogues, community facilities and Islamic prayer centres that cater for a range of faiths and beliefs. It is expected that further provision will be required to meet the needs of faith communities during the Plan period. The main sources of demand arise from the inadequate size of Islamic prayer spaces in the borough and the growth in forms of evangelical Christianity.
- 4.38 The Council welcomes investment by faith communities to develop new space to meet or worship, subject to other policies in the Local Plan. The Council will also encourage faith communities to consider sharing facilities where one community has spare capacity and another has a need for space. Where new spaces are provided, the Council will expect applicants to submit an Equalities Impact Assessment examining the balance between maintaining Camden's unique diversity and community cohesion.

### Provision for older people

- 4.39 Camden has a much lower proportion of older people aged over 65 compared to the national average for England and Wales, although one which is growing rapidly. A 'person centred approach' to social care support is helping older people to live more independently and for longer.

- 4.40 Older people generally have greater health needs than the wider population. It is important that development schemes take into account the physical, sensory and mental health barriers they experience. Modifications to the internal layout of buildings and features such as tactile surfaces, hearing loops, good signage and lighting and additional seating can provide significant benefits. Policy C6 of the Local Plan requires all buildings and places to meet the highest practicable standards of accessible and inclusive design.

### Public toilets

- 4.41 The need for public toilets is more prevalent amongst certain groups such as the elderly, disabled, children and people suffering from bladder or bowel conditions. The lack of provision can deter people going out in the community, increasing the risk of social isolation and poor mental health. The Council will expect major schemes with large numbers of visitors to provide public toilets. We will also continue to encourage schemes whereby businesses allow the public to use their facilities.

### Safeguarding community facilities

- 4.42 Community facilities are vulnerable to pressure from uses which attract higher land values and once they are lost cannot easily be replaced. The Council will normally seek the retention of community facilities except in defined circumstances. This includes where there is suitable replacement provision secured through the use of a planning obligation. We will assess whether the accessibility of the replacement provision satisfactorily addresses the needs of the facility's users and how this addresses relevant plans or programmes of re-provision of public sector bodies. In exceptional cases, the Council may seek a financial contribution based on the cost of providing a replacement facility. The Council will expect that replacement facilities are sufficient in size and a high quality design which facilitates the successful operation of the community use.



- 4.43 There may also be circumstances where a community use, either wholly or in part, is no longer required or viable in its current use. In this instance, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that the loss of the facility would not create, or add to, a shortfall in provision for the existing community use and if it would not, that the facility is unable to address a need for any other community use in the local area. The Council may require marketing evidence to show that the premises have been offered at a reasonable charge to community groups or voluntary organisations. We will set out further details in Camden Planning Guidance. The loss of a facility may also be acceptable where this forms part of an asset management strategy of a public or voluntary body and the loss is necessary to allow the service to continue operating successfully, for example where a facility is underused or no longer fit for purpose.
- 4.44 Where an alternative community use cannot be found for the existing facility, the Council will seek the provision of affordable housing as its preferred alternative use.

### Assets of Community Value

- 4.45 The Council supports the community, including Neighbourhood Forums, wishing to nominate 'Assets of Community Value' (ACV). An ACV is a building or piece of land which currently, or in the recent past, furthers the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community and is expected to do so in the future. The Council will formally register the asset if it meets certain criteria. If it does, if and when the owner decides to sell the asset, a local group can trigger a six month moratorium on the sale giving them time to raise the funds to purchase it (sometimes referred to as a 'right to bid'). Owners have to consider bids, but they do not have to accept them.
- 4.46 The Council, when determining planning applications involving loss of community facilities, will treat the listing of an Asset of Community Value as an indicator of local support and evidence that it furthers the social wellbeing and interests of residents.
- 4.47 Policy C3 provides more detail on how we will protect cultural and leisure facilities and Policy C4 relates to the safeguarding of pubs.

## Cultural and leisure facilities

- 4.48 Cultural and leisure facilities, such as theatres, galleries and museums; live music, comedy and dance venues; and provision for sports and exercise, contribute enormously to Camden's attractiveness as a place to live, work or study. These facilities support opportunities for people from all walks of life to meet and interact and promote a sense of belonging and connection. The variety and richness of culture and leisure facilities has an influence on community identity and mix, townscape character and the local economy.
- 4.49 Camden has a long history as a centre of creativity, attracting artists to live, study and work. This is demonstrated in the breadth of facilities in the borough, which include the British Museum, Roundhouse, Cockpit Arts, Camden People's Theatre, Akademi, The Place, Camden Arts Centre, Freud Museum and the New Diorama Theatre. Part of the West End theatre district lies in Camden and there are a number of cinemas and theatres elsewhere in the Borough catering for local/specialist audiences. Camden Town, in particular, acts as an internationally recognised centre for cultural activities, particularly the live music scene. There is also an important cluster of cultural activities and creative industries around King's Cross.



- 4.50 The ability to sustain and build on this success relies on the availability of a wide range of suitable accommodation, including small and affordable spaces, in appropriate locations. This includes retaining supporting infrastructure such as rehearsal rooms and studios. Policies E1 and E2 of the Local Plan seek to ensure there is a continuing supply of small and medium sized employment premises, which may be suitable for businesses in the arts and creative sector and facilitates the clustering of firms. Policy A2 of the Local Plan seeks to deliver improvements to open spaces, such as outdoor gyms and multi-use games areas.



- 4.51 Some of Camden's cultural and leisure facilities are considered to be at risk from demolition or a change of use due to the high values generated by alternative uses, particularly housing. Also, development in the vicinity of some facilities, particularly live music venues and theatres, can potentially lead to pressure from their occupants for additional restrictions on venues to be applied. This could affect their viability and may even lead to a facility closing in spite of its wider community benefit. This risks diminishing the mix and richness of Camden's culture and leisure offer. Pubs are closely linked to the vibrancy of Camden's culture by providing space for live music, comedy and theatre and are protected through Policy C4 of the Plan.



- 4.52 There are a number of sports facilities in the Borough including multi-purpose sports halls, fitness centres/gyms, swimming pools and bespoke provision for individual sports. There is a mix of private, voluntary and public sector providers and shared-use agreements are an important means of securing access for the wider community. It is desirable to protect these facilities, if viable. There is a very high level of demand on some sports facilities in the Borough linked to the large population of students and popularity of after-work sports activities. The Council will seek to ensure these demands do not harm the opportunity for the wider population to participate in physical exercise and sport or adversely affect the development of sports or athletes.
- 4.53 Some cultural facilities, such as museums and galleries, are classified as D1 under the Use Classes Order, as they are considered to provide a service to the community. They will be protected in accordance with Policy C2 on community facilities. Most other cultural and leisure uses fall under D2 of the Use Classes Order or are sui-generis (not belonging to a specific use class) for which this policy will apply.
- 4.54 This policy aims to ensure we give particular attention to the value provided by cultural and leisure facilities in planning decisions. It also seeks to address their vulnerability from higher value land uses.

## Policy C3 Cultural and leisure facilities

### Protection of cultural and leisure facilities

The Council will protect cultural and leisure facilities valued by the community, including protected groups and which are an important identity of the Borough or local area, cultural variety and richness, health and wellbeing, townscape, heritage and the economy.

We will also protect cultural and leisure uses, particularly Camden's live music venues and theatres, from other conflicting uses which are likely to adversely impact their continued operation.

Where there is a proposal involving the loss of a cultural or leisure facility, it must be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction there is no longer a demand. When assessing such planning applications, we will take the following into account:

- a. whether the premises are able to support alternative cultural and leisure uses which would make a positive contribution to the range of cultural and leisure facilities in the borough;
- b. the size, layout and design of the existing facility;
- c. proposals for re-provision elsewhere;
- d. the impact of the proposal on the range of cultural and leisure facilities; and
- e. the mix of uses in the area.

Exceptionally it may be practicable for a cultural or leisure facility to re-provided elsewhere. The Council will take the following into account when determining the suitability of proposals:

- i. the impacts of the re-provision on the existing occupier and users of the facility;
- ii. changes in the mix of uses arising from the loss of the existing cultural/leisure facility;
- iii. the loss of cultural heritage; and
- iv. the affordability of the new facility.

If a replacement facility is provided, it should be at the same or better standard than the facility which is lost and accessible to its existing users.

### New cultural and leisure facilities

The Council will seek opportunities for new cultural and leisure facilities in major, mixed use developments and support the temporary use of vacant buildings for cultural and leisure activities. We will seek shared-use or extended access for the community in appropriate developments through developer agreements.

We will expect the siting of new facilities, including the expansion of existing provision, to take into account its associated impacts. Large-scale facilities should be located where as many people as possible can enjoy their benefits

and make use of public transport to get there. Central London and town centres will, therefore, be the most appropriate locations.

Smaller facilities may, however, be appropriate anywhere in the Borough providing they do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding area or the local community.

### Retaining valued cultural and leisure facilities

- 4.55 The Council will seek to retain cultural and leisure facilities taking into account their value to the community including protected groups. In assessing planning applications, we will consider the effects of the proposal on both the local area and the wider borough and whether the loss of a use would be detrimental to the range of leisure and cultural facilities, including specific cultural and leisure activities (e.g. live music), where appropriate. We will take into account any planned new facilities which may address a shortfall in provision.
- 4.56 Cultural and leisure facilities can contribute to townscape value and the special character and appearance of conservation areas and may be a heritage asset in their own right. The civic importance of buildings, such as theatres and music venues, is often reflected by the quality of their architectural design and internal fabric and fittings. Cultural and leisure facilities support consumer expenditure, tourism and business investment in the Borough and contribute to the vibrancy and success of town centres and the night-time economy. The following types of facility are considered to be important in helping to define Camden's cultural and leisure offer:
- small, affordable accommodation highly valued by artists and performers;
  - the range of live music venues and performance spaces, including the concentration of these uses in Camden Town;
  - theatres of national, metropolitan and local/community significance, including part of London's 'theatreland';
  - the mix of galleries and venues supporting visual arts;
  - nationally and internationally important museums, archives and collections;
  - a wide range of indoor and built sports provision, including for specialist sports;
  - schools which through community access agreements provide opportunities for residents to participate in physical activity and sport; and
  - facilities supporting protected groups, e.g. children and young people.
- 4.57 The Council recognises that the users of a leisure or cultural facility will be drawn from a catchment unique to the particular venue and therefore we will consider the value a facility provides to Londoners, including protected groups (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) where relevant, as well as the local community.
- 4.58 Cultural and leisure facilities are seen as being under particular threat in London due to rising property values and their siting in prominent locations. There are a wide range of facilities we wish to see protected, in particular affordable accommodation as this is becoming increasingly scarce in inner London. Certain facilities are particularly valuable due to their significance in helping to define Camden's cultural and leisure offer.

- 4.59 The Council wants to ensure that existing cultural and leisure attractions are sustained and enhanced. It is important that noise sensitive uses, such as residential, built adjacent to an established facility, do not affect the ability for cultural and leisure premises to continue operating successfully, e.g. live music venues. Policy A4 in the Local Plan provides further advice on this matter.

**Additional considerations where the loss of a cultural or leisure facility is proposed**

- 4.60 Demand for cultural and leisure uses vary over time and as a result, there may no longer be a demand for an existing facility. Where proposals would involve the loss of a cultural or leisure facility we will expect the applicant to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction there had been a search for alternative cultural and leisure uses for the site through a marketing exercise according to requirements which will be set out in Camden Planning Guidance. The marketing exercise should be undertaken over a period of not less than 12 months and be based on a realistic price/rent which is supported by the Council. Alternative uses should support culture and leisure strategies in Camden and London and provide benefit for the local community or protected groups. This recognises that competition from other land uses could harm the variety, richness and character of Camden and London's cultural offer. Once lost, cultural and leisure uses cannot easily be replaced as land and construction costs make it challenging to provide new facilities.



- 4.61 When a proposal would result in the loss of existing cultural uses, we will take into account the size, layout and design of the existing facility, the mix of uses in the area and proposals for the re-instatement of a cultural or leisure facility elsewhere. It is considered that scope for re-providing cultural and leisure facilities is constrained by factors such as cultural history, associations (e.g. with prominent people or important periods or events) or experience, where these are intrinsic to a particular premises, as well as the benefits an attraction may enjoy from being located close to other cultural and leisure uses.

- 4.62 The sustainability of the funding arrangements for Council run facilities is a serious concern. There may be circumstances where a cultural or leisure facility is no longer viable. In considering proposals for replacement provision, we will take into account relevant plans and programmes to ensure services can continue to operate successfully.

#### Enhancing culture and leisure provision

- 4.63 The cultural and leisure sector will require more floorspace as Camden and London's population grows and in order to sustain its future success. The Council will seek opportunities for new accommodation in major mixed use schemes. Cultural and leisure facilities can enhance the potential appeal and character of a development although an impact assessment may be required for the largest facilities.
- 4.64 Major new cultural and leisure facilities should be located where as many people as possible can enjoy their benefits and make use of public transport to get there. Smaller facilities may be appropriately located anywhere providing they do not adversely affect the amenity of the area or the local community. We will also encourage temporary cultural and leisure attractions which can bring life back to vacant buildings and land and can help to offset the environmental impacts of a development's construction phase.
- 4.65 The Council will also support communities in nominating cultural and leisure facilities as 'Assets of Community Value'. For further details, please see Policy C2.