

CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO FOR CAMDEN

2014

COUNCIL ELECTIONS ON 22ND MAY



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Standing up for Camden

Winning in Camden!



Foreword

On the 22nd May 2014, Camden's residents will again take to the polls and cast their vote to decide who runs Camden Council for the coming four years.

Because the Conservatives in Government have worked hard to shift power back to local people, by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals, it really matters who you vote for in these local elections.

Councils have real power now, as they have taken control of more services, like public health.

Camden Conservatives have an ambitious vision for the borough that is based on your feedback. Over the past few months, we sent out surveys to homes across Camden. We were delighted to receive thousands of responses from you!

You told us about your issues, your concerns and also about what sort of services you'd like from Camden.

You told us that you want Camden's streets to be cleaner. You want the council to work more efficiently and more effectively for you. You want a choice of excellent schools for your children. You want the borough and its residents to be safe and secure and for us to work together to build a clean, sustainable and healthy environment. You also want us to find better ways of consulting and engaging with residents and businesses in the borough, so that the council can act more responsively to meet the needs that you have identified in your area.

In difficult economic times when resources are scarce, we all know the issues that we face are even more complex and harder to surmount. Over the next four years, we will need to work together as a community to resolve some of the problems we encounter. At times we will certainly have to make difficult choices, but we know that it is only by working closely with you that we will be able to design a range of different solutions that can work better for all of us in Camden.

Everyone who has worked with us knows just how hard we have fought for local people. This has sometimes been really difficult to do, but people have told us that it has made a real difference to them. And that makes it all worthwhile! We want every person in Camden to know that they can each make a valuable contribution that will make a real difference too - on their street, in their neighbourhood and to the way their council works.

Too often since the last borough elections in 2010, we have had to support frustrated residents from all across Camden who've told us that there is "no point in contacting the council" or coming to council meetings, because "no one listens or gets back to you and nothing changes". That's not acceptable.



Camden Labour has been in charge for the last four years. But all we hear from them are excuses or reasons why they can't do this or that.

They blame the government for all of their choices and they haven't taken responsibility for not managing some of our contracts (like street cleaning and repairs services) well enough. Blaming others is not what they were elected to do.

Camden Labour hasn't done enough to tackle inefficiency in council operations, manage contracts, hold staff to account when mistakes are made, or take responsibility for their choices. They're not putting residents first.

We believe in taking responsibility for choices. We also believe that the council really must understand what you need and how you want to access services, before any changes are made to how we work.

We want a more transparent and democratic system of decision-making that will allow your voice to be heard. A system that enables the representatives that you elect, to think about and discuss your concerns and your priorities. A system that will allow us all to work together, using our different perspectives, to find new ways of thinking about and addressing the competing needs that we will face in our communities.

We want you to know that what you say has made a difference to us. We want you to know that we will make sure that Camden's staff always put you first.

You will know that we have heard what you have said by the way you will be treated by Camden's staff over the coming four years.

We are determined to make sure that the council provides you with the services that you need and that these are delivered in the most effective manner.

You've told us that Camden isn't working for you. And we've listened.

Please read this manifesto. It will show you we have heard you. By voting for us, you will enable us to deliver the vision of Camden that you have shared with us.

Let's build a stronger community together and make sure that we save our hard-earned money by delivering the most efficient services that are right for you and your family!



Claire-Louise Leyland
Leader, Camden Conservatives

Executive Summary

Over the past few months, we have delivered surveys to homes across Camden and also spoken to many thousands of residents. You have told us about your issues, concerns and explained the sort of services that you want from your council. And you've shared with us the aspirations you have for your family and your community. Like you, we want Camden Council to get back on track. We will continue to make efficiency savings and develop new sources of non-tax revenue to provide money we can spend on Camden and its people. We will manage contracts tightly and use innovative ways of working to ensure that we can deliver the services that you have told us that you want and need. We will make sure that Camden's staff always put you first and we will also introduce a more transparent and democratically accountable systems of decision-making. This will help to ensure that councillors are able to discuss complex and important issues properly and to use the time spent in meetings to really focus on local people and their needs.

We want to work closely with you to:

- 1. Deliver better front-line services, so that you get value for your money**
- 2. Reduce waste and reduce your council tax over four years**
- 3. Make Camden Council open to all, by ensuring services are more accessible**
- 4. Increase school choice and training opportunities in Camden, so our children and young people can get the education, knowledge and skills they need to succeed**
- 5. Support local businesses and the local economy, so that Camden can grow and prosper**
- 6. Ensure tenants and leaseholders get a fair deal by making our housing and repairs services more efficient**
- 7. Support our elderly and vulnerable residents, so that they can play an active role in our community**
- 8. Protect the environment and a deliver a more sustainable future for Camden**

Delivering these pledges will be hard work and will take great determination, but you have told us that these are your priorities. We asked you for your views and you gave them to us. We have listened and we intend to make sure that Camden works better for you!



Our record for Camden

From 2006 to 2010, a Conservative & Liberal Democrat Coalition ran Camden Council. Providing good basic services for residents, like keeping our streets clean, was a major priority. We also set up a new school and built a new elderly person's home. We ended clamping, made parking resident-friendly and enhanced the streetscape across Camden. While doing all of this, we were also responsible for the first three years of council tax freezes in Camden's history!

This ended in 2010, when Labour resumed control. Since then, the quality of services provided by Camden has deteriorated. Camden Labour blame the government for the cuts they have made in each budget since 2010, ignoring the fact that the Labour government left behind a country that was borrowing nearly £160 billion a year, suffering from the deepest recession in our peacetime history and the biggest budget deficit in the developed world.

Each year we have shown in our Camden Conservative Budget Amendments¹ that it would have been possible to keep valued front line services open by re-structuring the council, rather than making the cuts that Labour chose to make.

Since 2010, we've all made sacrifices and now the economic plan is working: the deficit has been cut by a third, there are 1.6 million more private sector jobs and 400,000 more businesses.

Despite this, in Camden we are seeing local shops on our high streets closing down.



Local people tell us that there are not enough local state school places for our children.

The streets are not clean and hundreds of residents have contacted us to complain that rubbish is strewn around and bins are often over-flowing. This is because Camden Labour has taken £800,000 out of the street cleaning budget and they have not managed the contract rigorously enough to ensure that you get the services that were paid for with your money.

We're not opposed to everything the council is doing now just because Labour is in charge. Much of local government is, quite rightly, non-political and we have many dedicated council staff on our team, who continue to do excellent work across the borough. We're rightly proud of much of the work that Camden Council, its staff and its partners are doing. But we know that we can do better, because residents are telling us that Camden has got its priorities wrong.

Camden Labour want to see more spending, more borrowing and inevitably this will mean more taxes. Taking this approach will hurt hard-working people and it will hurt the long-term future of Camden.

¹ <http://www.hampsteadandkilburn.org/News>

Residents keep telling us that they do not feel that they are at the heart of Camden council anymore. That's unacceptable.

We've had to support people from all across Camden to cut through the endless red tape and inertia that they've encountered, when they've tried to express concern about an issue or service. Last year people made nearly 2000 complaints about Camden council. The main reasons given for the complaints were: no service, poor service, slow service or staff being disrespectful to residents.

We want things to change. We want to work with local people to create better practices and embed these in how the council works. We want the people you elect to run the council, not staff. We will make sure that staff work for us, so that we can do the work you have asked us to do.

We won't ignore the needs of local people like Camden Labour did last year, when they rushed to close the council's cashier office at the Town Hall.

There wasn't a consultation or a trial period beforehand and many older residents didn't even know that it was happening. Those without a computer, a "smart" device, or credit card found that they could no longer access parking and other services. Providing services online and through smart-phones is useful and convenient, but many residents need to talk to a real person. This should have been taken into account.

We are delighted that the Government has allowed us to review and change the way we work. Because of the greater power given to local authorities, it is really important that our council's decision-making is robust and that

processes are transparent.

People have told us that they want a more transparent and democratically accountable system of decision-making in Camden. We agree. We think that too many single-member decisions are made. We also think that too many decisions are devolved to officers, which means that councillors cannot scrutinise the decision-making process, or the way the decision is executed.

We want to introduce a system, more like the Committee System, that will ensure that all councillors are able to discuss issues, share the views of the people that they represent and to really make sure that the time spent in meetings focuses on local people and their needs.

Your Camden Conservative team has continued to work hard for you over the past four years. We have held Labour to account, made sure that residents know about the choices that are being made and insisted that local people get the services and help that they need to be able to thrive in our vibrant borough.

We proved in the last administration that we understand the issues and can run the council well. In opposition, we listened to you and fought hard to ensure your voice was heard. Now we want to use what you have told us that you want, to run Camden council in a way that delivers for you! To do that we need your vote on 22nd May.

Your vote will enable us to improve your life for the next four years, because we will work with you to meet the challenges that we face Together we can deliver the results that you want and that Camden so badly needs!

Our shared vision for Camden

Camden is known all around the world as a richly diverse, beautiful and very exciting borough. It stretches from the urban bustle of Holborn & Covent Garden and Bloomsbury, to the verdant open spaces of Hampstead Heath in the north. The people who live in Camden are diverse too, but most are brought together by a shared and abiding love for this area and often, a strong sense of belonging to their community. Whatever their background and whichever part of the borough they call their home, most of the people who live or work in Camden want to protect this special part of London and believe that all residents in Camden deserve a fair chance in life.

Living closely together we all experience every day the pressures of inner-city living, but also know that it is the rich mix of different communities that brings vibrancy and creativity to Camden. Protecting our diverse and tightly-knit community will ensure that Camden continues to be a special place to live and work: a place where people can come and settle and with hard work and determination, begin to flourish.

We know that you want to see Camden council listen to its people and to deliver excellent services by enabling you to influence decisions. We will make sure that Camden's staff put residents first.

The new council building is opening in July 2014 and staff will all now be working in the same building, in brand new flexible, shared workspaces. We want staff teams to start to communicate more and work together more effectively across all the council's services.



We will ensure that every single Camden staff member knows that our focus must be on our residents and on resolving their issues. We are tired of seeing issues fall between teams, where no one seems to have taken responsibility for identifying and delivering results for local people.

Camden has a good reputation as an innovative local authority, but when we start to think about making changes to how we work, it is sometimes important to hold in mind that smaller organisations can move faster and be more creative and adaptable. We will build partnerships with local businesses and the community & voluntary sector to learn from how they work and to pilot some of our new approaches.

Let's get back on track. Our budget amendments have shown we can combine sound finance with more limited cuts to front-line services. We will use service innovation to reduce spending, while maintaining the quality of services. We will have to do more than make incremental changes to the way we work in Camden, because of the nature and scale of the challenges we face.

Innovation will be important and it is at the heart of why we are Conservatives. We respect tradition, but we can be progressive too. We have seen the evidence for creative ways in which this is being done in local authorities across the country².

Working in a way that's financially and socially sustainable means tackling failure before it happens. Services in Camden now tend to be too reactive and address today's problems with too little emphasis on preventing those of tomorrow: early intervention is important in reducing pressure on the public purse.

We need to redesign public services and spending around the needs of our communities and the people who use services.

Camden Labour talk about protecting the vulnerable, but why are so many people are being left further and further behind?

We all want to protect vulnerable people, but we believe that we can only do this by encouraging them to be all that they can be.

We believe that social mobility isn't only based on targets and transfers of cash, but on inspiring people to believe in their capacity to succeed.

We will do this by encouraging a range of first-class primary and secondary school choices, so parents will be more able to make the right decision for their child to gain a first-class education. We will provide local support for local business and promote entrepreneurship and innovation.

And we will create a housing ladder that

offers opportunities to increase home ownership and regenerate deprived parts of Camden.

When it works well, local government is best placed to help communities to manage the challenges we are all facing. We have the resources, the skills and ultimately we believe, the responsibility to collaborate locally with our local residents, local businesses, our charities and voluntary sector organisations and other statutory services.

We want everyone to focus on what they are good at and part of what we are good at, is enabling many different peoples and groups to work better together for Camden

The best way to protect the vulnerable is to prevent them becoming vulnerable in the first place. Camden Conservatives want to work with you to ensure that every child has opportunities to recognise their full potential; working age people have chances to fulfil their dreams; and older people are helped to live active, independent lives.

We believe that our strength as a community lies in our differences. We don't want top down leadership that treats individuals like cogs in a machine.

We want to value each individual for their own unique mix of skills and aptitudes and to help them to realise these, so that they can be used to enrich our community and to build our local economy.

Work with us to bring about the changes we need in Camden!

²Parker, S & Leadbeater, (2013) *Call for Actions: 10 Lessons for Local Authority Innovators*, London: Nesta.

Better front-line services:

Making sure you get value for your money

We want Camden Council to get back on track and to make sure that we provide the front line services that residents want and need. **This is our first priority and it's the first thing that we will do when we are in charge again.**

Street cleaning, rubbish and recycling

The street cleaning budget has been cut consistently by Camden Labour since 2010. More than £800k has now been taken out of the budget, compromising rubbish collection.



Residents tell us almost every day that their streets are dirty. Some, like Mrs A. from Belsize told us that recycling boxes haven't been collected regularly and that bags are left all over the street after collections.

Mrs H. told us that since the street cleaning budget was cut, she's noticed that the leaves aren't being swept up as regularly and there is dog mess on the pavements. She worries

that older people might be more likely to slip and fall.

We know that our streets are far dirtier than Westminster, which also uses the same contractor for cleaning. We spoke to Westminster about this and they told us that they manage their street cleaners very closely and have actually increased the street cleaning budget, as they see it as an essential service, with public health benefits.

You've told us that things need to change. We want to put money back into this vital service and we also want to manage the contract better in Camden. Since 2011, there have been over 42,000 rectification orders. That means that 250 times a week on average, the service hasn't been provided right first time.

Let's fix this right away and start to clean up Camden!

Camden Conservatives will:

- Keep Camden's streets clean by re-instating weekend street cleaning, across the borough of Camden this would cost less than £500,000
- Manage the contracts better, so that they work for you
- Make the annual road condition survey accessible online and work together to ensure that all of our potholes are sorted out

Community Safety

Camden Conservatives believe that everybody has a right to feel safe in Camden and we don't think enough is being done in this area. We need to work with all parts of our community to ensure that we each start to take responsibility for keeping Camden safe and behaving well in public. People need to realize that they can't get away with intimidating our residents or behaving without regard for others. And we need to make sure that everyone knows that it is worth reporting incidents, because we will take them seriously and take appropriate action.

Miss O. from Gospel Oak has been struggling with a noisy, abusive neighbor for months. She's really worried about her daughter.

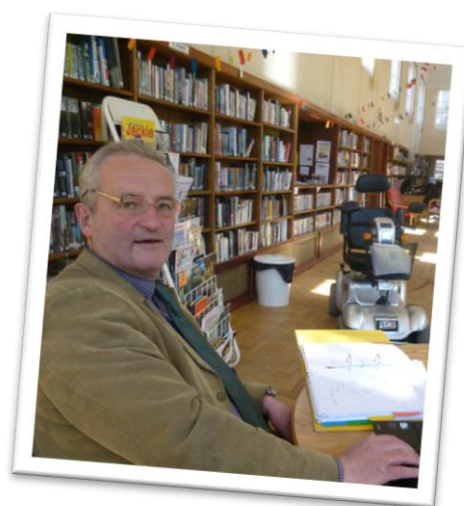
Mrs K. from Swiss Cottage told us: "I nearly had a heart attack as I turned the corner and saw a cyclist speeding right at me on the pavement. I know the health benefits and how much fun cycling can be, but we need to make sure that cyclists are aware that pavements are for pedestrians!"

Camden Conservatives will:

- Set aside a fund for additional Metropolitan Police Officers/ Community Support Officers to bolster the work done by our Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Roll out Neighbourhood Watch across the borough
- Implement more CCTV on estates
- Work to make it easier to remove anti-social tenants from our estates
- Make sure cyclists stay on the road, not on our pavements
- Show zero tolerance for gangs, drugs, illegal sub-letting of council properties and squatters

Libraries

Labour cut adrift three of our local libraries – Belsize, Chalk Farm and Keats. We know that local people are passionate about our libraries and we've worked hard to support them to save these libraries for the community. Cllr Jonny Bucknell still volunteers one afternoon a week at Belsize Community Library.



That these three wonderful community libraries remain open is a triumph for local people. It shows us what amazing and resourceful residents we have, but it will be a challenge for these volunteers to raise the funds to keep these libraries open each year.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Maintain all of our existing libraries
- Extend opening hours and use libraries to offer appropriate front-line services, so that they act as a community hub, bringing together young and old
- Allow community libraries access to Camden Library facilities and allow the creation of more community libraries

Parking

We want to make it easy for visitors and residents to get around Camden and people tell us that parking regulations need to be clearer and easier to follow. Not everyone understands the regulations now and too often we find that signs are confusing, or that reminders have not been sent out.

People have also been upset about the move away from paper permits and many wanted to have a say about the change, because the new system doesn't seem to work for them.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Freeze parking fees for residents for a year and then review charges annually
- Ensure that all resident parking permit-holders are sent written reminders as well as text and email reminders
- Provide a windscreen sticker with the permit's expiry date
- Give a 10 minutes grace period on parking meters
- Recognise that residents' parking is designed to reduce congestion on our streets. This is done most effectively by charging people higher amounts if they register second or third cars at an address, rather than by basing charges on CO2 emissions
- Commit to map out the utility provision (cables, pipes, wires) in Camden that run under our streets and encourage utility companies to synchronise their maintenance work to reduce road-works

Public Health

We want to deliver improved public health for local people and enhance the service jointly provided by our health partners and social services. We will work to develop more constructive partnerships with health providers and commissioners to ensure that people in our community get the best possible services and also, that they get the sort of services that they want and need.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Set targets to ensure that local residents have the best services that can be provided
- Work in partnership and directly manage the Better Care Fund budget



Less waste –lower taxes

Conservative councils always remember that it is your hard-earned money that they spend on services. Local government is the most efficient level of government – or, at least, it can be: spending money closer to taxpayers and in a way that’s more responsive to their needs. However, that requires vigilant supervision – and, sadly, far too much waste has built up in Town Hall.

Over the past four years, Camden Conservatives have presented detailed alternative budgets that would have cut through waste: allowing us to restore our borough’s finances, preserve the front-line services that Labour cut, and reduce Council Tax.

Despite these budgets being signed off by the council’s Director of Finance as achievable, Labour have rejected them every single time. Instead, they decided to preserve wasteful spending, and cut front-line services.

We know that you pay a lot of council tax in Camden compared with some other boroughs:

Band D Council Tax 2014/15

Westminster:	£676.74
Hammersmith & Fulham:	£1,034.16
Islington:	£1,260.87
Camden:	£1,324.48

This is your money and it should be spent wisely.

Instead Camden Labour chose to spend some of your money on vanity projects: they have increased the number of edition of the council’s magazine to ten a year, in direct contradiction of government guidelines!

The Camden magazine cost you £165,000 a year! That’s three times as much as Islington spends and enough to have funded one of our libraries for a whole year.

You’ve told us that you don’t want us to spend your money this way. We agree and we will scrap this council propaganda outlet and rather work in partnership with local newspapers to disseminate information.

While the national government has provided funding to allow councils to freeze council tax, Labour have sought to increase taxes by the back door. Labour councils, including Labour-run Islington, have pushed to allow councils to abolish the single persons’ council tax discount: hiking taxes by £312 a year for a person living alone in a Band D property. Labour-run Camden refused to oppose these plans. We will fight to retain the single persons’ council tax discount.

Labour have also imposed a higher council tax on empty properties. We have expressed reservations about this because local people have told us about problems with this system.

After a flood from the top floor gutted the whole building, Mrs C. from Belsize has faced real difficulties. She told us: "We were forced to move and to rent another property in Camden. Claiming insurance has been complicated and repairs are still not complete after 18 months. This means that we now have to pay two sets of council tax and rent. And after three months we’ve been told that we will have to pay 150% on a building that is uninhabitable. I’m really worried about how I can possibly pay this”.

Camden Conservatives want to use resources wisely and to invest for the future.

We will grow capital spending at least in line with our national income and increase sales of commercial property.

Kings Cross St Pancras has the highest footfall in the country, with people coming from the continent, the north of England and all over London. This offers us many commercial opportunities.

A Conservative-led Camden would learn from other councils too, so that we can make sure that we can get more without charging Camden people more.

We would look to increase the sponsorship and advertising revenue that we can earn in these areas, to pay for services. Westminster raised £2million in Covent Garden through sponsorship and we could do the same, or better in Kings Cross, allowing us to re-invest in schools, fund additional youth clubs or luncheon clubs for the elderly.

Only if we properly fix our public finances can we keep lowering taxes for hardworking people in a way that lasts.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Keep council tax down and aim to reduce it over four years
- Campaign to block any erosion of current council tax discounts
- Reduce waste and increase efficiency in Town Hall, by merging back-office teams and reducing bureaucracy
- Abolish Camden's vanity newspaper, reduce taxpayers money spent on funding trade union positions, and reduce spending on consultants and high-cost agency staff
- Use Camden's current services to raise alternative revenue streams for local residents, such as advertising and renting unused properties



A Council that is accessible to all:

Speak to people who understand the borough & your needs, or pay online

Residents keep telling us that they can't get hold of anyone when they have a problem. This is unacceptable.

We will review Camden's internal systems to make services simpler to use and also, let local people know how their money is being spent. We want local accountability – and that means having an easy-to-use Council that always puts our residents first.

Contacting the council

Under Labour, many services are now harder to access. Why is it so difficult to speak to the right person? Why is getting a parking permit or paying for parking so hard?

Using online systems to streamline services can cut costs and is essential today. But many of our residents do not own a computer or smartphone and alternative solutions should be found for them. Mrs F. from Bloomsbury told us that she'd tried hard from a long time to get a ramp put in, to help her to get into her home. She struggled to speak to someone or to find the right department. She had made no progress at all, until we took on her case!

Camden Conservatives will:

- Review the systems in place and improve communication, to make it easier for you to contact the council
- Get rid of multiple choice answering system and reinstate "Dial 8" to speak to a person
- Try to employ more staff who live in Camden

Planning and Licensing

So many people struggle with planning, enforcement and licensing issues. People tell us that they find these services confusing and hard to navigate. Currently few residents seem to know that they can give their views about applications in their area, as part of the consultation process.

As these issues can have an enormous impact on everyday life in our community, it is vital that people know they can participate and that they can have an impact on the decisions that are made.

Basement applications have long concerned us and it was Camden Conservatives who put through the first basement planning policy (DP 27: *Basements and Lightwells*). We know that basements have caused much concern and damage to properties in the area. Individual projects are considered in isolation without taking into account the human impact on the community and this needs to change.

Mrs B, from Camden Town and Primrose Hill told us about the difficulties that she has had since a neighbour started building a basement. Bad cracks have started to form in her hallway. She hopes that Camden will start to consider the cumulative impact on an area, when deciding individual applications.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Increase the consultation area, so that more residents are entitled to receive both planning and licensing notices - currently restricted to adjoining properties

- Protect local assets like period buildings and open spaces, by making sure that more people participate in consultations about local area plans
- Negotiate fair Section 106 agreements, that put the needs of current and future residents ahead of those of developers
- Clamp down on those developers who break the terms of their planning permission, by ensuring that we have better and consistent enforcement of planning permissions and in this way, ensure that developers know they can no longer break the rules and think that they won't get caught
- Ensure that planning officers are trained to be able to address the technical issues involved in planning, e.g. hydrology
- Find a way to ensure that Camden is able to take account of the wider context, as the cumulative impact on the area is so important for our community
- Explore approaches being taken in other boroughs to limit the size of basements, particularly in conservation areas.



More schools and opportunities:

Making sure that our children and young people can succeed

Every parent wants their child to have the best possible start in life. Whether that's in early years education, school, or apprenticeships, it is vitally important that we get these services right for our children and young people.

Our country will need 100,000 new engineers by 2010. We currently have fewer women going into science careers than any other developed country. Camden must play its part in changing this, by promoting these career paths to our girls and boys (aiming first at our 10-12 year olds).

Camden Conservatives are committed to greater availability and quality of these opportunities, so that children from all backgrounds can achieve their full potential!



More school choice

We're proud of the high quality of Camden's schools, but too many parents have to send their kids out of (or across the borough) to go to school, or have no option of where to go. Camden has

more children attending primary schools in neighbouring boroughs than anywhere in London, and way above the average number attending secondary schools elsewhere: an indictment of the lack of school places in our own borough.

Many ordinary Camden families resort to sending their children to private schools they can't easily afford – with the second highest number of children attending private primary schools and sixth highest number attending private secondary schools of any London borough.

We believe in the important role played by independent schools in the borough and think it is right that parents should be able to select the best possible education for their children. We want to enable parents to be able to choose the same quality and choice of education in the state sector. As a result, we are committed to providing greater choice for parents: working with local schools to ensure that we can provide world-class education for our children.

We will support parent groups wishing to establish new free schools, to help promote diversity of education in Camden. We particularly recognise the clear need for more school places in West Hampstead, and will push to deliver a new secondary school in the area.

We would focus on improving educational outcomes for primary and secondary and supporting local providers to work together to widen the vocational programme and 16 plus offer.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Support parents wanting to establish new free schools, including a new secondary school in NW6
- Ensure that all free schools in Camden are seen as an intrinsic part of our 'family of schools'
- Give power to local schools by supporting any application from existing schools to become academies
- Set up a Camden campaign to promote maths and science subjects at schools, to encourage more girls to take science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at university
- Pass the maximum of government money directly to the schools, and limit the work of the Camden Education Service
- Set up a Schools' Inspection team that can use expertise to challenge and improve standards of local schools

More school and youth sport

We believe in the benefit of competitive schools sports and will recruit mentors to inspire children and young people.

We will also arrange exciting events to ignite young people's ambition and help them realise their sporting goals!

Mr M. from Kentish Town told us how upset he had been when Camden closed the Maitland Park Sports Centre.

This meant that he and his children could no longer access their favourite sports.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Build more sports facilities in local parks and offer sports taster weekends twice a year (covering summer Olympic sports, plus rugby and cricket) so that we double participation of 8-14 year olds in sports activities
- Offer concessional rates for leisure centres for anyone under 25 years
- Stop Camden Labour's habit of closing down of sports facilities (e.g. Mornington, Maitland Park) and instead support these, by spending to improve the resources and increase access



- Reorient our youth services towards sports activities to maximise participation

More apprenticeships

We want to develop more apprenticeship schemes and put enterprise education in schools, teaching young people about creative problem-solving, collaboration, and other key business skills, so that our young people will be able to gain the skills they need to find (or create)

fulfilling jobs. We believe young people should be earning or learning. If they don't have a job they should be in school, college, or doing an apprenticeship. A life on benefits should not be an option.

We want to ensure that our Secondary Schools and Further Education providers offer a world-class education and that there are appropriate training opportunities and apprenticeships available for all of our 14-24 year olds.

These can help them to gain the confidence and skills needed to find a fulfilling career.

Mr A. from Cantelowes told us that young boys in his community needed to be inspired to take part in the community, by starting to see what work entails and how satisfying it can be.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Secure apprenticeships (both paid and unpaid) using partners in the borough and local businesses, so that our young and unemployed people can understand working life and gain the necessary life skills and work experience to help them to get onto the job ladder
- Schedule more work fairs and conventions each year for six-formers and graduates
- Offer more advice services in schools regarding work/career options
- Encourage volunteering from university students studying in Camden

More affordable childcare

The government has offered help to families to meet the cost of childcare, and help to providers to ensure the best possibly quality. This includes making childcare tax-free for parents in work or providing full-time care.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Encourage greater nursery provision in Camden, helping young families to get back to work



Supporting local businesses:

Let's work together to help Camden grow and prosper

Camden has some vibrant business centres, such as the new Kings Cross development, with major national and international companies based here. We want to encourage these businesses to take an active role in our community, employing local people and using local services.

Local people are worried that our high streets are becoming increasingly homogenous, with fewer independent shops. We all know that local businesses provide jobs and stimulate our local economy. They are so important to us and we want to help them to thrive.

The number of businesses in the UK has reached a record high, having increased by 400,000 over the last three years. We want the council to work with employers to alleviate poverty, leading the way by supporting people on low income.

We want Camden to focus on removing any obstacles that stand in the way of small businesses, rather than be an obstacle to local entrepreneurs. Mr Y. from West Hampstead told us about his small business and how much he needed Camden's support to be able to thrive. We want to help him to develop his business.

Boris Johnson has used his power as Mayor of London to introduce free parking on routes controlled by City Hall, and Camden Town Hall should do the same.

We asked local people and local businesses if it would help to make the first 20 minutes of parking free on smaller high streets, to help boost local businesses on overlooked high streets. Most people thought that it would help!

Camden Conservatives will:

- Make the first 20 minutes parking free on smaller high streets, encouraging people to come and use our local shops
- Consult local people to see if they think that Camden should start to give a two year rent and rate holiday for start-up business in wards with the highest levels of poverty
- Support our local theatres and other cultural centres by promoting them more widely
- Support the development of themed "A Day Out in Camden" packages that link several different sectors and encourage partners to work together
- Pilot a local business investment scheme project, with flexible financial support to assist new and existing businesses by offering capital grants
- Enhance some of our town centres, such as the Kilburn High Road, West End Lane and Finchley Road areas, by investing in them and maintaining them better with an on-going refurbishment programme that will support our local businesses

A fair deal for tenants and leaseholders

Coming into power in 2010, Labour overturned the existing council policy of selling off hard-to-let properties to fund much-needed repairs. This immediately created a black hole in our budget. Since then, they have concentrated on raising rents and borrowing money to cover the shortfall.

People from all across the borough tell us that housing systems in Camden are not working well enough and that the repairs contracts don't seem to be properly managed. Our housing allocation system needs to be simpler and easier to understand, so that those who need support to get back on their feet can be identified by Camden and housed.

Repairs are often hard to get and it can take several visits before the problem is finally fixed.

All across Camden, our Council tenants and leaseholders are worried about the state of their heating and hot water installations. Breakdowns are occurring (without notice) and usually during the coldest periods.

Also, many of our leaseholders tell us that they don't think they're treated fairly.

Camden needs to manage its stock better, value both tenant and leaseholder occupants, and carry out timely high-quality repairs.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Introduce a root-and-branch change in how maintenance and repairs are managed in Camden
- Reduce the cost and time it takes for repair to be completed, ensure repairs are more responsive with better quality of service, pass on resulting savings to tenants and leaseholders, and make final payments only when work has been signed off
- Use competitive tenders and experienced officers to specify repairs
- Use officers and tenants and or leaseholders to check that work has been done and to a high standard
- Sell freeholds of street properties that have over 50% leaseholders in them
- Encourage right-to-buy among council tenants
- Where possible, encourage the setting up of Residents (tenants & leaseholders) Management Organisations to deal with small to mid-sized repairs and maintenance, thus forcing cost-savings from builders
- Review how tenant participation works, cutting the amount of red tape an estate's residents' association needs to get through to get its repairs and maintenance work

Support elderly and vulnerable residents

Caring for our Community

Elderly vulnerable and disabled people tell us that they would welcome the opportunity to live an independent life.

We want to make sure that all people are treated with respect and that those who need support from us for a time are cared for well.

We also need to take care of the staff who deliver services, as they do such important and sometimes difficult work on our behalf.

Mrs C. from Fortune Green told us: “It was really hard for me when the resource centres for the elderly were reduced. These are so important for me and I’m now often alone.”

We want to make sure that we safeguard residents who might be exploited, particularly raising awareness of domestic violence and human trafficking.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Consult local people to ensure that there are sufficient resources centres for the elderly
- Older people will be entitled to a leisure pass with 52 free sessions for swimming, exercise etc.
- Designated GPs for vulnerable elderly patients – in other words, work with partners to make sure that we have proper family doctors who are able to give care to those most in need

and prevent unnecessary hospital visits

- Revive luncheon clubs for older residents and promote a range of activities for older or more vulnerable residents to get out regularly to enjoy our parks and open spaces and meet people, where possible
- Encourage retired residents to help set up and participate in local volunteering schemes, by working with local groups and charities to provide a gateway for them to get even more involved in their local community
- Ensure that the London Living Wage is now paid to all council staff and sub-contractors including homecare staff in Camden
- Hold an annual “Anti-Slavery Day” in Camden



Protect the environment:

Delivering a more sustainable future for Camden

Caring for Camden

We are lucky to live in one of the most wonderful and vibrant areas of London. Each ward has a very different character and the build environment ranges from modern high-rise buildings to long-established traditional Conservation Areas.

Alongside and dotted in and amongst our urban areas, we have some extraordinarily beautiful parks, nature reserves and other open spaces.

Biodiversity is important and we know that we need to take care of the environment if we are to have healthy communities in Camden.

Camden Conservatives will:

- Hold an annual “Camden Outdoors” festival for schools, linked to our Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme and work with the armed forces based in Camden
- Take greater care of the trees in our parks and open spaces, by improving the management of our tree stock, ensuring that they are looked after well
- Support schemes that increase the amount of cycling in Camden
- Work with local groups to devise and invest in schemes that encourage more walking across the whole of the borough
- Work with partners to develop and pilot new approaches and different

ways of working that will help us to address air quality in Camden



Standing up for Camden

We all know that in a city like London, many issues that arise will affect more than one borough, or in fact, many will impact residents across the whole city. The boundaries between boroughs sometimes seem arbitrary and we need to be able to think in a joined-up way to maximise benefits for the communities across the capital.

There are national issues too that we will need to address, as we know that these will affect people in Camden and we may be called upon to fight for our local interests.

We want to make sure that we stand up for local people, local families and local businesses and we will continue to actively lobby the Mayor of London and the government on any issues that matter to you.

HS2

The proposed high-speed rail line from London to Birmingham is a great threat to Camden. We know that Camden is a vital contributor to the UK's economic success, contributing 1% of its GDP. It is home to thousands of small businesses and the world famous Camden market, which is one of London's most visited tourist attractions.

We fought hard, alongside other local groups to save Camden from the plans to build a line between HS1-2link through Camden. Our "Save Camden" petition had over 43,000 signatures when we presented it to the Secretary of State Patrick McLoughlin.

We were pleased that he agreed with local people that the plans would have would meant "too many compromises" for Camden".

We will continue to lobby on behalf of local people and local businesses, as we know that many are still very worried about the plans for Euston, the impact on air quality in the area and the disruption that will be caused by road closures and traffic movements during construction.



Winning in Camden!

We have chosen a team of local candidates who really know Camden. They will be able to represent you well on the council, because they are really interested in hearing what you have to say, passionate about understanding local issues and local concerns and determined to deliver local people's aspirations for their area.

We work all across Camden and want to continue to do this, with Conservative councillors in seats across these wards:

- Frognal
- Swiss Cottage
- Belsize
- Hampstead Town
- West Hampstead
- Fortune Green
- Bloomsbury
- Regents Park
- Camden Town with Primrose Hill
- Holborn & Covent Garden
- Gospel Oak



Our councils have real power now. You've taken the time to respond to our surveys and to talk to us on the doorstep. And we have listened to you.

Please remember to come out and vote on 22nd May and help us to make a difference for you and your community. We want to get Camden back on track and to make sure that Camden's staff always put you first!



Camden Conservatives