

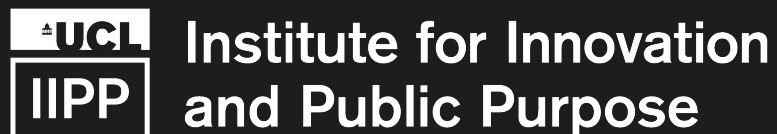
# An Introduction to Camden

---

The Camden Renewal Commission

London Borough of Camden | UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

September 2020





# Introduction & Background



# Introduction

Camden's Renewal Commission has been established to respond to this unique moment in time – one with deep social and economic challenges that present a call to action to build a better economy and society than we had before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ambitions of the Commission – to create a fairer, more just, inclusive and sustainable economy - are not new. But the context in which we are operating is notably different from the one in which we were operating before, with a disproportionately experienced public health crisis, rapid rise in unemployment and significant threats to whole sectors of our economy.

As we launch the Commission's work, it is important to understand how Camden arrived to where it is today – including an understanding of Camden's community and the vision that guides the local authority's work.

*This paper sets out our existing strategy and key contextual information about Camden as a place to inform the work of the Commission going forward.*

## Background

In Camden, child poverty is too high at 43% and the gap in healthy life expectancy between the poorest and richest parts of the borough is too wide – poorer citizens are expected to live in poor health almost 20 years earlier than those who are better off.

Young people who grow up here cannot afford to stay, and families are moving out of the borough. We also face challenges with access to jobs, the availability of affordable high-quality and family-sized homes, keeping young people safe and the impact of the climate emergency. Good health and wellbeing is also fundamental to the

ability of our residents to take up and remain in good work, with the impact of ill health most pronounced for our most deprived communities. Rising long term conditions, such as back pain and mental illness are health related barriers to work that require collaboration across partners to resolve.

But Camden has one of the most dynamic economies in the UK and is home to global businesses and academic, community and public institutions that can help us tackle these challenges. We want to bring the collective creativity of these organisations together with our citizens to ensure everyone can access and take advantage of the wealth and opportunity they bring to the borough.

We are a council with a strong track record of managing finances and consistently delivering our core services well. This has helped us achieve many positive outcomes like fewer families living in Temporary Accommodation, consistently sustaining a low rate of looked-after children and effectively managing risk in the community. But despite this, we face a significant financial challenge – not only due to the recent challenges posed by Covid-19, but also after a decade of cuts from central government, increasing pressure on our services, a taxation system that doesn't reflect the wealth, value or need in our communities, and ongoing uncertainty about the model and impact of the UK's exit from the European Union.

The Council is expecting Covid-19 related financial pressures of £55 million in 2020/21. This is due to increased costs (social care, additional support needs for households vulnerable to Covid-19 and for homeless people), reduced income from rents, fees and local taxation, and delays in our saving programme. The risk of a second wave of Covid-19, and/or a local or national lockdown, could increase these financial pressures further.

Over the medium term the Council is facing a budget gap of c£40m by 2023. The budget gap is a result of ongoing cost pressures along with expected reductions in local tax collection rates. The expected budget gap will mean the Council will likely need to agree a new Medium Term Financial Strategy with budget savings in order to ensure the Council remains financially resilient. The Council has no certainty about government funding beyond the end of this (2020/21) financial year.

# The development of Camden 2025 & Our Camden Plan

During the autumn and winter of 2017/18, thousands of local people, including residents, community organisations, businesses and other partners, came together to discuss what Camden should be like in 2025.

We knew that achieving the long-term vision for Camden would require the council, local organisations, community groups and residents to work together – so engagement work aimed to develop a sense of shared endeavour and explore the roles organisations and residents can play in making Camden a better place for everyone to live in 2025.

This included piloting new approaches to resident involvement, creating the space and opportunity for more deliberative discussions and encouraging collaborative working. As part of this work we set up Camden's first Citizens' Assembly – a broadly representative group of residents, who came together over three months to begin to explore some of the tough challenges facing the borough and the role of the council, residents and other organisations in overcoming them. This was in addition to a range of engagement activity, including a series of joint engagement events with VCS organisations, opportunities to engage at libraries, online via social media and a dedicated online forum, dedicated events for businesses, and community conversations led by our community researchers (residents employed by the council to undertake research).

This initial phase of engagement explored:

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

These discussions developed a new community vision for the borough – Camden 2025.

## An Introduction to Camden 2025

Camden has a proud, rebellious spirit that throughout its history has seen communities come together to tackle problems, and to bring about real social change. We want to make Camden a better borough – a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind. Together, we will create a place that works for everyone, and where everybody has a voice.

*For Camden 2025 to succeed, it must be a call to action that inspires a new way of working and encourages courageous leadership and a culture of challenging the status quo. It must build on the success of previous work to help us find solutions to some of our biggest challenges. For example, when our housing tenants rejected the government's suggestion to transfer our housing stock to an arm's-length management organisation, we listened and stood up for our tenants, continuing to manage it ourselves, despite losing out on financial incentives. This was evidence of Camden's community solidarity, activism and radicalism.*

## Camden 2025 vision

Camden 2025 sets out five broad ambitions for the borough. In 2025...

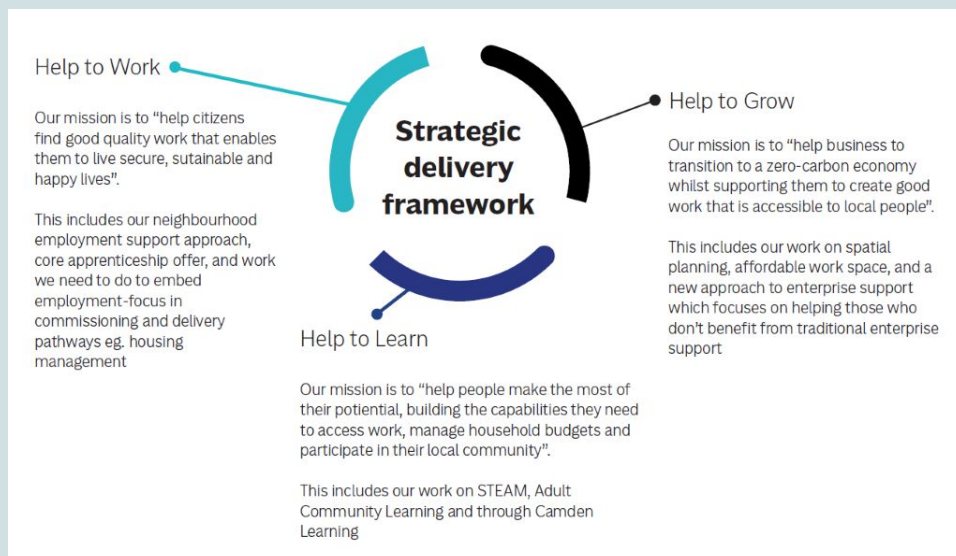
- Everyone in Camden should have a place they call home.
- Growth in Camden should be strong and inclusive – everyone should be able to access the work that is right for them.
- Camden should be safe, strong and open, and everyone should be able to contribute to their community.
- Camden should be a clean, vibrant and sustainable place.
- Everyone in Camden should be able to live a healthy, independent life.

# From economic development to building an inclusive economy

Camden 2025 sets out a vision for a Camden to be a place where growth is strong and inclusive. This builds on the previous corporate strategy (2012-2018) to redistribute the benefits of growth – a progressive ‘pro-growth’ stance that has delivered substantial outcomes, but an approach with limitations that are clear to see.

Camden 2025’s ambitions for inclusivity are clear – but it does not set out an explicit route map for how we deliver on this ambition.

Last year, we began to re-think our economic development, how we involve citizens, and how we capture the benefits of growth - pivoting from an economic development approach to an inclusive economy strategy.



We see the building blocks of an inclusive economy approach in Camden as:

- **Work and Livelihood:** Supporting residents into, and employers to offer, good work – going beyond thinking simply about ‘jobs’ and GVA growth
- **Curious Camden:** Supporting people to develop ‘capability’ across different stages of life to enable access to work, financial inclusion and participation.
- **Voice and value:** Changing the system so citizens can shape how decisions are made about the local economy and develop new ways of generating value where we know citizens do not benefit from historic growth policies
- **Sustainable economy:** Ensuring our economy responds directly to Camden’s declaration of a climate emergency, transitioning locally to a zero-carbon economy in a manner that addresses inequality.
- **Radical reform:** Working with partners to make an evidence-based case for change to national employment, skills and welfare services. This recognises that London lacks the levers it needs at present.

# From economic development to building an inclusive economy



Through the Renewal Commission, we will be creating a framework for developing an inclusive economy approach in Camden revising and developing our view of what it takes to build an inclusive economy in Camden – helping to set goals for what we want to achieve, and developing ideas to deliver this.



# The profile of Camden





# Camden's Profile

**Camden has a rich history, and is renowned for its vibrant cultural scene, impressive educational sector and flourishing startup community. But behind these well-known features of our community, Camden is home to a diverse population facing a variety of challenges.**

## Camden's Population

Comprising almost 22 square kilometres in the heart of London, Camden is a borough of diversity and contrasts. The latest estimate of Camden's resident population is 270,000 at mid-2019. Camden is only 1.4% of Greater London by area, but it is the fifth highest borough for population density and home to 7.1% of London's employment (compared to 3% of London's population).

Camden's population changes regularly – with the 6th largest population churn in the UK. Between mid-2018 and mid-2019, ONS estimates a total migration inflow to Camden of 40,700 people and a total outflow of 34,200 people. The majority of both those moving in and out of the borough are moving within the UK, and a significant number of those moving in and out are students. Camden is home to 11 higher education institutions and the largest student population in London, with more than 27,600 higher education students living in Camden: 59% are women and 57% are from overseas.

This large student population also contributes to the age distribution of Camden's population, as is typical of a metropolitan, university city, with 35% of Camden's residents aged under 30, and 65% under 45. According to the 2011 census\*, 34% of Camden residents were from black or minority ethnic groups, and a further 22% non-British white residents including Irish and others originating from other English-speaking countries, the EU and Eastern Europe. After English,

the most commonly spoken languages were Bengali (13%), French (8%), Spanish (6%), Italian and Somali (5%), German, Arabic, Portuguese and Polish (4%).

## Housing, income and employment

According to the 2011 census, 32% of Camden's households live in private rented accommodation. More households own their home outright (17%) than own with a mortgage or loan (15%). 85% of households live in purpose-built or converted flats, compared to 15% living in houses. And households often have less space in their homes compared to the rest of the UK – 19% of households in 2011 had more than 1.5 persons per bedroom, ranking 12th highest amongst local authorities in England and Wales.

Estimated equivalised median household income in Camden in 2019 was £36,053. There are significant differences across the borough – ranging from a median household income in St Pancras and Somers Town of £24,674 compared to £47,748 in Hampstead Town. 19% of households in Camden have a median household income of less than £20,000 a year. This income variance is in part contributed to by the inequality some residents of Camden find in accessing the labour market. In 2019, 61% of disabled Camden residents were in work – compared to 54% in London. Compared to non-disabled people, this is an employment gap of 12%. As of 2019, Camden had a comparatively small gender employment gap, 5% compared to the London average of

*\*The 2011 census provides the most reliable data on Camden's population, but is now nearly a decade old and therefore should be considered with its limitations in mind.*

11%. In contrast, Camden has a concerning high ethnicity employment gap – with 51% of non-white Camden residents in work, 30% lower than white Camden residents. This employment gap is felt particularly acutely by black residents, who are half as likely to be in employment than white residents.

Variance in income and high housing costs contribute to the prevalence of child poverty in the borough – which is highest in the south of the borough. 22% of children in Camden live in poverty before housing costs are accounted for – that's 12,380 children, but the pressure of high housing costs in Camden means that the number of children we would consider to be in poverty increases to 24,118 children, or 43% of all children in Camden once housing costs are accounted for. In 2018, 1 in 4 children in Camden were receiving free school meals.



# The impact of Covid-19 on employment

We are still in a rapidly changing employment situation. The number of people claiming unemployment benefits in London rose sharply between January and May, increasing by 2.5 times – this is a sharper rise than the UK average.

30 per cent of London jobs have been furloughed at some point since the introduction of the scheme. High furlough rates correspond with the hardest hit sectors (retail, leisure and hospitality), which also correspond with lower income levels. The rise in unemployment benefit claims is higher in outer London boroughs, but inner London's claim numbers are still twice that of last year. Younger people have been hardest hit, consistent with the sectoral impact of the crisis. The number of 25-29-year-old Londoners claiming unemployment related benefits has almost tripled.

Camden is experiencing impacts of Covid-19 broadly in line with the London perspective. Covid-19 has served to exacerbate and amplify existing inequalities with existing inequalities being exacerbated and amplified. The number of people claiming benefits has more than doubled. The number of people on Universal Credit is rising faster in Camden than Central London and Great Britain with an increase of 8,289 people on Universal Credit since the crisis. This includes a rise of 1,100 people who are working but have a low income which requires them to look for new work or increase their hours/pay.

We know that the Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on certain parts of our population. A full picture is still emerging, but we do know that:

- Women, young people and the lowest paid are more likely to work in shutdown sectors and have therefore been particularly affected.
- Young people have been disproportionately impacted, as over half of the pupils currently in Year 13 will not go onto higher education, they must now find a job without completing the academic year or having access to any career advice.
- 45% of all those on zero-hours contracts work in shutdown sectors, as do 30% of those working part-time. For many of these workers, the harmful effects of the shutdown will come on the back of already challenging labour market experiences.
- As of the end of June 2020, 25,400 Camden based employees had been furloughed. Camden has low levels of furlough compared to the London average – 7% of London jobs are located in Camden, but Camden only makes up 2.3% of furloughed employees. This is due in large part to the nature of Camden's dominant sectors (Professional, Business Support, Information & Communication and Art & entertainment) which are less likely to furlough.

# Business

Camden has a strong history of growth and economic success by traditional measures. ONS estimates show that Camden added £34.4Bn to the national economy in 2018, an increase of 93% on 2008, growing faster than Central London (54%), Greater London (45%) or the UK (34%). Camden specialises in highly skilled, high value parts of the economy such as law, management consultancy and advertising which made up 29% of Camden enterprises in 2017. But there are still many jobs in the foundational economy (the part of the economy that provides basic goods and services).

Many businesses choose Camden as a place to start up, with 6,765 businesses founded in Camden in 2018. The majority don't survive beyond 5 years – in 2018, only 41% of Camden startups founded in 2013 survived beyond 5 years (marginally higher than the Greater London average of 39%).

Recent research conducted with 600 Camden businesses in mid-2020 showed, amongst other things, that:

- Many businesses are local and small yet established. Eight-in-ten businesses (79%) mentioned they are a local company with one business site; 83% employed less than 10 staff at the Camden site; and 65% has been operating for over ten years. 6% were a London company with more than one office/business premises in different parts of London and 6% were a National company.
- Prior to the pandemic, businesses were confident about their growth - around 6 in 10 businesses were expecting their turnover to grow prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, with larger businesses more likely to expect a growth. 7 in 10 businesses said they were confident that their business has the financial

resources to continue operating throughout Covid-19 outbreak.

- 35% were also planning to increase their workforce prior to Covid-19 (although 1 in 5 large businesses said they were planning a decrease).
- 6 in 10 businesses (61%) agree that Camden is a good or excellent place to do business, and more than half of businesses (53%) agree that Camden is a business-friendly Council (two times higher than 2017).

The medium-term impacts of Covid-19 on Camden's business community remain unknown. We do know that:

- Investment in startup businesses has fallen dramatically. This is particularly important in Camden given its status as the top UK district for new startup companies prior to Covid-19
- 80% of the businesses surveyed in mid-2020 said their turnover had decreased compared to pre-Covid, with smaller businesses more likely to experience a larger percentage decrease. Decreases were more likely in hospitality, food, creative and cultural sectors than in tech and digital sectors.
- As of 1 September, 4,151 Camden business applicants have received government grants distributed by the Council, totaling £75,275,000, with more applications being processed weekly.
- In addition, £202.86m of business rates relief has been granted to the accounts of eligible businesses so far in 2020 resulting in little or no business rates being payable for the remainder of the 2020-21 financial year.

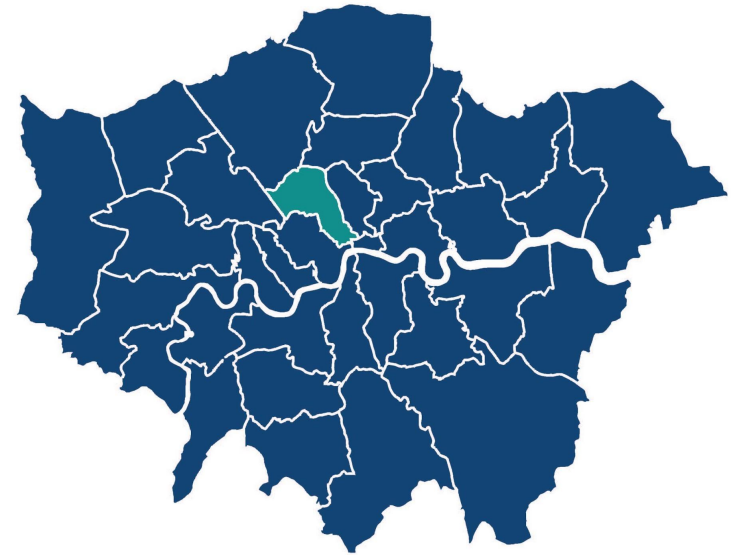


# A central London location

Camden is a central London borough, located north of the River Thames and comprising almost 22 square kilometres.

Stretches from Covent Garden, Hatton Gardens and Holborn in central London, to the former villages of Hampstead and Highgate in the hills to the north.

Camden is well served by public transport, including three main-line railway stations (St Pancras, King's Cross and Euston); and St Pancras International; with extensive bus, tube and suburban rail networks – soon to include the Crossrail link at Tottenham Court Road.





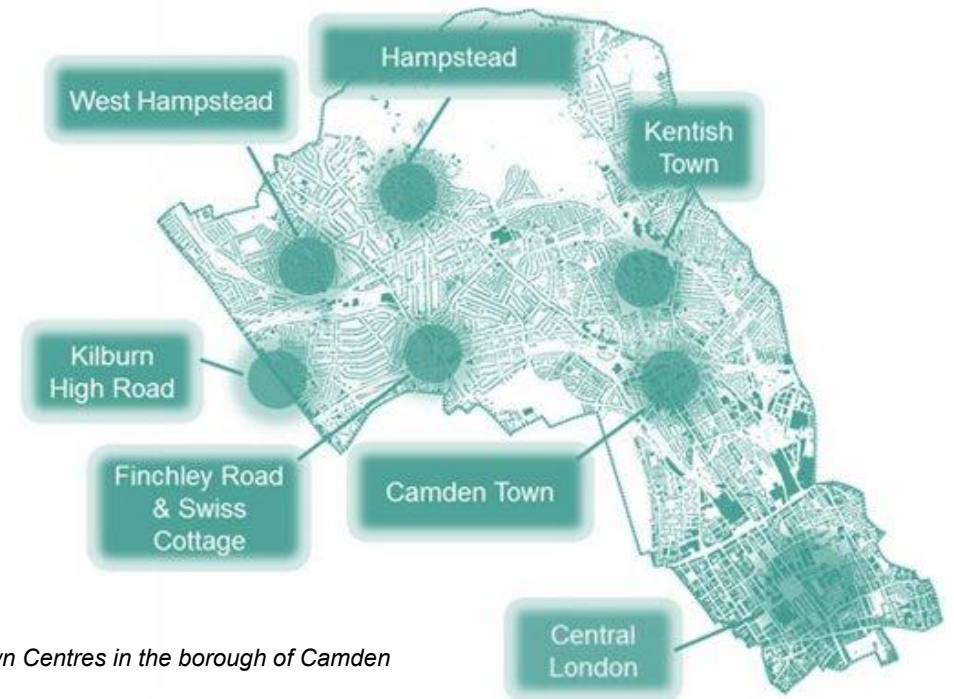
# A borough of diversity and contrasts

Camden is a borough of diversity and contrasts.

The borough includes a number of Town Centres, each with their own characteristics and catering to a varied population.

These areas have a mix of social and economic conditions, with pockets of deprivation, poor health and low life expectancy.

The borough has a growing problem with rough sleeping, one of the most affected boroughs in the capital, and increasing problems with anti-social behaviour and drug-related issues.



*Town Centres in the borough of Camden*

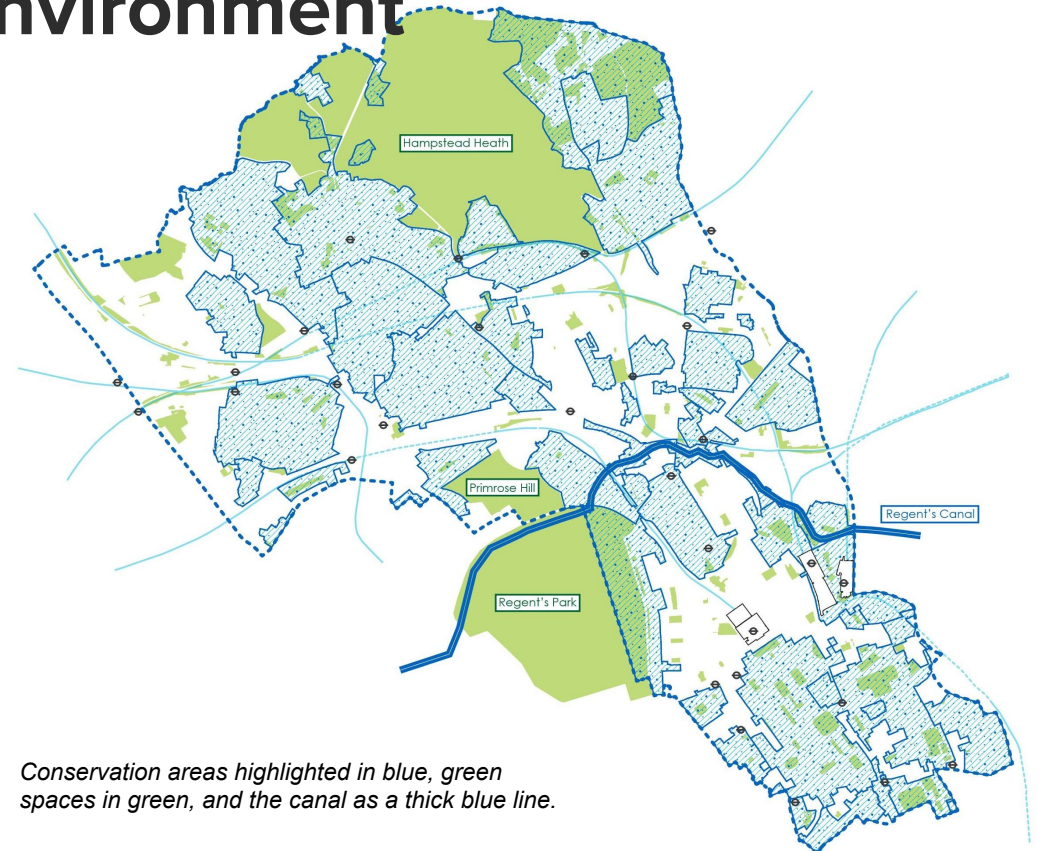




# Rich history and natural environment

Camden is characterised by rich built and natural environments, containing many neighbourhoods each with their own distinctive identity and characteristics. Its architectural and cultural heritage is vast and the borough has many buildings and places of architectural or historic importance.

- Heritage assets: 40 designated Conservation Areas that cover approximately half the borough, while more than 5,600 listed buildings and structures
- Many green spaces and parks, including Hampstead Heath, Regent's Park, Primrose Hill
- Blue corridors, including Regent's Canal



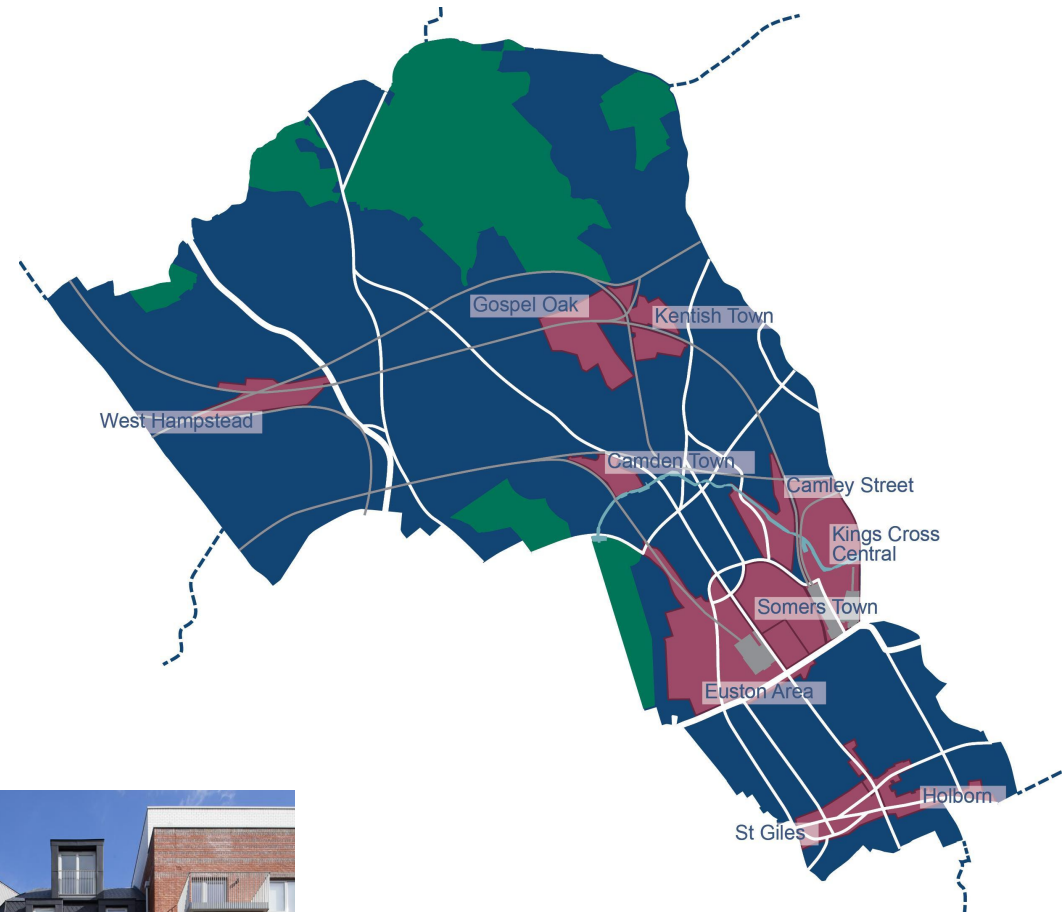
*Conservation areas highlighted in blue, green spaces in green, and the canal as a thick blue line.*



# Local Plan and guidance

The Camden Local Plan (2017) identifies 10 growth areas where the majority of Camden's 16,800 additional homes and 89,000 new jobs will be created by 2031. These growth areas are highlighted in the opposite map.

As well as homes and jobs in Camden, there is also the need to create great places and ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support our growing communities. We have therefore produced, or are in the process of producing, guidance for all our growth areas to ensure we deliver the necessary infrastructure for growth and its successful integration into the unique character of Camden. Neighbourhoods plans for specific areas are also developed and adopted as guidance in the planning process.





# Towards a green borough

In 2019, Camden Council has declared a climate emergency. We are working towards achieving a net zero carbon Camden by 2030. Camden's Climate Action Plan 2020-2025 was set-up to achieve this goal and responds to the views of the wider community and the Citizens' Assembly on the climate crisis, one of the first of its kind in the UK. The following statements describe our ambition for a zero carbon Camden by 2030:

- **People.** Everyone who lives, works, studies and visits the borough will be well informed and actively contribute to tackling the climate crisis in all aspects of their lives.
- **Buildings.** Camden's buildings will be energy efficient, comfortable and fit-for-purpose for a zero carbon future.
- **Places.** Camden's public spaces will encourage and enable healthy and sustainable travel choices and promote biodiversity.
- **Organisations.** All organisations in Camden will operate responsibly and embed tackling the climate crisis throughout their operations.

For more info, visit <https://www.camden.gov.uk/climate-crisis>



*Boroughs in green are more likely to be encouraging eco-transport and heating, reusing and recycling waste, planting trees and using renewable energy.*

Time Out September 2019

