

# **Camden's Community Strategy:**

## **Voluntary and Community Sector Case Studies and Consultation 2008 – 2009**

**A summary of Camden Community Empowerment Network seminars**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The background**

In early 2008 Camden's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) decided that a progress report on a Community Strategy theme would be presented at each LSP meeting. It was agreed with the council policy team responsible for scoping the reports that they would liaise with Camden Community Empowerment Network (CCEN) to include a voluntary and community sector (VCS) perspective. The reporting themes were timetabled for the whole year and CCEN planned a series of seminars in relation to the deadlines. This report brings together the information from all the seminars and is arranged according to the Community Strategy and seminar themes.

### **The seminars**

A total of six seminars took place over the year along with visits to organisations who could not attend but whose work was relevant to the report themes. The seminars are informal meetings where VCS members are encouraged to present their own work and their views on how the Community Strategy vision is being delivered. The CCEN see the seminars as an important vehicle for strengthening partnership through:

- Profiling VCS work and viewpoints in LSP reports and debate.
- Keeping the Community Strategy vision 'live' and connecting people with the LSP.
- Providing opportunity for consultation about Community Strategy delivery as it is happening.

### **The participants**

The seminars have attracted organisations and groups from across the whole sector. People have helped us to produce case studies and provided information via email and through outreach visits as well as through attending the seminars. The result is that we have been able to profile VCS activity and opinion beyond that monitored through local public sector funding streams. The total number of groups contributing to the six seminars was 131.

## **A THRIVING AND SAFE PART OF LONDON AND GATEWAY TO EUROPE: 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008**

The specific aims within this Community Strategy theme are:

- Reducing overall crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly robbery and violent crime.
- Reducing fear of crime.
- Reducing the number of adult and young offenders who re-offend.
- Reducing the harm caused by alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Increasing the numbers of drug users in treatment programmes.
- Preventing children and young people becoming involved in bullying, anti-social behaviour and crime.

The seminar looked at what the voluntary and community sector do and can contribute to achieving these aims:

- What is being achieved and how?
- Where are the gaps and barriers for Kings Cross as 'a thriving and safe part of London'?

### **Case Studies**

#### **Young people and anti-social behaviour**

**New Horizon Youth Centre (NHYC)** is the only youth specific day centre operating in central London. The centre delivers joined up services addressing anti-social behaviour, health, homelessness, training and employment. NHYC works in partnership with Camden Primary Care Trust (PCT), the police, LB Camden Street Services, Mental Health Team, A&E clinics, and housing providers and hostels across London. The centre currently has 22 volunteers who are supported into further training and employment. Volunteers are also involved in a peer education mentoring project to develop life skills.

Fifty young people aged between 16 and 21 use NHYC every day. The centre finds people accommodation (700 in the past year), but also prevents young people from becoming rough sleepers. When the project began in 1994 60-80% of clients were rough sleepers. Today that has been reduced to 2-3%. Two evenings a week the centre has a drop-in for sex workers. 14-20 people come to each of these sessions - usually drug users with chaotic lifestyles involving crack, heroin, alcohol and mental health issues. The service focuses on stabilising the client's situation and highlighting opportunities available to them. Priorities are usually housing (many clients live in crack houses) and health care.

Partnership and collaboration is a key factor in NHYC work. New collaborations continue to develop, addressing anti-social behaviour from a complex perspective of youth, health, housing, life skills, training and employment. Good communication with the police is especially important. Local police officers meet with young people at the centre every few months. Publicising the work that goes on at the centre locally also helps to reduce fear and reassure people that problems they see on the street are being dealt with.

**Camden Police and Community Consultative Group (CPCCG)** work in partnership with LB Camden and the police on community safety issues, and have strong links with Safer Neighbourhoods Panels. CPCCG hold six meetings a year around the borough. Youth crime is usually the main concern expressed by local residents, but in Kings Cross street drinking is a major concern. Work includes myth busting sessions and focus groups, which have looked at issues like violent extremism and police 'stop and search' powers. Interestingly the focus groups have revealed that some young people think that 'stop and search' is useful because it makes them feel safe. In turn young people have learned that local police officers don't actually like stopping and searching, with the result that it happens less frequently in Camden than in other parts of London.

### **Third Party Reporting (TPR) on race hate crime**

**Camden BME Alliance (CBMEA)** works in partnership with London Borough of Camden, the police and the 34 community centres that have become third party reporting sites. To date eight volunteers (all local residents) have been trained as reporters supporting the work of the project coordinator in reporting and providing ongoing support to victims. Once referred to CBMEA's Third Party Reporting Project, victims are contacted and interviewed by the TPR Coordinator, either in person or by phone, to gather more detailed information about the incident. This provides local police with a portfolio of where the incidents take place, where the perpetrators reside and which areas they operate in. For example Somali victims living on the Templar House Estate were targeted by a group of teenagers who lived at three different addresses in the area and were also suspects in other anti social behaviours. The local Safer Neighbourhood Teams were made aware of this information, which was valuable in identifying and dealing with the alleged perpetrators. Eventually CCTV was installed on the Templar House Estate where there had been an increase in the number of Third Party Reports from Somali mothers.

The majority of race hate crime victims require ongoing support as they tend to be subjected to repeat incidents in their localities. The support given includes fortnightly checks on current case victims to see whether they have encountered further problems, require more help or referral to other agencies. Repeat victims are also encouraged to keep a diary of incidents which the TPR Coordinator assists them in compiling.

Through the TPR work the coordinator has been able to identify 'hotspots' (usually areas where there are tensions between youth gangs). The project has developed, and continues to build, a trusting relationship with young people, who often do not wish to be seen as 'a grass'. Information has been gathered about potential gang fights, the emergence of new gangs in the borough and related criminal activities. Through the TPR project the Camden Community Safety Team and Police were able to identify new and emerging gangs such as TMS (Too Many Somalis), Silent Movers and Duppy Squad. The TPR Coordinator also provides assistance to witnesses who wish to make statements against gang leaders to the police as part of the Source Unit (which deals with informants).

The project has highlighted a key cause for concern through its outreach work and volunteers: that much race hate crime is not reported because it is accepted by residents as 'part of every day life'. Most of the reporting over the past year has been related to more extreme race hate crime that involves physical violence rather than other less obvious harassment. The project

manager reports that it can take eight or nine incidents such as being spat at or punched on the street before residents decide to act.

The main activities at the **Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre (KCNA) and TPR centre** are for families, aimed at bringing people together to generate greater understanding and respect across culture and generations. There are a variety of activities which include language lessons, day trips, lunch clubs, advice and support, and health education. The centre provides space and activities that help to diffuse community tensions through changing behaviour and perceptions. In turn this complements the centre's use as a Third Party Reporting Centre. Achievements at the most basic level, for example, families from very different cultural backgrounds actually communicating with each other outside the community centre, help to enable initiatives like TPR. The volunteer reporter at KCNA has recently dealt with reports on violent harassment and drugs issues, the latter from a local family who had not previously felt safe enough to report drug dealing out of a neighbouring flat. Issues like gang membership and violence are also fed back and addressed through focussed work with young people and their families.

## **Issues and comments**

### **Tackling the causes of anti- social behaviour**

- It was felt that there is a policy of 'parking' young people with ABAs or ASBOs in communities where there is little or no youth provision, e.g. Gospel Oak and in Camden Town itself. Young people with ASBOs are relocated to these areas and left with nothing to do, especially where youth funding has recently been withdrawn, for example, in Gospel Oak.
- Local people are concerned about anti-social behaviour and do want solutions. However there are many who feel that ASBOs are not a solution but can exacerbate the problem by leaving vulnerable people, many with alcohol addictions, without any support networks.
- There were concerns about how the new Safer Neighbourhoods Team at St Pancras Station would operate. Particularly the danger of displacement with surrounding Safer Neighbourhoods Panels.
- Displacing anti social behaviour into residential areas was seen as a problem, and the impact of new Camden Town initiatives repeating the example of Kings Cross and Agar Grove.
- The sale of cheap strong alcohol in shops on the doorstep of prevention oriented projects like New Horizon Youth Centre was identified as a challenge for the Local Strategic Partnership.
- There are serious issues with refugees and access to services, especially unaccompanied minors and people with health problems, with no eligibility for housing, health care etc. Places like NHYC can only accommodate them during the day. There is increasing pressure on Voluntary and Community Sector projects to deal with the problem.
- More focus is needed on drugs, alcohol and older people – not just young people.
- People were concerned about whether antisocial behaviour resulting from mental health issues was being addressed.

## **Improving bullying and racist incident monitoring systems**

- It was felt that stronger links between housing and preventing race hate crime needed to be developed. Estates and neighbourhoods are where much race hate crime occurs.
- Many people see some racial harassment as 'part of everyday life' and do not report it – most reporting to date is only about the most violent race hate crime.

## **Reducing fear of crime**

- A key prevention measure is outreach work and communicating how issues are being addressed locally. But this is also slow and intensive process that requires recognition and resources.
- Other community centres, faith groups etc are doing a lot of work that contributes to community safety – connects with third party reporting, gang issues etc – but don't necessarily see themselves as fitting into Community Strategy themes. Key areas of work include things like challenging cultural barriers so that residents from different backgrounds will communicate with one another. In turn creating an environment where other issues can then be addressed.
- The relationship between the VCS and police is seen as constructive, enabling 'myth busting' etc with residents, especially young people. It was felt that effective barrier breaking can be achieved through quite simple interventions if there was good communication between agencies.

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## IMPROVING WELL-BEING AND HEALTH ACROSS THE BOROUGH: 28<sup>TH</sup> May 2008

The specific aims within this Community Strategy theme are:

- Reducing smoking.
- Promoting healthy eating and physical activity.
- Improving access to sexual health services.
- Reducing the incidence of diseases like cancer and coronary heart disease.
- Ensuring a range of services and accommodations are available to meet the needs and aspirations of an aging population.
- Minimising the incidence of child abuse and neglect.
- Increasing the numbers of vulnerable adults living independently in their own homes, with support if need be.

The seminar focussed on:

- How people are changing their lifestyles through physical activity, stopping smoking and healthy eating.
- People getting involved in learning, cultural and recreational activities.
- How the well-being of people with disabling physical or mental ill health is being supported.
- How the life chances and choices for children and young people are being improved.
- Opportunities for everyone to stay healthy, keep learning and have full and active lives.

### Case Studies

#### Stop smoking services and health promotion activities

The **Third Age Project** have been tackling health inequalities in older men, raising awareness of health issues from Camden PCT's Health Bus, local community centres and at neighbourhood events. The project developed through involving Camden residents in health debates encouraging participants to take up the health checks on offer through the project. Over 500 men have received screening and advice resulting in referrals to a range of health services. This includes 42 older men from the Somali and Bangladeshi communities who have been referred to smoking cessation service programmes. Men participating in the project have also contributed to identifying and addressing the barriers that stop them accessing services and leading healthier lifestyles, including successfully campaigning for evening and Saturday local GP surgery opening.

Approximately 50 young people per week are using the innovative health services at **Kilburn Youth Centre (KYC)**. The Seriously Healthy project provides a 3 monthly cycle of holistic therapies for stopping smoking and weight loss. Currently 10 -12 local young people volunteer (and are trained) as peer educators on KYC health projects. One user of the centre who progressed from user to peer educator has recently become a member of staff.

## **Promoting healthy behaviour including healthy eating and physical activity**

Camden's network of five **Healthy Living Centres** deliver a range of services and programmes to address the health and well-being of local people, bringing together services and health promotion within the context of public health strategy. Outreach work is key in mobilising local residents to increase access to mainstream services and reduce health inequalities. Centres promote healthy behaviour through services including dietary advice, exercise and smoking cessation. Health outcomes for local people are achieved by providing information and health improvement activities in a community setting and connecting people into mainstream health services. For example **West Euston Healthy Community Project** links Timebank volunteering and training support into their healthy living approach, whilst the **Kentish Town Healthy Living Centre** is developing a new building with internet and social facilities.

The approach of many voluntary and community sector organisations is to offer a mix of services that together support the health and well-being of their local communities. The combinations vary. For example the **Calthorpe Project** in Kings Cross supports social and gardening activities with a focus on food growing, cooking and healthy eating strengthened by childcare, play schemes, training and volunteering. Similarly **Penrose Housing Association** focuses on healthy eating on a low income, but combines this with different sporting activities and addressing mental health issues and substance misuse.

For older people it is often extremely difficult to change the eating habits of a lifetime. At **Great Croft Resource Centre** vegetable growing is combined with preparing food, information and health talks to promote the value of fresh foods and healthy diet. A number of centres for older people in the borough share this approach.

### **Sport and physical activity initiatives**

**Pro Touch Soccer Academy** provides training delivered by sports professionals volunteering their time. The approach is community based and holistic addressing personal, social and educational development through projects that are developed by young people involved in the academy. Sporting activity has been expanded to include fashion design and workshops on issues that affect young people like drugs and safe sex.

**African Physical Training Organisation** is another sports focussed project where sport is a catalyst for achieving different quality of life outcomes. The organisation is run by 12 volunteers and sport activity is combined with arts activities, educational support like IT, translation, ESOL and a supplementary school. Health and well-being is measured through a collection of outcomes that include putting new skills into practice such as parents who are learning English being able to assist their children with homework.

### **Tackling substance misuse**

VCS organisations are addressing substance misuse in a variety of ways, often targeting a specific age group or community. **ICAP (Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy)** provide mental health services. Within this they work to reduce reliance on drugs and alcohol and improve life quality for adults from BME communities. For example, they work closely with the **Irish Community Centre** running men's groups to address substance use, depression and loss.

**La Palace Social Club**, run by eight volunteers, works with young people from the Somali and Bangladeshi communities, and their local Safer Neighbourhoods Team addressing misuse of drugs and alcohol and related anti-social behaviour and crime. The work is balanced with sports, dance and short accredited courses for young people that promote empowerment and social well-being.

### **Sexual health**

Sexual health promotion is a key area of work within VCS services for young people. **The Seriously Sexy Clinic**, part of Kilburn Youth Centre's package of health initiatives for young people, is the first of its kind. Open on Saturdays it provides health checks, emergency contraception, free condoms, screening and basic treatment, and confidential sexual health advice.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

Community development workers at **Voluntary Action Camden (VAC)** are helping to address the barriers that stop BME and refugee communities accessing mental health services. Two development workers deliver training, educational activities and events that are increasing the awareness of mental health issues and services, with a focus in the first year on the Somali and Bangladeshi communities. The aim is to improve the flow of information, bridge the gap between service providers and community groups, and empower those groups to represent the views of their communities to statutory providers on issues of service delivery. The development workers also help to facilitate the Mental Health Network where information and concerns about mental health are shared. The involvement of local service providers in the network and connections with commissioners and Camden's Local Implementation Team give communities a real voice.

During the seminar held with VCS groups for the purpose of this Community Strategy report the **Ethiopian Health Support Group** were able to connect with the Mental Health Network. They are a small organisation, among other things providing health promotion literature. They have recently produced information on autism and healthy eating. Until now a problem for the group has been relative isolation in not knowing how to connect their community with health service providers.

**Sante Refugee Mental Health Project** is a group of Camden residents who advocate to get refugees and asylum seekers linked into the community care assessment process. Six voluntary befrienders support people who are experiencing isolation and despair and are unaware or afraid of mainstream services because they fear deportation.

### **Providing opportunities for everyone to stay healthy, keep learning and have full and active lives**

**Camden Chinese Community Centre** has 600 members, 80% of whom are Camden residents. The centre provides leisure and health related activities for people of all ages. A lunch club and outings are organised for older people, who also take part in activities like Tai Chi, basic IT and language classes. Activities at the centre's youth project include dance, theatre, sports, language lessons, homework club and an intergenerational initiative called Playback. Users of the centre are encouraged to train and volunteer. There are currently 80

volunteers delivering meals on wheels, acting as escorts for GP visits, providing blood pressure checks, home and hospital visits, delivering meals, and running the IT and language classes.

### **Tackling worklessness in Camden**

Volunteering plays an important part in service delivery by VCS organisations. As well as increasing capacity of organisations and enabling services that would not otherwise exist, volunteers gain confidence, broaden their social networks, and learn new skills. Last year 1695 Camden Residents used **Volunteer Centre Camden's (VCC)** services to find volunteering opportunities. VCC also deliver a volunteering project with 30 people using Camden mental health services, encouraging people to build networks outside of the mental health setting through volunteering in the wider community, in turn increasing confidence and employability.

**Age Concern's Employment Support Project** focuses on the 50+ age group offering volunteering, training and employment support. Camden residents up to 80 years of age have used the service to find paid and voluntary work.

### **Working with people facing the disabling effects of physical or mental ill health so they can continue to make a positive contribution**

**Upbeat** is a group that helps people with mental health problems improve their life quality through developing their love of music. The 150 members of the group can learn how to play musical instruments, receive training in singing and dancing, use a recording studio and receive different therapies. Upbeat members won an award in 2006 for Exceptional Contribution to Arts and Culture and the 2008 Indie Award. In addition to developing creative talents the project runs on reciprocal working arrangements encouraging all users to contribute to running the organisation, activities and facilities. This arrangement is now being developed in to a 'currency' of volunteering units that can be 'spent' on project activities.

**Talking Therapy** is an initiative run by Age Concern Camden that addresses the disabling effects of dementia and depression on older people. For some service users the therapy has had a profound effect, enabling people with serious conditions to participate in social activity, volunteer or take up employment.

### **Ensuring access to the right support at the right time to promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities**

**Age Concern Camden** delivers a range of services for older Camden residents that support independence and in turn promote health and well-being. Services include health and social care support such as counselling, Talking Therapies, a shopping service and Helping Hands home services. In addition advice and advocacy initiatives support older people to negotiate the benefits and allowances available achieving greater independence and peace of mind. An important outcome is that once connected with these support services people are lifted out of an isolated and constrained environment and able to benefit from social and learning activities. Service users taking up opportunities to volunteer, learn English, take part in exercise, arts and craft sessions and computer classes and go on daytrips are continuing to improve their physical and mental health. Age Concern Camden currently has 180 volunteers (70% are older people) who use their services volunteering their help and skills to benefit others.

## Issues and comments

### Lack of information sharing, communication and 're-inventing the wheel'

- Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) are looking at alternative funding sources as current funding streams come to an end. HLCs are concerned that there are new initiatives that may be 'reinventing the wheel', particularly those that focus on access and equalities. Once a service is lost the impacts are likely to remain unknown for some time. It was noted that where some services are lost it is unlikely that client groups will take up those services again.
- Groups felt that access to services that join up to achieve strong outcomes was important.
- The new focus on Polyclinics does not seem to include much emphasis on health promotion. It was suggested that HLCs could be a key vehicle for delivering Polyclinics.
- Demise of Well and Wise HLC has resulted in Age Concern dealing with an increase in enquiries about where to refer people for those services.
- New Routes, a statutory project, found it difficult to access information – during visits to other statutory services they found a lack of information available about those services, let alone what the VCS / other providers are delivering.
- VCS groups emphasised the need to understand the whole picture – contributors to health and well-being like benefits advice, transport, housing etc.
- VCS need to have more input into the whole commissioning process.
- Different communities can be confused by what services are for and how to access what they need.
- Ethiopian Health Support Group felt that their community needed to be encouraged to access services provided by PCT etc and integrate with wider community.
- More bridging / link work between statutory and VCS health providers was suggested. More VCS also need to take up networking opportunities e.g. like the recent PCT conference.
- Increasing referrals between projects was suggested as a way of sharing knowledge and maximising outcome potential.

### Monitoring

- The Calthorpe Project encourages people to use their garden in therapeutic ways, but felt that registering and asking people questions was intrusive and interfered with their freedom to relax and enjoy the space and activities.
- Measuring the qualitative outcomes achieved through 'holistic' approach to health is extremely difficult. Proxy measurement and the Outcomes Star were discussed as possible solutions. Sharing information about how we monitor and learning from each other was suggested, particularly in relation to softer outcomes.
- Monitoring requirements do not always fit with services delivered and their real benefits. Women and Health felt that numbers / outputs weren't useful measurements for the alternative therapies that they offer. The emphasis needs to be on quality. Outcomes focussed commissioning needs to be developed.
- It was felt that VCS providers should be involved at an earlier stage to decide on appropriate indicators for measuring outcomes.

- Some providers felt that the outcomes expected from VCS were far greater than resources / input, or were just unrealistic. Gaps need to be looked at with commissioners and addressed or taken into consideration when looking at services needed in future.
- Concern was expressed about increasing admin to the detriment of actual services to communities. Monitoring could be about visits to projects rather than filling in forms.

### **Policy versus reality**

- Simplistic ideas such as moving people out of the benefits system and into work were criticised – a benefit claimant cannot always become an employee just because a job is available. Many people on benefits are in complicated situations. Asylum seekers and refugees were used as an example.
- Related to above some providers had found that clients using counselling and other therapies were keen to work, but needed the right support and guidance. The Stress Project was incorporating appropriate career guidance and referrals to business support groups into their service provision.
- Women and Health reported more emphasis from government on early stage therapies which is welcomed but a related increased need for medium level therapies must be addressed too.
- There is a need to address whether existing therapy models are appropriate for BME communities (there is low take up).
- More support is needed to help people develop social skills as an extension of one-to-one therapies.

## **INCREASING ACCESS TO SKILLS, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND JOBS: 2nd September 2008**

The specific aims of the Community Strategy theme are:

- Raising standards in English, maths and science, including the number of students gaining at least five GCSEs (grade A to C), overall achievement in secondary education and all aspects of learning.
- Improving the overall employment rate and having fewer people dependent on state benefits.
- Increasing participation in skills and training amongst priority groups including those receiving Incapacity Benefit and lone parents.
- Increasing the number of young people aged 16 to 18 who are in education, employment or training.
- Improving school attendance.

The seminar focussed on:

- A voluntary and community sector (VCS) perspective on services funded / delivered in partnership with the Council, Learning and Skills Council and other public sector agencies (what are the achievements, issues, gaps in services etc)
- What are the VCS services that are not funded by the public sector but are achieving important outcomes? What else is the VCS doing that should be brought to the attention of the LSP?
- VCS organisations are significant employers in the borough, particularly of disadvantage groups. What are current or planned initiatives in this area?

### **Case Studies**

#### **The sector as an employer: overview from OPM research**

In 2007 the Office for Public Management (OPM) completed a research report on a sample of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in Camden. The research gave a snapshot of the VCS as a local employer. Within the sample of 42 organisations of varying size and income a total of 2,490 people were employed, 1815 in a voluntary capacity and 685 paid staff. 53% relied on volunteers to deliver their services whilst at the same time providing their volunteers with training and important work experience. The employment profile in the research also showed that the VCS was a key employer of people for whom it is often difficult to find work, particularly older people, young people (18 – 25 year olds), those from BME communities and people with disabilities.

#### **Workforce development**

The VCS in Camden continues to develop as an employer through a range of initiatives aimed at increasing capabilities and improving quality. Increasing numbers of organisations are achieving accreditation in commissioning and contracting, and project management, and are gaining quality standard marks. **VAC** has been working with the **Mary Ward Centre** to develop

accredited training within the framework of progression routes from level 1 through to level 5. A further two management modules will be rolled out in early 2009.

A new initiative delivered by VAC through BASIS (lottery funded) is enabling organisations to access training for their voluntary management committees and trustees. 50 people a year over three years will receive accredited training in key areas of management like strategic planning, governance versus operational management, legal responsibilities etc. In parallel the project will train trainers from groups that work with BME communities to cascade the training. Future development includes the setting up of a social enterprise for newly qualified trainers to sustain and continue the work. The main outcome for this project is for participants to gain the relevant skills and knowledge to respond to the changing and complex environment that faces their organisations and ensure a stable future.

There are many people working in the sector who have a wealth of experience that is not formally recognised. An Accredited Prior Learning (APL) model is now being taken forward to enable those people to produce evidence of their experience and for this to be accredited to OCN level 3.

### **Training, skills development and access to work for disadvantaged groups**

**The Camden Society** works with people with learning and physical disabilities through its Learning and Employment Centre. This is combined with social and care services that ensure clients ability to train or work is not impaired by other needs not being met. In Camden there are 30 staff supported by 75 volunteers who work as escorts, in administration, finance, in a 'drop in' and on a peer activity scheme. Of 240 students and 190 Skills for Life placements about 40% go on to paid employment of over 16.5 hours a week. The main issues for the Camden Society are steering clients through the benefits trap and lack of advocacy support.

**Cranstoun Drug Service** provides specialist treatment, rehabilitation and support services to people affected by drug and alcohol misuse. Their Skills for Life programme offers additional training and employment services for people accessing rehabilitation and support. The programme currently includes 30 unemployed Camden clients of whom ten are expected to follow into paid employment and 20 into further education or training.

**Manor Gardens Advocacy Project** aims to improve the employability of refugees through increasing access to health services. Volunteers at the project receive training to become bilingual health advocates. About 30% of volunteers go on to paid employment, usually in the advice and advocacy field or into language support in schools.

### **Volunteering**

**Volunteer Centre Camden (VCC)** reports that one of the key reasons why local people volunteer is to access employment. Volunteering is a way of developing new skills, getting work experience or exploring a change of career. Where high quality volunteer support is offered the VCS can provide opportunities for a range of people to volunteer and eventually find their way into employment. At **Kilburn Youth Centre**, for example, young volunteers have trained as peer health educators, with one of them recently becoming a full time health worker at the centre. Other community projects report similar transitions from service user to volunteer to employee.

Projects such as **Community Accountancy** and **ITC Volunteers** provide groups with trained volunteers to assist in developing financial and IT skills. These projects have dual benefit - volunteers with specific skills help to build the capacity of local groups, at the same time the volunteers gain valuable employment experience and learn community development skills.

## **Issues and comments**

### **ESOL provision – reach, and co-ordination with other partners**

- At the seminar on this Community Strategy theme a major issue was felt to be the gaps in ESOL provision. ESOL providers who are not specifically employment focused have problems maintaining their services. This particularly affects provision for older people. Some groups that are working with local residents to access employment feel that there needs to be more communication and co-ordination between partners delivering at different stages of the route into employment. For example, one group felt that the benefits of their ESOL provision could be increased by having designated staff in job centres that were familiar with the problems faced by people in the early stages of learning English. This would help to build the confidence of clients as well as broaden their understanding of the local work environment.

### **Contracts**

- The size of contracts was felt to be a barrier to VCS organisations. Even organisations running large programmes and with relatively high turnover were not tendering for contracts on the basis of contract size, their capacity to administrate them and the negative impact a large contract could have on their core objectives, community outcomes and future sustainability.

## **WORKING TOGETHER TO MANAGE A GROWING POPULATION: 28<sup>TH</sup> October 2008**

The specific aims for this theme are:

- **Increasing the provision of affordable housing and making supported housing work better for everyone**
- **Improving the quality and availability of social housing**
- **Bringing empty properties back into use**
- **Preventing homelessness**

The seminar focussed on housing provision and the economic downturn but also included debate about other aspects of the emerging Local Development Framework.

### **Case Studies**

#### **Housing support**

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are delivering supported housing schemes which address the multiple issues that stop people from disadvantaged groups accessing and retaining secure housing.

**The Alcohol Recovery Project** run a Tenancy Support project to improve the life of Camden residents experiencing housing problems related to their substance misuse. This is achieved by encouraging settled independent living, promoting health, minimising antisocial behaviour and addressing the underlying causes of their substance misuse. When a client's tenancy is more secure the focus is then on getting back into employment. The project runs in partnership with LBC, the PCT and other voluntary sector organisations.

**Nacro Housing** work closely with the Probation Service to deliver a supported housing scheme for ex-offenders – part of the Camden Single Homeless Person Hostel Pathway. The key outcomes for service users are a reduction in re-offending, greater social inclusion and client participation in education, training and employment. Whilst the pathway model depends on clients moving through a series of stages the system can be let down by lack of council housing availability and client fear of the private rental sector. One of the achievements in Camden is that work is being done to build more confidence in the private rental sector enabling service users to move on and avoid becoming institutionalised, and reducing silt-up in local hostels. However the private rental sector still presents challenges including difficulties in procuring landlords within the borough.

**Kick Start** is also part of the pathways initiative funded by Camden through Supporting People. The client group are 16 – 21 year old single homeless people, most of whom have learning difficulties, mental health issues or are affected by substance misuse. Kick Start helps them to develop strategies to return home or find permanent accommodation in the private rental sector, and access education, training and employment.

**Off the Streets and into Work** runs the Transitional Spaces Project (TSP) funded through HM Treasury 'Invest to Save' and the London Housing Foundation. TSP aims to address the problem of 'silt-up' in hostels and supported accommodation by providing a 'work first' model to support clients. Through access to employment and housing the model seeks to achieve short term impact and long term sustainability and enable hostels to refocus on their role of transitional spaces. Outcomes in Camden have recently included clients being housed by registered social landlords and in the private rental sector, as well as achieving full time employment.

**Hope Worldwide** work with Camden's cold weather shelters through Two Step, their programme for homeless people in London. The programme prioritises single 'non-statutory priority' homeless people, and houses at least 200 people per year. The programme includes residential rehabilitation and a volunteer mentoring scheme. It is unusual in that volunteer 'hosts' put up clients in their own homes while longer term accommodation is found and needs are addressed.

### **Housing advocacy**

**Camden Federation of Private Tenants** works on behalf of the 25% of Camden households who live in private rented accommodation and the 11% who live in housing association properties. The key issues for private tenants include poor management (both through letting agencies and landlords), lack of access to legal advice, and short tenancies which impact on resident's willingness or ability to engage in community life. More recently the economic downturn has led to property loss and an increase in evictions. The federation suggests more effective regulation of the private rental sector could contribute to changing attitudes and alleviating people's fears of private rentals and in turn help to address the chronic housing shortage.

**Camden Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations** works for council tenants. Their members are concerned about the lack of available council housing, oppose the sale of housing stock and would like to see new council housing built. The current climate is seen as providing opportunity for new council housing in terms of policy change, and potentially through the downturn in the private housing market.

**The Kings Cross Railway Lands Group (KXRLG)** have worked for a number years consulting with local residents and trying to secure housing and jobs for local people within the Kings Cross development site. Most recently their approach has been to work with developers to create employment opportunities for local people, and secure social and environmental benefits through connecting training, employment and new housing. KXRLG welcome the new training centre at Kings Cross and are continuing their work to achieve more of this in the borough along with other employment / housing related schemes.

### **Points made on the economic downturn**

- Overall people thought that the economic climate would result in more pressure on their already over-stretched services as more vulnerable people fall through the net as services are cut back / debt increases / housing repossessions etc.
- At the same time groups felt that the VCS, with sufficient resources, was well placed to fill gaps in services as they emerge.

- Fears were expressed about deterioration in housing conditions and supply – both council and private rental – in parallel with increasing need.
- Some people also felt that the economic climate could provide opportunity for new approaches to housing provision – for example, if effective regulation and allaying fears of both landlords and tenants were addressed, the potential of the private rental sector could be developed.
- The idea of a strategic cross sector group was discussed to look at housing issues and opportunity – innovation / action / solution focussed.

## **Issues and comments on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

### **Managing Camden's Growth**

- There is a need to be clear about the nature of population growth in the borough. Assuming growth is a cross section of the existing population Camden should deliver in a better and more environmentally safe way to meet current need and guide future development.
- The finer detail of preferred development / growth areas will inevitably be decided at such time as development is able to start and will be affected by conditions at that time. It is important that communities are engaged in debate and decision making with enough time to understand the full context and participate from an informed point of view. Not just consulted through question / answer exercises
- Decisions on the use of Section 106 and possible Community Infrastructure Levy on the preferred sites need to include local communities on a case by case basis. The LDF consultation should not be used to justify how these planning gains are used.

### **Making housing the priority land use of Camden's Local Development Framework**

- Housing security is an important consideration. Temporary and short-term private sector tenancy agreements make people reluctant to engage in community life and exacerbates other social / economic worries.

### **Encouraging the provision of more housing**

- There are potentially opportunities in the private rented sector for helping to meet housing need if security and regulation are addressed.
- Camden needs to work on improving the reputation of the private rented sector, especially if it wants to make it a more attractive housing option vis-à-vis the continuing popularity of obtaining council property amongst many residents.
- Poor housing management by both landlords and letting agencies should be addressed as part of a broad approach to increasing the number of decent affordable homes.
- Housing type needs to reflect need and be appropriate for people with disabilities.
- A high percentage of tenants live in private rented accommodation where there is also the highest percentage of homes that don't meet decent homes standards.

Migrant communities also often live in the worst part of the private rented sector. Situations likely to get worse in recession unless these issues are addressed.

- Whilst the private sector presents opportunity there is a real danger that increasing / promoting private sector growth and power could make it even more difficult to regulate.
- Achievements through initiatives like Pathways models should be built upon and expanded.

### **Preventing the loss of existing homes**

- No council housing stock should be sold off.
- Homelessness and destitution need to be addressed more thoroughly with support for winter shelters etc, Economic downturn will mean more people losing their homes and more vulnerable people slipping through the net.

### **Seeking a range of affordable housing for people who cannot afford to occupy houses available on the open market and ensuring that 50% of new homes are affordable**

- Council should take opportunity in current climate (policy change and economic downturn affecting private sector building) to build and acquire new municipal housing.
- Municipal housing should be looked at in its own right – not as a percentage split with private 'affordable' housing (as in splitting the 50% into 60/40%).
- The plight of refugees and asylum seekers needs addressing. Housing is one issue but lack of rights means that these communities are disadvantaged in accessing support in every area – health, community safety, training, employment etc.

### **Dealing with our waste sustainably and encouraging recycling**

- Information sharing is important. Business, community groups, council etc can all learn from each other about small scale initiatives that contribute to the big picture.
- Disabled people have problems with existing recycling methods, for example being unable to carry their recycling to centres if they live in certain types of housing.

### **Protecting designated open space and conservation sites**

- Type of space should be identified, for example green spaces should be protected and increased for health, recreation and environmental reasons

### **Providing community and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors, and seeking to keep the facilities we already have**

- Community development approaches are needed to design and build for strong communities and achieve appropriate infrastructure.
- Environments should be created where different groups / people can communicate and address local issues.

- There is a need to address improvements, upkeep and sustainability for existing community facilities as well as increase provision.

### **Improving health and well-being by working in partnership with Camden's Primary Care Trust**

- The whole health picture should be looked at – contributors to health like benefits advice, transport, and housing.
- Camden needs health services that are easily accessible to everyone with clear information for local communities.
- Prevention of poor health should be integrated into designing places and delivering services.

### **Supporting efforts to make Camden a safer place by ensuring appropriate design to help reduce opportunities for crime**

- Facilities and infrastructure should be prioritised where there are high levels of social need e.g. youth provision in communities where there are anti-social behaviour issues.
- 'Place-shaping' beyond physical design with networks and support infrastructure for vulnerable people.
- Development needs to look at the long term and beyond area boundaries to avoid displacement of problems into residential or other areas.
- Housing providers (not just the council) should be more involved in addressing crime – for example to address the links between race hate crime and housing estates.

### **Ensuring buildings, streets and transport systems are as accessible as possible**

- Attitudes to public seating need to be more positive – in the right places seating can help community cohesion as well as make places more accessible and comfortable for elderly or disabled people. Parks in particular should have more seating.
- Good and appropriate transport links between housing, community facilities and local services are essential to maintain and improve.
- Clear connections and safe accessible routes for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public and community transport.

### **Supporting local enterprise development and training schemes**

- Local enterprise development linking high quality training, jobs and housing needs to be available across the borough. A variety of high quality approaches to training for local young people e.g. training centres, apprenticeships.
- There needs to be more balance between people travelling into the borough to work and people who live and work here. There is lack of training available / appropriate to the local population in relation to employment opportunity.
- Training and skills development on offer should be appropriate to the needs of local employers and the jobs likely to be on offer in the area. Employers and

businesses could be more involved in anticipating and communicating local opportunity to local communities.

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## **CAMDEN TOWN VISION: 13<sup>TH</sup> January 2009**

The Camden Town vision in the Community Strategy was developed to improve the area through a range of interventions including:

- **Enforcement, including a much greater uniformed presence.**
- **Improving the state of Camden Town's physical environment, including roads, pavements and lighting, building on the considerable investment that has already gone into the area through the liveability funding.**
- **Using enforcement against drug dealers and the improvements to the environment to change the areas reputation, together with better marketing of Camden Town as a place for everyone.**

The seminar focussed on:

- **What is being achieved and how?**
- **What is the added value that voluntary and community sector groups bring to achieving these aims?**
- **What are the gaps and barriers for different groups / users?**

### **Case Studies**

**Castlehaven Community Association (CCA)** is a key organisation serving residents in the middle of Camden Town. The association run a range of facilities and projects for local people including some of the only accessible and safe open spaces in the area. CCA work with the whole community (from Under 5s to over 90s), work with children and young people involves the participation of their families, and there is increasing demand for inter-generational work. Recent initiatives like a Fashion Through the Ages competition, and recording sessions that combine 'older' words with contemporary music and vice versa, are encouraging more diversity in an environment dominated by youth culture. Camden Town's youth culture is driven by tourism, and contrasts sharply with high levels of deprivation experienced by many young people living in the area. An important aspect of CCA's work is creating more balance between the well-being of local residents and the wider environment. Ensuring, for example, that local young people excluded from commercial leisure opportunities by lack of money, employment or aspirations, are not isolated within their own community &/or environment. Local older people, on the other hand, are isolated by fear of drug & alcohol related antisocial behaviour and the lack of basic provision such as useful shops in their locality. CCA provide variety of opportunities for local young people including focussed work with those identified as being at risk of crime, anti-social behaviour and exclusion as well as more generic youth provision and a broad range of activities for older people. In conjunction with their mainstream activities CCA are currently holding alcohol free affordable Saturday Youth 'Club' nights and resourcing visits to local leisure and entertainment facilities. Despite the success of these initiatives their often short term funding have an impact on whether the residents involved are able to feel at home in their own neighbourhood.

**New Horizons Youth Centre (NHYC)** has outreach workers in Camden Town working with the street population – sex work, substance misuse, homelessness. Clients have usually migrated to the area, many from the Kings Cross area. Over the past year staff have reported that whilst

Camden Town continues to maintain a significant street population client numbers have stabilised rather than increased. NHYC works specifically with 16-21 year olds in Camden Town, providing education and support, and referring clients on to relevant drug agencies, accommodation and health care providers.

**CARAF** give information, advice and support to black and other parents in Camden on social, educational and training issues that affect black children and their families. CARAF also run training workshops, provide counselling services, and run a play scheme and a supplementary school. The organisation reports that racism is still rife in the area and there are divisions between different groups of youths. For example Somali youth will tend not to access youth activities currently provided. To increase provision and choice in the area Queens Crescent Community Centre are looking into opening one evening a week for young people, focussing on Somali young people.

**Sahil Housing Association** work with the Somali community living in Camden Town, particularly women, older people and young people. Sahil work with other housing associations but feel that greater integration is needed for their large numbers of Somali tenants who need support because of language and cultural isolation. This is particularly true of older people who need more culturally sensitive sheltered accommodation. Overcrowding also presents problems with young people who often face homelessness, exacerbated by the high level of unemployment within the Somali community, low skills levels and lack of educational / training support and youth provision.

## **Issues and comments**

### **Lack of opportunities for local residents**

- Local facilities in day and night-time economy are for young people – but not local young people.
- Despite a few streets of 'affluence' the local resident population is one of the most deprived in the borough. Not only contrasting with the few affluent residents, but also with the huge tourist population.
- People wanted to know how much employment for local people there actually was, and whether all the income from tourism leaks back out again. There is a perception that 'the pound doesn't even hit the ground' in Camden Town.
- The environment doesn't lend itself to educational achievement. Late night noise, drug dealing etc. Relevant training for the local economy (like the Kings Cross Training Centre) is needed.
- There is acute need for development for local people not a further stretching of the night time economy.
- Lack of useful shops and facilities for residents increases isolation, particularly for older residents.
- It was felt that an audit of local employers who are employing local people would be useful.

## **Diversification**

- Developments that encouraged an older age group were seen as a positive step, but older residents who can't afford restaurants / clubs etc need to be encouraged to use the high street more.
- It was felt that closure of Woolworths could provide opportunity but there is also a danger of increasing chain stores and destroying vibrancy.
- It was felt that Camden Town is special but a better balance between uses is needed.
- Encouraging a more 'multi-aged' character would have a calming effect.
- It was agreed that it wasn't possible to regain what Camden used to have, but succession could be managed to maintain uniqueness and include resident's needs – planning enforcement and approaches were seen as key.
- Planning was seen as an important tool, but to date was felt not to be used effectively – licensing policies not being enforced, roller shutters still in use, oversized display panels, and use of commercial properties for the same type of business.
- Questions were raised about the future of remaining light industrial units (most were thought to be on six month leases). Some of the most useful businesses / services for residents (e.g. car maintenance) and more likely to create local jobs 'that were better than McDonalds' are in these units.
- The high number of fast food outlets in the Stables was cited as an example of 'saturation'. Residents thought that the development had been supposed to include community facilities.
- Councillors for Camden Town and Primrose Hill were mentioned as being supportive of resident's plight.
- Camden Town was described as being full of invisible walls – dividing the haves and have-nots – particularly poignant for the high numbers of local young people who often desire the lifestyle that Camden Town offers but have no access to it.

## **Anti-social behaviour**

- It was felt that increased presence of community officers had made a difference to the area, having an impact on how older and younger local people felt about the area. It was also acknowledged that perceptions take a long time to change.
- Safer Neighbourhoods Teams were also cited as doing a good job in the area with outreach work and community relations.
- It was suggested that Camden Town would be a good area to run a mentoring / shadowing project with the police for young people – based on a similar initiative in Berlin.
- It was felt that more outreach work was needed with local young people at risk.
- It was felt that the drug problem was less prominent but the reasons were unclear – decrease in dealing / change of drugs (less paraphernalia being found in gardens etc) / more arrests.
- Shops selling drugs paraphernalia were felt to give an impression of tolerance.
- Litter from food outlets was an issue, particularly in the community gardens as there was limited seating in the Stables where so much food is sold. It was noted that LBC are now helping with this.

- Noise for seven nights a week was a big issue for local people and groups working with residents. Notably the impact continuous broken sleep has on health and educational achievement.
- It was noted that older people using the Castlehaven Centre won't come to evening activities without an escort.

### **Transport, parking and environment**

- Parking is already oversubscribed by local residents, but after 6.30pm they are in danger of losing their parking spaces to visitors (it was noted that this is under review).
- After the tube shuts there is limited late transport for residents. Buses are scarce and taxi drivers are reluctant to pick up because of drunks.
- Older people and single mothers are most likely to travel out of the area to find community activities but younger people are more territorial.
- Street lighting, pavements and rainwater drainage were felt to need attention.
- There were concerns about the Hawley Wharf development stretching the night-time economy into other areas and the impact of the development's density.
- It was felt that roller shutters on shops (especially with graffiti) made Camden Town feel like a New York ghetto at night.

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## **BENEFITING FROM CULTURAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING THE LONDON OLYMPICS: 10<sup>TH</sup> March 2009**

The specific aims in this Community Strategy theme are:

- **More residents satisfied with cultural and recreational activities.**
- **More residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.**
- **More five to sixteen years olds taking part in at least two hours of organised physical activity a week.**
- **Developing extended services around schools to help children and young people to enjoy and achieve, such as breakfast clubs and after school activities.**

The seminar focussed on volunteering, open spaces and on the opportunities provided by the London Olympics

### **Case Studies**

#### **Enhancing the attractiveness of the borough**

As well as formal parks and open spaces the borough has a significant number of green spaces developed and managed by local people. These spaces have often originated on derelict sites, bringing unused and sometimes contaminated land back into use and improving the quality of the environment for a variety of uses. For example **Camley Street Nature Reserve** is a two acre site supporting a bio diversity of plant and animal life for the benefit of local residents, school children and visitors to the area. A new pathway to the reserve will open as part of the Kings Cross development which will increase use by the general public. Whilst there are benefits in increasing the use of the site there are also implications for the plant and animal life. The Camley Street Nature Reserve is also resource for promoting wellbeing, and like other community gardens attracts high numbers of volunteers who further contribute to the development of the site.

**Kentish Town City Farm** currently has 60-70 young people volunteering as well as 25-30 regular volunteers. The farm receives approximately 13,000 visitors a year including school children, local residents and visitors from outside the borough. As well as providing a stimulating outdoor environment the farm engages people in its development through creative activities and practical management of the site and animals. Kentish Town City Farm is also a venue for a number of local festivals and events.

#### **Children's activities and enhancing cultural and leisure opportunities by widening audience and increasing access**

A new project in Camden that involves artists working with young parents aims to combine the production of an artwork with children's play. Arts charity **Artangel** are working with partners **Coram Family** on this Arts Council funded project to encourage parents to get involved in and develop play activities for their children. The project will run until March 2010 and will be led by the young parents involved. They will choose appropriate creative activities to expand and develop their ideas about play, for example they may choose to make a film, perform, paint,

produce a book. The project will enable access to different creative media through workshops, visits and residencies.

## **Making the most of the opportunities presented by 2012 Games**

Last summer **Coram Fields** hosted a mini Olympics and are planning to make this an annual event to enthuse children and young people in the run up to the 2012 Games. Their site is suitable for most athletic events and during the actual games they plan to create a kind of Olympic village with giant outdoor screens to show live events. Coram Fields are hoping that athletes may want to use them as a base for training, and are also keen to encourage schools to use their facilities for their own Olympic celebrations through the 2012 summer term.

**Volunteer Centre Camden** is involved in a pan London initiative with Greater London Volunteering. The objective is to get people interested in volunteering now so that they are encouraged and prepared when the Games arrive. Current volunteering roles will help people to develop some of skills needed for the Olympic volunteering roles, and help to match people with appropriate opportunities. 300 people have so far signed up for the programme. RSVP Camden Network is also looking for opportunities for older people to volunteer leading up to and during the 2012 Games. In particular utilising skills people in the network already have like languages for interpretation, first aid knowledge etc.

## **Issues and comments**

- A number of VCS groups were very keen to get involved in a co-ordinated approach to promoting and celebrating the games locally. Coram Fields plan to use big outdoor screens to show events but would also like to co-ordinate this with other organisations / businesses / council etc who might be doing something similar (to avoid replication, create a large scale community event, make a strong visible connection with the games).
- It was felt that there is no coherent approach to activity related to the Olympics filtering down from the regional level - local co-ordination is needed to make the most of opportunities provided.
- Volunteering related to the games appears to focus on employer supported volunteering. Age Concern / RSVP are concerned about their members (retired people) being excluded from volunteering opportunity – for example they have not had very positive response from private companies about using older volunteers in the past.
- Clarity on volunteer involvement was felt to be lacking at local level – again all the knowledge and contacts were regional (RSVP London and GLV) – there is plenty of interest but people are confused about how they can get involved.
- There was concern that local initiatives wouldn't get off the ground because it would be left too late.
- It was felt that walking in the borough should be promoted using parks, open spaces, community gardens, and existing routes like the Jubilee Walk and Green Trail.
- Groups were very interested in using the Olympic brand to encourage physical activity, sport, health etc.
- Festivals were cited as an important cultural activity that promoted community cohesion. It was felt that the different festivals in Camden would be good local vehicles

for promoting the idea of different people getting together / working together within the context of games.

- The Bloomsbury Cultural Network which involves big cultural institutions, community groups, business etc was suggested as one way of sharing information.

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