



We will deliver you value for your money 2010 Camden Conservatives Manifesto

Contents

Foreword	3
Our key pledges	4
The last four years	5
Our vision for Camden the borough	5
Working with a Conservative government	5
Business and jobs for local people	6
Children and young people	7
Older people	8
Climate change and a sustainable environment	9
Housing	10
Crime and antisocial behaviour	11
Transport and parking	12
The street environment	13
Health and adult social services	14
Parking, leisure and sport	15
Borough management: planning, voluntary sector, public health	15
Community relations and involving people	17
Resources	17
Customer service	18
Internal structures and leadership	18

foreword

We know that the next few years will be difficult. The Labour Government has spent money that it doesn't have and, over the next few years in Camden, we will have to be part of paying back the debt.

Camden is an excellent borough in which to live and work. The Council does many things that are excellent and is highly rated for many of its services. However, some major things are wrong, and many others can be improved.

Conservative councils are greener, helping to improve the local environment and protect green spaces in our cities and countryside. They are safer, fighting the crime, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti that ruin people's quality of life. And, at a time when people are being hit by the economic downturn, they offer better value for money.

Over the past four years, we have frozen Council Tax for three out of four years, improving efficiency and delivering better value for money. Over the next four years, Camden's finances will need the qualities seen in many Conservative authorities up and down the country, focusing effort on what is necessary and where the council can add value, and then harnessing the creativity and talent of the Council workforce to put this into effect.

Everyone knows Conservative councils provide better services at less cost.

Like the Conservative Party in Parliament, The Conservative Team on Camden Council is ready to take control, ready to take difficult decisions to move Camden forward. Not only are more of our councillors elected in 2006 re-standing than is the case with Labour or LibDems, but we have never had such a strong, diverse and committed group of new candidates, from Holborn to Fortune Green.

Councillor Andrew Marshall
Leader of Camden Conservatives
and Deputy Leader of Camden Council

andrew.marshall27@btopenworld.com

Councillor Martin Davies
Deputy Leader of Camden Conservatives

cllr.mjdavies@btopenworld.com

Website: <http://camdenconservatives.yourcllr.com/>

our key pledges

- We will freeze council tax until 2013 – Labour and LibDems both say they would raise it
- We will build a new primary school in the north-west of Camden, and build a new secondary school south of the Euston Rd as soon as possible, backing the “free school” option a Conservative Government will offer local people
- We will extend recycling to council estates and mansion blocks and with a Conservative government offer every household £6,500 of energy efficiency improvements, to meet our climate change targets
- We will cut the number of top council officers earning over £100K by 20%, reduce management layers and move staff onto private sector terms and conditions
- We will increase sales of underperforming/unwanted council buildings to fund investment, and share services with other councils and public bodies to cut costs
- We will invest £5m in a pothole fund to improve our roads, and stop expensive, unwanted road schemes
- We will empower tenants & leaseholders by giving them the right to withhold contractor payments until works have been completed to a reasonable standard, and encourage leaseholders to buy the freeholds of buildings where they are the majority
- We will take antisocial behaviour seriously by using introductory and demoted tenancies to remove antisocial tenants, by increasing dog patrols and by establishing a hotline for anonymous reporting of ASB
- We will employ wardens and street officers trained to issue fines for night noise, dog fouling, litter, graffiti and pavement cycling – and inform all new residents of their rights and responsibilities
- We will make the Planning service more responsive: better targeted enforcement, good management of our conservation areas and open spaces like the Heath, and using the new powers Camden Conservatives have secured to prevent excessive basement developments
- With Westminster Council we will establish a powerful Central Zone Partnership, pooling ideas and staff to tackle the problems of the West End - noise, drugs, rough sleeping – that know no boundaries
- We will task senior Council management to radically overhaul customer service; change the Council culture; and focus staff and services on residents and customers

the last four years: new Conservative initiatives, but more to be done

In 2006, voters said that they wanted a change from 35 years of Labour. Even though we didn't have a majority, we listened to your message and chose to be responsible and be part of the administration running the Council, in partnership with the Liberal Democrats.

For the last borough elections, we produced key pledges that we wanted to achieve. Since 2006, we have delivered against many of the pledges that we set out then. In particular we promised a two-year freeze in Council Tax and we delivered a Council Tax freeze for three years out of four. In addition, we ended clamping of vehicles; we have started on a new secondary school at Swiss Cottage; we have refurbished the Kentish Town baths, we provided more home care funding, we set up local area forums; we have created 20 mph zones and we introduced changes to the scrutiny function.

However, we have also been hamstrung at times by the Liberal Democrats. They may seem well meaning, but they weren't able to make things happen in some areas, or get agreement in their group, and in some areas our priorities differed, and so the Council has not been able to be as decisive as required to make all the changes needed. In particular, we recognise that Camden's Housing is still poorly run; customer service across the Council must improve; and the Liberal Democrats have been too soft on tackling drugs and anti-social behaviour.

We have achieved a lot in coalition – Imagine what we can achieve on our own – we can truly deliver a Conservative vision for Camden.

our vision for Camden the borough

As Conservatives, we want to see a Camden that:

- Delivers excellent services
- Enables residents to influence decisions
- Gives freedom of choice to residents
- Keeps the borough and its residents safe and secure
- Builds a clean, sustainable, & healthy environment.

We believe that through keeping to these key principles, we can deliver quality, efficient, effective services that residents want, thereby reducing waste and keeping Council Tax down.

working in partnership with a reforming Conservative government

As a local Conservative-run council, we will work positively with a Conservative Government to get the best deal for Camden and its residents. We believe strongly in local democracy. Too many decisions that affect local communities are currently taken by officials in Whitehall. We will take the powers and freedoms delegated by a Conservative Government, and extend town hall accountability to local people. In particular, we want councillors to be the voice for their local ward on Camden Council, not a voice for Camden Council in their local ward.

We will use the freedoms granted by a Conservative government over local spending to ensure that your money is spent wisely.

We will freeze council tax for two years, working in partnership with a Conservative Government committed to supporting efficiency improvements in local government.

We will increase openness and transparency by publishing online all our spending on goods and services over £500.

We will link up with Conservative national government initiatives and create Social Enterprise Zones – areas where relaxed rules would help social entrepreneurs and the voluntary sector deal with problems such as drug abuse.

Our aim is to empower and embolden people to take action themselves, whether as individuals or as members of independent organisations, voluntary groups and social enterprises.

Below we lay out how we'd help local people prosper in their working lives, and how we'd improve the lives of our children, young people and older citizens.

business and jobs for local people

Getting Camden Working: We will work with a Conservative Government to tackle Labour's jobs crisis, creating many new opportunities to help people move from unemployment back into work. Camden has a large business community and employs many people who live both in and outside the borough. A Conservative Council will create the right environment for businesses to thrive and create good, sustainable jobs.

Our goal is simple: to make Camden the easiest and the best place in the London to set up and grow a business. Nationally Labour have failed to deliver real help to business during the recession and locally over the past 30 years, Labour has failed to help businesses thrive in Camden. They failed to help sound companies obtain credit to keep them running through the downturn. They failed to deliver on promises to ease the burden of red tape, especially on small and medium-sized firms. And they failed to understand businesses' cash flow problems and are actually planning to increase them with a rise in National Insurance Contributions – a straightforward tax on jobs.

We will introduce rescheduling of business rates for profitable, yet cash-strapped businesses, making sure all small businesses benefit automatically from rate relief.

We will work with other boroughs to reform the London Development Agency to create a vibrant, business-focused force that is more responsive to local needs.

We will increase Council procurement from small firms and improve prompt payment.

We recognise the huge contribution business, local high streets and local independent shops make to neighbourhoods. By ensuring Camden and business work together, we will achieve far more for local society than Labour has ever done.

Many of Camden's residents want a job and yet many are unable to find work. We will offer support to the young unemployed as we recognise the importance to self-esteem as well as the wider economy of getting your first job.

Building on the success of Camden Working and the KX Construction Skills Centre, we will look for these initiatives locally to be delivered increasingly by private and voluntary providers, who will only be paid when someone gets and keeps a job. The programme will be paid for by reallocating funding from any existing schemes that are not delivering the results.

Youth Action for Work: To give young people the skills they need to get a sustainable job for the future, we will prioritise investment in learning and skills for work and further education college places.

Work for Yourself: We will build a network of business mentors to support self-employment and franchising as a route back into work.

Work Together: We will support a programme to connect people with volunteering opportunities in their area.

Job Clubs: Local Conservatives in Holborn & Covent Garden have set up a job club, which is already helping people back into work. We will build on this experience and provide the seed funding needed to establish a network of Job Clubs, places where people receive mentoring, skills training and help to find local job opportunities.

children & young people

Children are our future and Camden Conservatives will invest in their education and give real choice to parents. We will give our children the best start by continuing to create the new school places that we need locally.

Improving our schools system is the most important thing we can do to make opportunity more equal, and to address declining social mobility. Standards have been rising in Camden's primary and secondary schools – in particular, for the first time ever Camden is above the national average for percentage of young people achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and Maths. Yet families rightly want standards to be even higher. We will support a Conservative Government as it pursues the kind of reforms that have worked so well in countries like the USA, Canada, Sweden and elsewhere, based on increased choice and accountability, rigorous standards and greater prestige for the teaching profession.

We will work for a secondary school south of the Euston Road as soon as possible, exploring all routes to set up smaller schools. If a Conservative Government is elected, we will encourage and back local parents if they wish to consider setting up a new "free school" on the Wren Street site.

We will continue groundbreaking work to improve educational performance of white working class boys and Somali and Bangladeshi pupils.

We will build one new primary school in the northwest of Camden, prioritising this and the planned expansion of St Paul's Primary in the Council's overall capital programme, as well as investing in the maintenance of our primary schools as a whole.

We will deliver secondary schools with a new ethos for the 21st Century. This is the vital part of Camden's transformational Building Schools for the Future Programme, which seeks to ensure that our secondaries are welcome participants in our local neighbourhoods, offering a range of opportunities to our young people who take pride both in their school and the local area, and thus behave accordingly. We created this vision and we will deliver it, across all our secondary schools.

We strongly support the new UCL Academy that is planned for Adelaide Road and will work with UCL to ensure that the benefits from their engagement will reach across all our secondaries. We will also deliver the new Swiss Cottage Special School and ensure Frank Barnes School is well supported before it moves to its new site at King's Cross.

We recognise the difficulties encountered by families in securing school places. While welcoming the ethos offered by faith schools, we increasingly believe it is anachronistic for places to be allocated on the basis of a family's attendance at a particular church. While Camden has no power in this sphere, a Conservative Camden would open discussions with the diocesan boards of both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church to attempt to address this issue.

Whilst education is a very important part of our children's lives and development, the opportunities for leisure, sport and recreational activities are important in providing a range of things to do for our young people. We will review our current youth services provision together with young people, to ensure that it is providing the services that they want and focus resources on what is popular with young people. We will promote organized sport activities for young people and ensure that they have the full range of access to our parks and leisure facilities.

We will promote volunteering as a way to assist young people to develop their skills and interests as part of preparing them for adulthood and to develop a sense of community in young people.

We will review our arrangements for listening to the views of young people and change these to be more focussed and results driven.

We will continue with the Safer Routes to School initiative and ensure that major routes like the Euston Road and the Finchley Road were safe for school journeys.

The prominence of child protection after such tragic cases as 'Baby Peter' has highlighted to all of us the importance of children's social work. We will continue to seek improvements to ensure that our social work teams are properly managed and resourced and that we are able to recruit and retain good quality competent staff to these vital jobs, and ensure that they are working in partnership with other key agencies such as the Police, Education services and local health services.

older people

As well as recognising the contributions older people make to society, we also need to help those elderly people who are amongst the most vulnerable. So a Conservative Camden will continue with and look for more innovative ways of extending personalisation in health and social care.

We will encourage further use of direct payments and individual budgets, which give people real control over their care.

We will build on the excellent work in Camden with older people over the last few years. We will support the quality of life panels and ensure that we continue to listen to the voices of older people to address the issues that matter to them.

From our work so far, we know that access to information on services available is one of the main building blocks to improving and maintaining older people's quality of life. We will ensure that information on services in Camden is both available and accessible to our older residents.

Under the Labour Government, the cost of living for pensioners has soared. We will help to tackle this by introducing a two-year Council Tax freeze.

We will also do more to help pensioners with their fuel bills. By working closely with a Conservative government, we will promote locally a new entitlement for every household to be fitted with up to £6,500 of approved energy efficiency improvements. We will look for other local initiatives to help pensioners save fuel and money, whilst ensuring that they stay warm and well.

Older people tell us that fear is one of the key reasons why they do not fully participate in their communities. There is often more than one reason for this fear, and we propose to tackle this through such measures as by being tough on anti-social behaviour; increasing inter-generational understanding through joint projects; and tackling cycling on pavements.

climate change and a sustainable environment

A Conservative Government will recognise the central importance of tackling climate change for future generations, and a Conservative Camden will help deliver on this vision, aiming to reduce the borough's carbon emissions, alongside the Conservative government's programme, by 40% by 2020.

Quality of life and environmental issues must be at the heart of politics, which is why we will actively contribute locally to improve Britain's environment by working towards zero waste, encouraging recycling and sustainable water management, taking action to help our wildlife, and taking cost effective measures to reduce our CO2 emissions. We are struggling to cope with mountains of waste. We will introduce a new approach, one that minimises waste and promotes recycling. We will work with businesses, our contractors and the North London Waste Authority to deliver in new forms of waste disposal.

We will take action to protect and enhance our natural environment from the pressures of climate change and development. As well as targeted help for protected habitats and species, we also need to take a broader approach, which improves the landscape as a whole. We will continue Camden's good work in protecting local biodiversity.

Climate change adaptation must go hand in hand with mitigation measures, and we are committed to planning how to cope with extreme weather conditions. This is important for all residents, our children, future generations and those that find it most difficult to cope in extreme circumstances – the elderly and disabled.

With our energy supplies increasingly sourced overseas, and with urgent action needed to combat climate change, it's time to rethink the way we supply and consume energy in Britain. We urgently need to move to a low carbon economy to strengthen our economy, help guarantee our energy security and protect our environment.

We will support and actively encourage locally:

- Households to make energy efficiency improvements such as taking up a Conservative governments Green Deal offer, which is the right to have up to £6,500 worth of home insulation improvements, enabling households to reduce their energy bills;
- Transformation of electricity networks with 'smart grid' and 'smart meter' technology that automatically matches supply and demand, allowing a huge increase in renewable power;
- Promote and work to create locally a decentralised energy revolution by introducing a system of feed-in tariffs to encourage micro-generation of electricity.

The rising cost of energy is pushing more and more families and pensioners into fuel poverty. So we will help cut people's fuel bills through promoting the work of energy watchdogs to inform customers if they are on the company's cheapest tariff, and how much they could save if they are not.

We will reduce air pollution by discouraging vehicles sitting with their engines running indefinitely for no reason.

We will encourage Camden Council officials to put Camden at the forefront of the green technology revolution and work with energy companies to build a local recharging network for electric vehicles cars, mopeds, etc.

We will create a cabinet portfolio for climate change and sustainability, to give sustainability a seat at the centre of local decision-making. We will invite the opposition parties to appoint from amongst them an Eco Champion and will reinvigorate the eco taskforce, which has been effective, with councillors from all political parties to act as a critical friend and to help us drive our response to environmental issues locally.

housing

Camden is a very popular place in which to live and we need more homes in Camden – but they must be built in a way that protects the environment and provides the infrastructure to support local communities.

Camden needs housing for key workers and housing for local people, so that people with their roots in the borough have a real choice to stay in Camden. We will deliver at least 1,200 affordable homes over the next four years, concentrating development on the growth zones identified in the London Plan in order to manage growth carefully. A Conservative Council would work with local communities to set up new Local Housing Trusts to build new affordable homes, to ensure Camden remains a mixed community. We will also maximise the use of local lettings policies to keep families together in Camden.

We are committed to continue with estate regeneration - seeking new sources of finance from a new government for decent homes and in the meantime we will continue to fund the programme through whatever means are available, including as necessary selling off a small proportion of poor quality stock. We will however make changes to the current sell offs, especially to combat flipping.

We will give tenants and leaseholders more power to run estates and encourage the purchase of Council freeholds by leaseholders where they are the majority in a block, so that they can take control of their own capital works and repairs.

Whereas Labour have curtailed the right of social tenants to own their home, Conservatives will make it easier for social tenants to own or part-own their home. This will not only help people up the housing ladder, but also ensure residents have greater pride and a greater stake in their community.

Tenants and leaseholders get a bad deal from the bloated and ineffective housing department. Camden leaseholders pay for this through higher bills and having to pay for defective work. We will provide better value for money for our leaseholders by making sure that the Housing Department is run much more efficiently and economically. We will listen to leaseholders on where improvements and savings can be made, and will review the basis for leaseholder service charges. We will start this by committing to a regular meeting where the Leader of the Council and the housing cabinet member, plus top officers, will meet leaseholders representatives to discuss problems and potential savings, both in contracts and housing department overheads.

The balance of power needs to shift from housing bureaucrats to tenants and leaseholders. We will start this by informing them of their rights. We will empower tenants and leaseholders by making them the customer rather than the Council, for such things as capital works and repairs. We will give them the right to withhold contractor payments until works have not been completed to a reasonable standard.

We believe that our council estate residents have a right to live in peace without anti social behaviour. The Liberal Democrats have failed to prioritise effective action against anti-social tenants. We will enforce introductory tenancies and demoted tenancies and other means to improve the quality of life of residents on our estates, removing the worst antisocial offenders where justified. We will also ensure tenants can report ASB anonymously to council staff (and thus to the police) with clear commitments about the feedback residents in an area should expect on action taken.

We will improve energy efficiency on our estates through such programmes such as combined heat and power, which will also help to reduce CO2 emissions.

crime and anti social behaviour

Labour's obsession with bureaucratic targets and box ticking has hindered the fight against crime. They have launched endless initiatives and top-down schemes that have made little difference. The string of broken promises has undermined people's trust. We can't go on with the police filling in forms instead of fighting crime.

Our aim is to restore responsibility and discretion to the police – getting them out of police stations and out onto the streets – while making them truly accountable to the people they serve. A Conservative Camden Council will take firm action to keep you and your neighbourhood safe, working more effectively with the police and being tough on anti-social behaviour in our streets and housing estates.

We will provide detailed data about crime in local areas. Giving people robust information and real power will empower them to force the police to focus on the crime that affects the community. We will build a strong partnership with the Police in Camden to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and look for efficiencies in back office savings and avoid unnecessary duplications.

Camden Conservatives have fought to save local police stations, which we believe are a critical part of community policing. We also want to see police officers not only visible but also actually involved with their surroundings. We will promote the creation of more neighbourhood watch schemes and support community policing through safer neighbourhood teams.

We believe that dog patrols are an important part of tackling anti social behaviour and we will invest in more dog patrols particularly in areas of high crime and anti social behaviour.

We will be tough on drugs and drug related crime. We will tackle drug peddling and excessive alcohol and drug taking in the borough.

Camden Town is a vibrant and lively place and it attracts millions of people each year. It is also a highly residential area. We will use our licensing powers and local street wardens to ensure that residents get a fair deal. We will work with local residents to improve the Camden Town area. Noise nuisance is an increasing problem for residents, especially in central London and the effects of sleep deprivation are harmful to health. We will introduce a 24-hour noise patrol in the West End and take robust action to tackle this scourge of modern living.

We will fight to ensure that Camden and its residents are protected during the Olympics and that all of Camden's police resource isn't spent dealing with the Olympics.

The design of the local environment impacts on crime and the fear of crime. We will tackle poor street lighting so as not to give local burglars, car thieves and vandals an easy ride.

We welcome the Mayor of London's plans to increase London's police by 2,000 officers over the next two years. We will ensure that Camden gets its fair share of this increase.

We will restore a dedicated cabinet member for community safety (scrapped by the LibDems in 2008), which would include responsibility for licensing. In line with the policy of a Conservative Government to make the police more accountable locally, we will seek a much closer "hands on" relationship with the borough police to ensure that residents' priorities are clearly heard and that the current wasteful overlaps in functions are cut out with seamless working together.

transport and parking

Providing an improved public transport system will be an important element of Conservative strategy to tackle congestion and to reduce CO2 emissions. Our public transport system is creaking and desperately needs improvement. But the current piecemeal approach looking at tube lines in isolation isn't working. We will work with Transport for London (TfL) to stop them from repeating the fiasco of the current upgrade projects to the Northern and Jubilee lines. We will work to ensure that all future upgrades to the Tube, Overground and Network Rail lines in the local area are coordinated.

Camden residents are Londoners and don't recognise the administrative boundaries when they travel. We need to make our accessible transport network more integrated with the rest of public transport infrastructure across London, improving the service to Camden residents and reducing inefficiencies in the network. This includes working with TfL to improve the dial a ride service, so that disabled and older residents can use their taxi cards for the most important journeys. A better and more integrated accessible transport service will save CO2 as well as money.

We will put in place measures to deliver electric vehicle charging points to boost driving choices and the switch to electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

We will work with the voluntary sector and local residents to develop green travel initiatives that will work best for their communities, including projects to encourage cycling and improve real-time information and priority measures for bus services.

Neighbouring boroughs, like Westminster, have pioneered the use of technology to improve parking. We will make the most of improved technology to make parking easier and to text drivers when their meters are about to run out.

Four years ago when we came into power, we immediately stopped clamping. Car owners and drivers are rightly angry about overzealous parking enforcement. We will introduce appropriate discretion for parking wardens in parking enforcement. Parking revenue will be used to support the Freedom pass and other travel concessions for older and disabled residents and to improve the overall transport infrastructure for all residents.

Controlled hours in residents parking zones must better reflect local conditions, while the parking system in Camden must be kept simple to make it easier for people to know where and when they can park. We oppose the suggestion from some that larger CPZs should be broken up to deliberately reduce car use – people are shifting gradually in their transport choices, but this proposal (for example raised in relation to Belsize's CA-B) smacks of vindictiveness.

We support responsible cycling and will seek to make our roads safer for cyclists. Equally, we will expect cyclists to respect pedestrians and obey traffic rules.

the street environment

The on street environment is the most visible part of Camden. It is important that it is kept clean and safe and that we do this in an environmentally friendly way. We recognise that our environmental challenges are immense, and Conservatives will work with the community both to respond locally to climate change and improve our streets and open spaces.

Conservatives have pioneered reducing street clutter across London, in Kensington High Street, at Oxford Circus and in Camden Town. We will roll out our Naked Streets programme to other high streets across Camden as resources allow.

We will introduce recycling for high-rise and mansion block residents to reduce their residual waste and roll out organic (food) waste recycling across the borough – liaising properly with porters and management companies. We will incentivise participation through targeted schemes such as gardening, flower and vegetable planting and advice. We will encourage less waste by working with retailers to reduce packaging and encourage home recycling through providing advice such as how to start a compost bin.

We will collect recyclables and waste in the most overall environmentally friendly way. Camden Conservatives guarantee at least one weekly rubbish collection, together with increased recycling.

We will end spending on wasteful road projects, including the expensive building of numerous unnecessary humps. Instead we will invest in our roads and create a pothole fund of £5m to improve our roads for motorists and cyclists.

Trees are an important part of an enjoyable street scene and we will actively promote tree-planting working together with the Conservative Mayor of London Boris Johnson's tree planting initiative.

Making our streets clean includes tackling dog dirt. We will install more bins and fine the irresponsible minority of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs.

health and adult social services

Over three years ago David Cameron spelled out his priorities in three letters – NHS. Since then, we have consistently fought to protect the values the NHS stands for and have campaigned locally to defend the NHS from Labour's cuts. A decade of top-down, bureaucratic mismanagement has consistently undermined the professionalism and motivation of NHS staff and skewed NHS priorities away from patient care, creating a culture where ticking boxes is more important than giving patients the treatment they need.

We understand the pressures the NHS faces and in Camden Council we have been working closely with our local NHS partners for many years. As Conservatives, we believe that we can work better and more efficiently together with the local NHS, avoiding duplication and reducing bureaucracy. As Merrick Cockell, Leader of London Councils recently said *"Enormous potential savings exist from bringing more public expenditure under local control"* As Conservatives, we are ready to realise these savings through integrating non-acute care budgets of PCTs with our local care services.

Social care services provide support to frail elderly and disabled people, who are some of our most vulnerable and needy residents. After four years of Conservatives running these services, Camden Adult Social Services is one of the best in the country. We will work closely with a Conservative Government to deliver its reform plan, which is based on the methods of the post-bureaucratic age – decentralisation, accountability and transparency. Instead of bureaucratic accountability there will be democratic accountability. We will decentralise power, so that care users and patients have a real choice. And by publishing information about the kind of results that social care and healthcare providers are achieving, we will make sure there is no hiding place for failure.

These developments are already under way in Camden, with personalisation in care services and the development of a marketplace. In making this market work effectively, information and transparency, which makes providers accountable is the key to success. We believe that a single local market for health and social care with consistent information will help patients and care users alike. If patients and care users don't like what is offered, they will be able to find something better. This will drive up standards by allowing people to choose the best providers and by encouraging providers to compete for patients and care users. When patients and care users not only have the power to choose where they get treated but also the information to make an informed choice, then all providers of care that don't provide good care will have to raise their game.

Too many local residents cannot get the GP of their choice and find that GP opening hours are inconvenient. We will work with the local NHS to improve the choice of GPs and make opening hours convenient for patients.

Preventing conditions and intervening early keeps residents needing less support and saves money in the long term. Although finances will be under pressure over the next few years, cutting discretionary services with a proven benefit would be a false saving. We will continue to invest resources in early intervention and prevention services that are value for money.

parks, leisure and sport

Culture and sport are all vital for our quality of life, as well as being huge generators of wealth and prosperity for our economy: tourism is the UK's 5th biggest industry and the creative industries account for 7.3 per cent of GDP. Camden has a large share of both the tourism and creative industries. With the Olympic Games approaching, we have a wonderful opportunity to showcase these sectors and highlight the best sporting and cultural activities that Camden has to offer, promoting our borough as the attractive tourist destination it undoubtedly is. More importantly, we must make sure that the Olympics leave us with a lasting legacy focused on inspiring young people to take part in sport.

The Conservative Party is committed to fostering an environment in which sport, the arts, and the creative industries can flourish, and in which people can take control of the most enjoyable aspects of their lives. We will target the Council's investment including through our funding of the voluntary sector to those areas that promote and enhance Camden as a borough and support the borough's strengths in tourism and creative industries.

In cities, the availability of parks and open spaces is important for health and well being. Conservatives will protect and enhance Camden's green spaces.

Our libraries are great community venues. We will maximise the use of our libraries, by increasing the range of services available and make a greater use of volunteers to support new initiatives.

borough management: harnessing our local public, private and voluntary sectors

The local Council is responsible for borough leadership and as Conservatives our style of leadership will be based on localism. The structure of borough management and the local strategic partnership is still based on the model set up by the socialists of command and control. We will be looking to devolve responsibility and decision making to the lowest level, with the strategic direction set by the LSP. This will mean a slimmed down LSP and one that is more in touch with local people and elected representatives. True efficiency savings only come where overlaps are avoided. We will look for more fluid relationships with our partners (like the Police and local NHS) that deliver efficiencies for both of us, including sharing services and support functions.

Many parts of Camden are vibrant and desirable, but there are also areas that need rejuvenating. Past failures created by poor planning only looked at housing need, rather than what people need for a good quality life. We will work with local communities to develop proposals for regeneration that create great places for people to live. This means looking at transport, jobs, schools and local amenities as well as housing.

As part of our localism plans, we will improve our high streets as local shopping destinations and we will make better use of our waste land and dormant building plots by turning them into allotments. This will promote greater community spirit, encourage greater self-sufficiency and encourage growers to supply local shops and restaurants thereby reducing the carbon footprint.

planning and conservation

Planning is of major concern to many residents, and understandably causes conflict in a borough as densely populated as Camden. We've listened to local groups and individual residents and will:

- protect the architectural heritage of Camden;
- restrict uncontrolled basement developments, using the much stronger policy in the LDF which Conservative steered through the Council, and ensuring we fully utilise national planning guidance PPG14 and PPS25 in preventing unsuitable basements in the borough;
- be more targeted and robust in planning enforcement;
- look favourably on the extension of (ultimately self-enforcing) bans of estate agents boards in further conservation areas where this is a problem;
- welcome and support the involvement of residents as the Council's eyes and ears in preserving our local heritage.

public health

Local authorities have always had a major impact on public health. Camden has one of the largest differences in life expectancy in the country. The Council and the local NHS need to work closely together to tackle the challenges ahead. We now have a joint director of public health across the Council and the NHS, and we want closer alignment of priorities and funding to reduce duplications and make our money go further. Tackling the public health concerns in Camden must involve all parts of the Council. We will take a strategic lead to address the underlying issues of health inequality and improve the life chances of children from our poorest areas and devolve responsibility and decision making to those people that can make real differences to people's lives.

voluntary sector

We want to see a transformation in the role of community groups, social enterprises and the voluntary sector to help build a stronger society. A Conservative Camden would create a more supportive environment for philanthropy and volunteering, reduce the bureaucracy faced by charities and voluntary groups, and enable them to earn a return on any investment they make in providing public services.

We will enhance the role played by charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises with a series of measures including:

- Enabling charities, co-operatives and voluntary organisations to make a fair return on money they spend on providing public services, just as private businesses already do;
- Creating a single, simple website to advertise Council grant schemes, helping smaller charities to win a fair share of Council funding;
- Encouraging regular volunteering by giving Camden employees an annual volunteering leave entitlement
- We will promote volunteering. We believe that local people play a vital role in their community through volunteering and create cohesion. We will expand good neighbour schemes and neighbourhood watches and promote intergenerational projects as senior citizens have a lot to give younger generations in terms of mentoring and indeed teaching English. In return, the younger generation can teach older people new technologies. Working together they can gain mutual respect and break down the barriers that cause fear.

community relations and involving residents

Building stronger, more integrated communities is central to our vision for Camden. Under Labour, state-driven multiculturalism and the threat of extremism have led to an increase in distrust and segregation, and left us with divided communities across Britain. Luckily, Camden has so far avoided the worst of these problems, but we must remain vigilant and ensure that we remain a borough with strong community relations, without segregation and living together in atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

A Conservative Council will correct Labour's mistakes and create a local society where people from different backgrounds can celebrate their diversity while sharing common civic values and national pride. And we will support Camden's communities with a balanced package of measures:

- Supporting community groups based on their effectiveness in delivering services and activities rather than on the basis of ethnicity or faith
- Offering English language instruction for all to cement national identity and help all citizens to realise their full potential.
- Tackling unacceptable cultural practices, such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- We firmly back the community-led project to establish a Central Camden Mosque and Cultural Centre, in which Conservatives have been involved from the outset.

We believe that the State is no substitute for community. So a Conservative Camden will help foster community cohesion, but recognise that it is, above all, about social responsibility. That means that everyone must do all they can to make this a fairer and more just society - helping others, creating opportunity, and ensuring that no one is excluded.

In 2006 we created area forums to involve local people in decision-making. We believe they have achieved a great deal, leading to better policy decisions in many cases. But we are conscious of criticisms. We want to build on what has worked well, creating larger forums that better reflect natural communities. We believe that people will be more interested in having some degree of real influence over how large sums of public money are spent locally, such as local road improvements, than in "deciding" how a relatively small delegated sum of £10,000 or similar is spent.

resources – finding savings and improving value for money

Over the next few years, finances will be difficult and we will need to work within limited resources. We will scrutinise spending to ensure that it is value for money and look for innovative ways of sharing costs and services and consider outsourcing, where this benefits to residents and council taxpayers.

We will deliver the quality, efficient services that residents want, reducing waste and freezing Council Tax until at least 2013. We know that Council Tax bears down on those least able to afford it, so we will keep it as low as possible - remember it was Conservative councillors who secured no increase in council tax in three of the last four years. We are spending your money and we will spend it wisely. How will we do this?

Our key measures to reduce waste and inefficiency include:

- Bring public sector pay and conditions into line with those in the private sector, freezing senior officer pay for two years
- Reduce by 20% the number of top council managers (those earning over 100K), and slimming down management layers across the organisation
- Set up an innovation fund to invest in ideas that have a payback of less than two years.
- Weekend and holiday overtime will be restricted to urgent and necessary work
- Rationalise our property portfolio to fund investment, especially in our primary schools
- Invest in new building at Kings Cross to deliver staffing and work efficiencies and to save CO2
- Incentivise front line staff to find efficiency savings in their teams.
- Enable Councillors and local residents greater oversight of local projects and to hold the Council to account when works go over time and over budget
- Sharing back office functions across London, for example by combining our pensions management, treasury management and ICT functions with other councils

Improving our resources is not just about saving costs. We will also look for opportunities to generate revenue. For example our schools service has a good reputation and should be able to pitch for business from other authorities, so we will turn it into a profit centre. We will look for other such innovations to generate income and keep your Council Tax down.

customer service – and residents rights & responsibilities

Customer service is an area of major failing in the Council. There is massive improvement required across all services. We will radically overhaul the Council culture and focus staff and services on residents and customers and away from processes and internal targets. We do not underestimate the challenge ahead to deliver this, but we believe you deserve better. We will lead this change from the top as one of our key priorities and clearly task the senior management of the Council to drive this change through the Council.

We will enable residents to influence the decisions that matter to them. We know that many Council decisions greatly affect your lives, whether a planning application or the social care provided to older citizens. You should have a greater say over those decisions.

Camden has many new residents each year, and we will adapt the Council's A-Z of Services to also serve as a "Welcome to Camden" introductory leaflet which explains the key services for new residents, like recycling and refuse collection dates; noise restrictions; resident parking; and giving useful contact numbers. This would make explicit in outlining both rights and responsibilities of residents, in relation to noise, cutting down trees, dog fouling, bonfires, cycling and parking etc. We will use local estate agents and other third parties as distributors to ensure all new residents really understand what they can and can't do.

Internal structures and leadership

Reflecting all these priorities, a Conservative Camden would have a cabinet with the following portfolios:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| • Leader | • Customer service |
| • Climate change and sustainability | • Borough management |
| • Children, families and education | • Environment, Planning & Transport |
| • Housing | • Community Safety and Public Protection |
| • Adult and community services | • Resources |