



# Camden's Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm **2023 to 2028**

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# Foreword from Councillor Shah

2020 marked a new chapter for Camden, as the Council made equality and disproportionality work a key priority, starting with our Building Equal Foundations report and action plan, and the creation of our Equalities and Disproportionality Service.

**Camden is committed to addressing inequalities, building community strength, and increasing diversity and inclusion. Over the past two years there has been an increased drive for change, and the Council has worked together with communities to deliver ambitious and exciting projects.**

Our work to diversify the public realm in Camden is a key part of this change, and one part of the Council's wider equalities and disproportionality work. Over the past two years we have delivered projects to increase diversity, inclusion, and representation in public spaces in Camden. We have worked with and supported diverse creative organisations, businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations. We have commemorated pioneering individuals from communities that have historically been underrepresented in the public realm.

We have been part of a wider effort across London to make our public spaces reflect the diversity of the capital's communities.

But this is just the beginning, and we have a long journey ahead of us. This document, Camden's new Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm (SDPR), sets out an ambitious action plan for increasing equality, diversity, and inclusion in Camden's public realm. The strategy and action plan have been co-designed with our community and stakeholders, through extensive resident engagement. The action plan will be owned and delivered by services across the Council, and we have worked with many services to develop the strategy.

I am very proud to be part of the first strategy of its kind to be developed by a UK Council, and I am looking forward to working with officers to deliver this ambitious and exciting programme of work.



**Councillor Nadia Shah, Cabinet Member for Equalities, Young People, and Cohesion**



# Introduction

The public realm is a space where we come together to socialise, exercise, rest, reflect and share moments. Our open spaces are places where people can relax or play, share food and explore elements of the natural world.



The built environment shapes the way we feel about a place, and where we can feel a sense of belonging. The public realm is key in shaping the identity of a city, town or borough; it is a cultural asset and reinforces a sense of place. It can be a place that reflects our rich cultural heritage and enable celebration. It can be a space that brings communities together, provide economic opportunities and the quality of public spaces can have a direct impact on people's health and wellbeing.

In Summer 2021, officers and members began developing the Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm to establish a vision, with a set of ambitions to ensure diversity underpins our work in the public realm going forward, that we assess and improve our existing public realm and address the power dynamics within it.

This Strategy intends to increase diversity, inclusion, equity, and equality in Camden's public realm. A key part of this is empowering people with protected characteristics who have often historically been underrepresented in Camden's public realm, to design and develop a public realm that is for everyone.

# Introduction

In order to better understand this strategy, here are some key terms that will be referenced throughout:

**Public Realm:** The public realm is commonly defined as any space that is free and open to everyone. Camden's public realm is made up of the built environment and open spaces that are shared by residents, workers, and visitors to Camden. Spaces in which people come together, rest, work, and play. This strategy takes a broad approach to the public realm and is inclusive of the spaces around and within buildings that are accessible to the public (as opposed to private land or buildings), open spaces, parks, gardens, high streets, shop fronts, streets and footways, playgrounds, public art, canal ways, libraries and galleries.

Our community consultation found that many people also associated the words 'public realm' with community centres, social media, print media, radio, television and some public funding bodies and services.

**Diversity:** Refers to any dimension that can be used to distinguish between groups and people. It is about empowering people by recognising and appreciating what makes them different, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin.

**Inclusion:** Refers to the extent of participation of an individual in society, especially those who are disadvantaged and need to be amplified to be heard. It is also the process of involving them in addressing certain causes within the community.

**Equality:** Giving all individuals fair treatment and equal rights to opportunities.

**Protected Characteristics:** According to the Equality Act 2010, it is against the law to discriminate against somebody because of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.



“All a-we is one’, say the Jamaicans. The assertion also serves as a fitting motto for the work of Camden Council in acknowledging the plurality of voices that make up the tapestry of cultural life in 21st century Britain. For too long parts of our population have been made invisible and confined to the margins; it’s thrilling to consider how Camden Council reflects how culture coalesces and works as a cause for unity and celebration.”

**Colin Grant, author, historian, Associate Fellow in the Centre for Caribbean Studies**



# 1. Strategic Context

Camden has a radical history of being at the forefront of movements for equality and justice. The Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm is one part of Camden's wider equalities work.



Our [Building Equal Foundations One Year On report](#) details the equalities and disproportionality work that has been done since August 2020, across the areas of education, health, adult social care, the voluntary and community sector, housing, and workforce. Diversity and equality in the public realm is a key part of the next stage in Camden's equalities and disproportionality strategy.

The Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm aligns with the aims of '[We Make Camden](#)', which states that we want to create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities in which people can take forward their ideas and ambitions – be it the public spaces we inhabit, or the connections that we build with them. The Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm sets out specific actions and programmes of work which further the aims of 'We Make Camden' that 'Camden's local economy should be strong, sustainable, and inclusive' and 'Camden actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong, and open communities where everyone can contribute'.

Camden's Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm aligns with the mission of the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm and builds upon it. It extends what we mean by the public realm, and includes plans across high street, borough planning and economic regeneration programmes.

# 1. Strategic Context



The role of the Mayor's Commission is to enrich and add to London's public realm and advise on better ways to raise public understanding behind existing statues, street names, building names and memorials. It is committed to building an accessible programme which is sensitive to the beliefs, views and opinions of all Londoners, helping people have a better understanding of London's diverse histories. Its ambition is that by 2023 there will be more objects in the public realm that tell a wider, diverse and more representative story of London. As a result, Londoners will have a better understanding of London's diverse histories. Diverse communities will better understand how they can impact the public realm and visitors will have a better sense of what London represents. London Boroughs will be more aligned and activated in diversifying the public realm, which will build capacity for best practice to continue after the Commission ends.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 states that the Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not, and seek to foster good relations between groups. This duty applies to everything we do as a Council including our management of the public realm. The Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm will help the Council to comply with these duties as we seek to have our public realm better reflect our population, its diversity, and its rich history.

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## Other policies and statutory obligations which help shape the strategy:

- [London Plan](#).
- [Public London Charter](#).
- Department strategies, guidance and statutory obligations such as [Camden Planning Guidance](#), [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), Cultural Framework, Artworks & Memorials Guidance, [Green Space Investment Programme 2020-25](#), Evening and Night-Time Economy Strategy, Education Strategy, [Housing Strategy](#).
- Local Plans and National Planning Policies including Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Equalities Impact Assessments.

“

*How we work together in equal and inclusive ways in key public institutions like Camden Council shapes in deep ways what citizenship means in London and the United Kingdom. If we want to free ourselves to live together in the fullest and most creative ways, we must challenge the legacies of past discrimination and injustice: this is what makes a strategy for diversity urgent.*”

**Richard Drayton, Professor of Imperial and Global History at Kings' College London Service.**



# Project insight: Camden Alive

Camden Alive is a programme of arts and cultural events that celebrates the people of Camden. Sharing our diverse heritage through creativity, Camden Alive captures the sights, sounds and spirit of the borough and what it means to live and work in Camden.



Since 2019 Camden Council has been working with communities, artists and cultural organisations to collaborate on creativity. Camden Alive has produced outdoor Black cinema events, exhibitions of art and social history, two music albums by diverse artists, worked with residents to develop a sustainable fashion brand, brought artists and young people together on a creative dirt biking project, produced social housing estate soundscapes and collaborated on a beat box theatre piece. The results were showcased through a large-scale event at the British Museum, outdoor performances and events and through an augmented reality app on the streets of Camden.

“ There is a need for interaction to bring communities together through multi-strand events - markets, festivals, artist sharings and performances - which inspire and motivate different parts of the community to come out and mix.

**Youth Board Member, Roundhouse**

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## 2. How we have developed the strategy

Camden Council aims to ensure that everyone (residents, people who work in the borough and visitors) benefits from a diverse and engaging public realm that is representative and inspiring and generates a better understanding of our connections with each other. From this will come greater economic opportunities, an improved sense of wellbeing and a strengthened, inclusive sense of identity for Camden.

In 2020 Camden launched its own review of statues, monuments and memorials, and established a cross-party member working group to oversee this work. The work of the Commemoration, Memorials and Streets Working Group (CMWG) recognised that our public spaces and buildings shape how we view our shared history. The CMWG also considered how public spaces and buildings in Camden can best commemorate the wide-ranging contributions of Camden's diverse citizens and communities. The CMWG was set up to consider and review existing memorials, buildings and street names, and make recommendations for the naming (or renaming) of buildings and streets.

The CMWG and an officers working group delivered the renaming of social housing block Park View House (formerly Cecil Rhodes House) and West Hampstead Primary School (formerly Beckford Primary School) in September 2021. The CMWG and council officers also developed a Framework for Assessing Extant Memorials, Statues and Place Names and approach for interpreting the borough's statues and memorials. Initial research into Camden's street and building names has indicated that more detailed, independent research is needed to ensure that place names align with the policies developed through this strategy.

Officers across directorates have also been working on many other projects which promote diversity in the public realm. These include supporting the development of Camden Black Creatives CIC, supporting diverse businesses on the high street, a programme of events for Black History Season, Camden Alive, funding grants for diverse VCS groups, and the naming of new buildings in Maitland Park.

To develop this strategy, a larger officers working group was set up, bringing together officers from multiple services across council teams working in the public realm. The officers working group brought together current work in the public realm, assessed existing policies, identified new ways of working to increase diversity in the public realm and developed a set of actions. Officers have connected their work across teams, collaborated on ideas and projects, and shared learning and good practice to inform the development of the strategy.

### **The strategy has been developed using the following inclusive principles:**

- Co-design and engagement with our communities.
- Cross-collaboration with multiple council teams to embed diversity and create opportunities.
- Partnership working with external organisations to harness expertise, support, and share.
- Encouraging a wide, diverse, and inclusive audience and participation in all aspects of the public realm.

### 3. Our vision for Camden's public realm

A public realm that reflects and celebrates the diversity of Camden's communities, and ensures our residents feel connected to, and part of their borough. Camden is a better place to live, visit and work, with people benefiting from improved wellbeing and sense of place.

**This strategy takes a holistic approach to ensure a more diverse public realm by developing:**

**Our physical assets:**

embedding and underpinning our ability to celebrate diversity in public realm through our buildings, high streets, venues, heritage and cultural collections and public art.

**Partnerships:**

developing partnerships between the Council and external organisations to develop the inclusive economy, creative industries and cultural regeneration and support diverse cultural, community & academic organisations delivering activity in public realm.

**Guidance and policy:**

advising and supporting communities and organisations through our policies and guidance and making connections between people and organisations.



## 4. Our Ambitions

**The strategy sets out our three ambitions for delivering a more diverse public realm:**

To celebrate diversity and equality in the public realm going forward, so that it is reflective of Camden's diverse communities.

To ensure that our existing public realm is balanced, accessible, and inclusive.

To understand and address the imbalance in power dynamics in the public realm. That those who currently dominate space in the public realm tend to have power over the social, cultural, and political 'space' and have the biggest platform and opportunity to have their voices heard.

# Project insight: Maitland Park

Three new Council-owned residential buildings in Maitland Park will open in Winter 2022. They will be named after resistance fighter Noor Inayat Khan, LGBTQ+ campaigner Antony Grey, and former enslaved woman Mary Prince, with commemorative plaques installed to tell their stories.

The names were chosen by Councillors following a consultation with residents, from a shortlist of eight people connected to Camden who made inspiring contributions to society and represent Camden's diverse communities. The development is part of the Community Investment Programme and will provide 119 new homes. The Council drew up the shortlist with the help of an independent researcher, and the Diversity in the Public Realm officers' working group worked with the Community Investment Programme team to deliver the resident consultation. Residents' suggestions and feedback informed the selection of the final names by The Cross-Party Commemorations, Memorials, and Streets Members Working Group.



# 5. About Camden

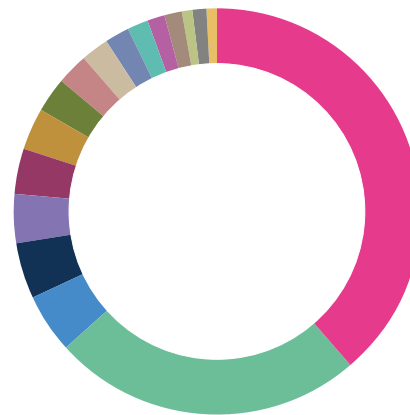
“Diversity is our super-power.”

Year 7 student,  
Parliament Hill School.

## The people of Camden.

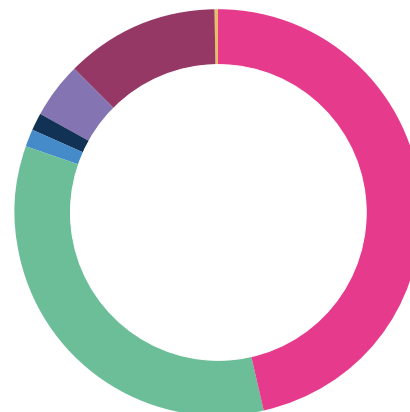
Camden has a diverse and vibrant cultural heritage, with over 140 languages and dialects spoken every day by approximately 274,000 residents. Yet the public realm in Camden does not fully encompass or reflect the diversity of its residents and visitors. It is important that the public realm is a space that brings communities together, provides a sense of place and identity, and reflects the demographic and cultural diversity of the population.

Camden residents and communities reflect a rich and diverse cultural heritage and lived experiences. Our residents are relatively young, with the median age of 38.9 years with nearly half of Camden's population identifying as female. 14% (about 1 in 7) have a long-term condition or disability. Camden also has a diverse LGBTQIA+ community, with 8.5% people identifying as LGBTQIA+, slightly higher than the London average. Camden's diverse communities are made up of:



### Ethnicity.

White British	38.8%	Arab	1.8%
White Other	24.6%	Mixed Asian and White	1.7%
Asian Other	4%	Black (other)	1.5%
Asian Bangladesh	4.3%	Black Caribbean	1.4%
Black African	4%	Mixed Black Caribbean and White	0.9%
Asian Chinese	3.6%	Asian Pakistani	0.9%
Asian Indian	3.3%	Mixed Black African and White	0.8%
White Irish	2.8%		
Other Ethnic Grp	2.6%		
Mixed (other)	2.2%		



### Religion.

Other or non religious	46.6%
Christian	34%
Buddhist	1.3%
Hindu	1.4%
Jewish	4.5%
Muslim	12.1%
Sikh	0.2%

Data source:

GLA 2016-based Ethnic Group Projections – housing led (Camden = ‘Camden Development, Capped AHS’), © GLA, 2018



# 5. About Camden

## The borough of Camden.

Camden covers 8.4 square miles of streets, housing, open spaces, parks, cultural venues and workplaces in the heart of London. The borough of Camden includes a great diversity of high streets, ranging from small local parades to town centres and international visitor destinations. Camden has six town centres, (Camden Town, Kentish Town, West Hampstead, Hampstead, Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage, and Kilburn) as well as multiple neighbourhoods, commercial and business areas. Each of these centres has its own distinct identity, and Camden Town is one of London's top visitor destinations as well as serving the local community.

Camden is home to over 76 parks and 300 green spaces and is one of the top 20 places in England and Wales for tree cover. There is a variety of open spaces in Camden, from gardens in residential squares, large municipal parks, playgrounds to nature reserves all with differing wildlife, flora, activities, events and opportunities.

The borough is one of the most thriving areas for the arts in Europe. Its cultural offer is incomparable, with enormous variety and potential in its places, people, institutions, heritage and diversity that have a local, regional and international impact.



# 5. About Camden

Camden is home to many of the UK's leading arts and cultural organisations, with over 50 public museums, galleries and cultural venues, together with hundreds of commercial galleries, theatres and thriving creative industries. Camden is home to iconic international spaces such as The Roundhouse, The British Library, The British Museum and Camden Arts Centre, as well as nationally significant spaces such as JW3 the Jewish Community centre, The Place for Contemporary Dance and the UK Mexican Arts Society. In 2022, Arts Council England confirmed 31 cultural organisations in Camden will be supported through their National Portfolio Investment programme, many of whom work in the public realm across music, theatre, visual arts, dance, heritage and film.



Currently, many of our residents and communities do not participate with the vibrant cultural offer of the borough's arts and heritage organisations. There is a disconnect between the international and national nature of some of these organisations and the communities and spaces in which they are sited, with many residents feeling that these spaces 'are not for them'. The SDPR and the Camden's Cultural Framework aims to ensure that residents and communities have access to all aspects of the cultural life of the borough and that the diversity of our communities is celebrated through partnerships and programming in the public realm.

High business rates and rents are a challenge for businesses in Camden, as is the lower level of spending in physical stores due to the rise of online shopping. Closures on high streets have put more people out of work, with Black and Asian residents and young people worst affected. Some areas have higher levels of pollution and congestion and our roads and pavements are busy, which are factors in how people might use high street spaces. Whilst some neighbourhoods in Camden offer a variety of diverse and independent shops, many spaces do not reflect the diverse communities of the area or their needs.

# 5. About Camden

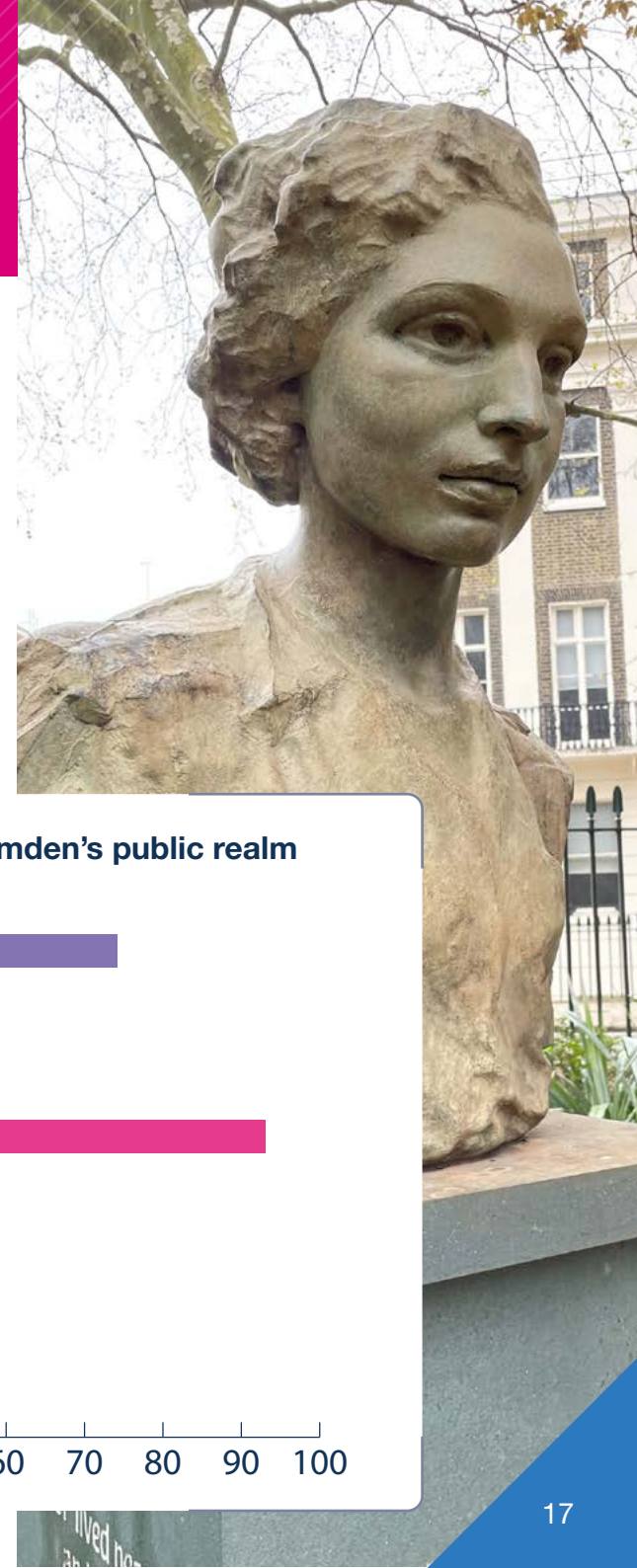
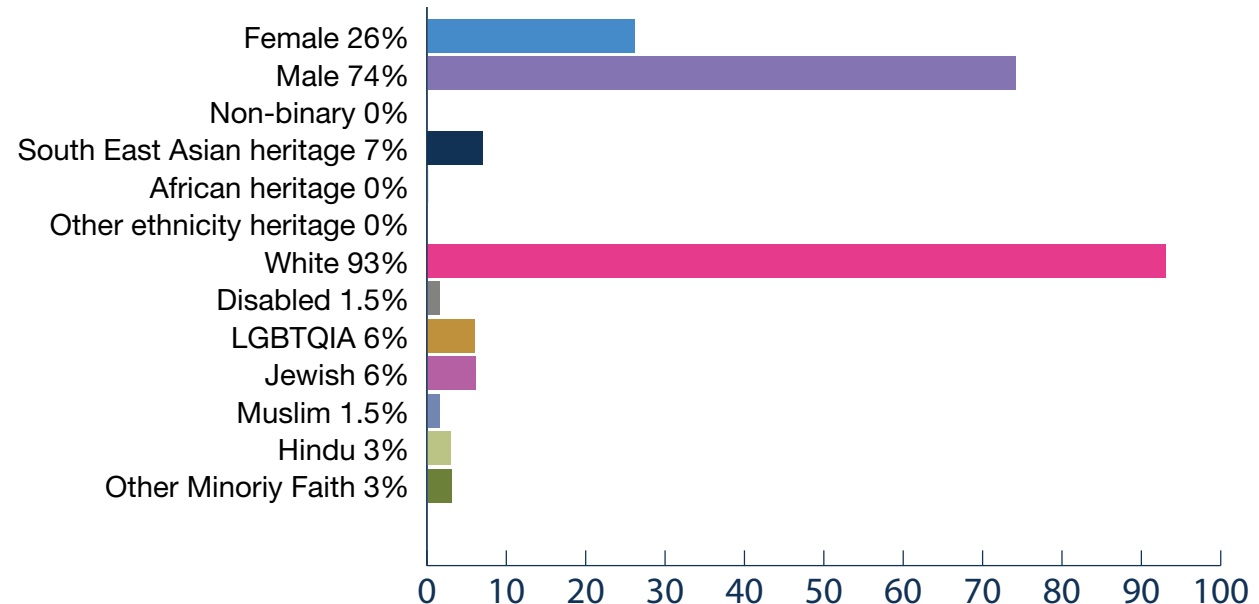
The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to quality open and green spaces. More people staying local and working from home increases the importance of local centres for shopping and also for relaxing. Our parks and open spaces have a central role in reducing health inequalities, increasing social cohesion and wellbeing. We want to ensure parks are inclusive, attractive, representative and accesible for all.

The public realm in Camden is unrepresentative of the diversity of our community, failing to be culturally inclusive or celebrate the contributions to our history of our diverse residents and their role in development of our society. Those who are represented in the public realm currently are those who hold greater social, political, economic, and cultural power in our society, and tackling inequality in the public realm has the power to tackle inequalities in these other spheres of life. Increasing diversity in the public realm is about empowering those who have historically

been underrepresented and whose voices and experiences have historically been erased from the public realm and from public discourse.

Our statues and memorials are not representative of our diverse communities and often tell stories from a single perspective which is mainly white, male and Imperial.

**Statues and memorials commemorating individuals in Camden's public realm**





# Project insight: Camden Together

Camden Together was a series of cultural events to reactivate the public realm after the COVID19 lockdowns. Artists and cultural organisations delivered performances and activities on the streets of Camden in the summer 2021 and 2022.



**Young creatives in Inverness Street:** in 2022 Camden-raised musician and curator Awate was commissioned to put together a live music event in Inverness street to showcase and celebrate the talent of young musicians in the borough. The day-long event saw over 15 music artists perform their own work, as well as talented DJs take over the space. Audiences danced to a wealth and variety of home-grown talent, new connections between the artists were made and the Inverness street cafes and traders also had a great day.

Several locals mentioned the need for events like this one on Inverness street. Especially after the pandemic as music brings people together. Also, as some haven't decided to go to music events in years, bringing it to the high street was a benefit for everyone's mental health.

Awate, musician and curator

## 6. How we worked with communities in Camden to inform the strategy

From March to October 2022, the officer's working group worked with an external community engagement specialist to talk to residents and share ideas about how we can make our public realm more diverse. We also opened up a Camden-wide engagement webspace to enable everyone who wanted to share ideas with us to be able to do so. These engagement processes facilitated a meaningful dialogue with a range of communities and over 150 individuals. These included:

### **These included:**

Roundhouse Youth Board, Holborn Community Association, Somali Youth Centre, Surma Centre, British Somali Centre, Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum, Ossulston Social Housing, Residents Cromer Street, Camden High Street, Belsize Park Library, Camden Sustainable Interactive Markets, Camden Disability Network, Parliament Hill School, Brookfield School, Holy Trinity School, The History Club, Parents/Toddlers Group, The Winch, Bartlett School of Architecture, London School of Mosaics, Camden Black British History group, Black History Walks, Nubian Jak Plaques, Fortune (Local Refugee Arts Group) and local diverse arts companies/organisations Tamasha Theatre and Pan Intercultural Arts. In-person interviews were held at libraries, community centres, schools, arts organisations, cultural community groups, cafés, market stalls and in open public spaces (Granary Square, British Library Courtyard). Some were also conducted digitally or via telephone. What we learned from the community conversations and many of the ideas shared with us have helped shape the action plan for the delivery of the SDPR's vision and ambitions.

# 6.1 What our communities told us

We asked communities what they felt are the barriers to celebrating diversity and equality in the public realm are and their ideas for making our public realm more representative of our communities. Here are some things they told us:



- **Community centres:** many were used over the Covid-19 pandemic to deliver front-line services and have only recently begun to programme activities with less staff than before, due to the decrease in public and charitable funding.
- **Access to arts and culture/skills sharing:** There is a perception amongst communities that arts and cultural activities are becoming harder to access - especially for young people. Some cultural centres/ organisations were described as being “disconnected” from their local communities and therefore reduce opportunities for communities to meet, socialise and celebrate together.
- **Parks and open spaces:** Parks and green spaces are well used by the community as a space to gather, socialise and celebrate. Hampstead Heath was mentioned as an extremely welcoming spaces and fosters a real sense of community and ownership. Some squares rarely seem to host community events despite being in an area of dense social housing. The canal is also seen as an underused space which could be used to bring people together to celebrate.
- **Homogeneity:** Shops and restaurants with franchises across the borough are reducing the unique nature of the borough.
- **Marketing and communication:** is not successful so people don't know about free cultural events or festivals.
- **The mobile memorial window:** shop fronts could be used to celebrate and represent the people and communities who live in the areas instead of only marketing their products.
- **Chatting benches:** where people can sit to relax or they want to connect and have a chat with someone, benches could be designed by local children and artists and be inviting spaces for connection on the high street.
- **Community takeover:** library events which “hand over” the library to the residents so they feel more of a sense of ownership. These days could be themed or chosen by the community
- **Outdoor films screening made by local artists**
- **Use bus stops to showcase talent of the community:** photography, poetry, positive stories of kindness and compassion. More stories of ‘unsung heroes’ people who live in the community – celebrating current and past people.
- **More free festivals:** more community-led or community focussed festivals
- **More permanent public artworks:** there is also a strong feeling that the community should be a part of making these works as often as possible.



# 6.1 What our communities told us

We asked communities what they felt the barriers to ensuring our existing public realm is balanced, unprejudiced and inclusive?

- **Expensive local shops and cafes:** areas like kings cross, russell square, bloomsbury have a high density of social housing and whilst residents enjoy relaxing in coal drops, lamb's conduit street and marchmont street- the shops are too expensive for them.
- **Too many similar shops:** some streets have multiple versions of the same type of shops.
- **Safety:** some women commented on improved safety in public spaces, but safety remains a significant issue for communities, affecting residents' mental health.
- **History and representation:** communities commented that statues, commemorative artworks and memorials in camden were found to largely represent the white, male privileged voices. Whilst there are some female statues most are unnamed or allegorical. Consultees could not think of any black, disabled or LGBTQIA+ figures who have been memorialised in this way.
- **Lack of selling space:** help local artists, makers and crafters test, tweak and trial their products with the public. It benefits local artists and makers develop their product for the public.
- **Lack of local museum:** residents suggested a website which archives the life stories of people from communities who have been traditionally excluded e.G women, people of colour, the working class, disabled, LGBTQIA+. It will include both people who were famous in their lifetime and "ordinary people" who the current communities remember and wish to honour.
- **Inaccessible interpretation boards:** boards should have braille / audio possibilities and suitable for colour-blind
- **Shortage of information about statues:** respondents suggested a trail to link up the well-known and lesser-known people from diverse backgrounds in a trail for families.
- **Interactive artworks and audio-tactile statues:** many people ignore statues and often children cannot engage with them. Mini statues or interactive works of art would be a way to bring young children and their families to these spaces.



# 6.1 What our communities told us

What are the barriers to understanding and addressing the power balance in the Public Realm?



- **History from the top:** communities feel that Camden's history has been repeatedly told through the lives of famous people. Generations of residents, workers, craftspeople, migrants and immigrants who built, lived and transformed the borough have been excluded from the narrative. This unbalanced telling of history 'from the top' continues to be an influence over who holds power and whose voice is heard and celebrated.
- **Gentrification:** there is a perception that spaces in Camden are becoming more like other places with larger chain stores and coffee shops, leading to a loss of small businesses who cannot compete with them.
- **Gatekeepers and professionalisation of the community:** young people in the consultation mentioned gatekeeping institutions in relation to the public realm, ranging from national public funding bodies to education and the cultural industries. Grassroots organisations spoke about feeling patronised by 'professionals' when organising community events, despite being at the heart of communities and having built relationships and co-created change.
- **Language:** some respondents felt that because words like diversity, inclusion, and representation are used across all areas of life now, these terms have been diluted and their nuance and complexity has been lost.
- **Empty buildings:** younger communities expressed frustration with privately owned empty buildings in the borough which are bought up for investment purposes.
- **Business rates:** consultation respondents felt that the rates for start-ups to test out and platform their business ideas are often too high for them to take a risk, which means that market spaces empower those who are financially secure and disempower new creative small business ideas from those with financial hardship.
- **Civic power systems and accountability:** many of the young people consulted did not understand how the council works, how power is distributed locally, and who makes decisions.

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The public realm should be spaces which brings people of different backgrounds and ages together without the pressure of spending money.

Year 7 student, Parliament Hill School

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# Project insight:

## Renaming of Park View House and West Hampstead Primary School.

In 2020, the Council launched a review into individuals memorialised across the borough. As part of this review, Cecil Rhodes House was identified for renaming for Cecil Rhodes' involvement in creating a political system of racism, discrimination and segregation which led to the apartheid in South Africa in the 19th century. The renaming of Cecil Rhodes House is one part of a wider programme of work to ensure Camden's public realm is inclusive and representative of its diverse and vibrant communities.

All Cecil Rhodes House residents were invited to take part in a ballot in February 2021 to choose a new name for their block. The vote received an excellent turnout with 77% of households voting for their favourite name. Nearly two thirds of voters chose Park View House, named after the building's view of St Pancras Gardens, in a shortlist of four names.

In September 2021, Beckford Primary School was also officially renamed to West Hampstead Primary School after a vote by staff, parents and pupils in September 2020. The school was previously named after William Beckford, who enslaved over 2000 Africans to work on his plantations and supported the slave trade that kept his family among the wealthiest of their generation.



“ The renaming of Cecil Rhodes House was an important task for us. It was vital that we looked at the figures honoured in our borough and commemorating Cecil Rhodes did not align with our values or those of our residents. The renaming of Cecil Rhodes House is a significant moment for us, but the work doesn't end here - we will continue to work towards making Camden truly inclusive and representative of our diverse and vibrant communities. We're proud to honour the new name, Park View House, with a commemorative plaque which will be installed at the block to mark this new chapter in our local history.

**Abdul Hai, previous Camden Cabinet Member for Young People, Equalities and Cohesion**

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# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

<b>Ambition:</b>	To celebrate diversity and equality in the public realm going forward, so that it is reflective of Camden's diverse communities.
<b>Priority:</b>	Enable our public realm to be diverse and animated.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Commission artists and producers to work with communities to animate high streets/open spaces, making them culturally diverse and inclusive through festivals, performances, music, film and visual art.	Culture.	2023-2028
Embed principles of diversity in the public realm within the activity included in the Camden Future High Streets programme, including promoting opportunities to a wide, diverse, and inclusive audience.	High Streets with support from Equalities and Disproportionality Service.	2023-2025
Identify opportunities for diverse communities to set up culture hubs in high street spaces or council-run community spaces.	High streets, Culture, Strategy, Property.	2023-2025
Develop and extend events and activities in high street libraries to encourage celebration of diversity.	Libraries.	2023-2025
Inform and support all Camden's funded community festivals to be more aware of diversity and inclusivity in their programming and to understand the importance of partnership working.	Culture.	2023-2024
Work in partnership across the borough to celebrate key moments in the inclusion calendar through events, exhibitions, artworks, creativity and performance. Eg: South Asian Heritage Month, Black History Season, Pride, Disability History Month.	Culture and other services.	2023-2028

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Enable Camden's cultural organisations, venues and spaces to be connected with and work with Camden residents and communities to explore multiple cultural heritages.	Culture.	2023-2028
Support partnership projects to animate the public realm with celebrations of diversity with external cultural partners such as The World Reimagined, Avant Arte, Bloomsbury Festival and The London Architecture Festival.	Culture.	2023-2028
Develop partnership with Camden Tour Guides to create tour of statues, memorials and places which profile and discuss Camden's history more widely and that celebrates diversity.	Culture.	2023-2024
Scope and develop a virtual Camden People's Museum to showcase Camden's diverse people, places and objects. Enable communities to develop content elements.	Culture.	2023-2024
Empower communities to create the public realm and develop new initiatives and projects, through the Camden Future High Streets Crowdfund and the We Make Camden Kit.	High Streets and those delivering the We Make Camden challenges.	2023-2025

## Priority:

Enable our green and open spaces to be welcoming and inclusive.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Support local community groups to engage through Parks for Health learning and the service's Green Space Partnership.	Green Spaces.	2023-2025
Ensure Open Spaces are accessible by responding to areas of highest priority for access.	Green Spaces.	2023-2025

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

## Priority:

Ensure our built environment is reflective of our communities and celebrates our heritage.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Understand the existing community in relation to development sites.	CIP Planning.	2023-2028
Develop programme of naming opportunities for public realm, including buildings, streets, open spaces, memorials and plaques, ensuring strategic and prioritised. Use existing memorials data and resident demographics to develop programme. Ensure all commemorative naming follows Artworks & Memorials application and planning process.	CIP, highways, green spaces, equalities, culture.	2023-2025 and beyond
Incorporate approaches into accessibility and diversity into open spaces around new developments, establishing relevant local planning policies.	CIP and Planning.	2023-2028
Ensure developments follow planning policies and national housing design standards, including accessibility, lifetime homes and Building Regulations.	CIP.	2023-2028
Ensure Social Value is included in contracts for new development, with mandatory obligations on contracts over £100K.	CIP.	2023-2024
Explore the potential for Community Design Review Panels.	Regeneration and Development.	2023-2024
Programme of promotion and 'dressing the borough' for key cultural moments e.g. Diwali, Eid ul-Fitr, Black History Season, Pride, Disability History Month, Hanukkah.	Communications.	Calendar launched in 2022/2023 and continued each year
Commission semi-permanent public art to celebrate our diverse communities.	Culture.	2023-2028



# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Work with Nubian Jak Community Trust on blue plaques across Camden and other projects commemorating individuals from underrepresented groups.	Equalities with Culture.	2023-2024 and beyond
Engage with Developers and partners of regeneration projects through the planning process to ensure projects are diverse.	Planning.	2023-2028

**Priority:** Ensure our policies, guidance and data are inclusive and promote diversity.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Develop a commissioning principles and policy document for public art.	Culture.	2023-2024
Encourage applications from diverse communities for all commissions, public art, festivals, events through clear, positive marketing and extended networks.	Culture.	2023 and beyond
Ensure data on inequalities and disproportionalities is routinely collected and better coordinated.	All/ Data team/ Equalities team.	2023-2024 and beyond
Establish a wider evidence base on existing and potential diverse businesses (with an intersectional lens), and the disproportionate impact of COVID on them.	Inclusive Economy.	2023-2025
Support the growth of diverse businesses on the high street. Where possible, prioritise diverse and underrepresented businesses for spaces on the high street.	Inclusive Economy, High Streets, Commercial Property.	2023-2028
Develop and publish policy for the naming of buildings, streets and open spaces, including renaming.	Culture with Planning.	2023
Develop an accessible design and inclusive content guidance for information and heritage interpretation boards in the public realm.	Culture with Green Spaces.	2023-2024

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Develop guidance on engaging/consulting with diverse members of a community who may not be represented by the existing community groups and who may have multiple needs.	Equalities and Participation.	2023-2024
Develop guidance ensuring disabled access when creating new outdoor areas for play/exercise.	Green Spaces and Planning.	2023-2024
Review and adapt the Community Infrastructure Levy application form to ensure that new projects must promote diversity and equality.	CIL.	2023
Actively work to make CIL funding accessible to residents and businesses from diverse groups and raise awareness of the opportunity.	CIL.	2023
Ensure the Framework for Assessing Memorials, Statues, Artworks, Buildings, Street and Place Names is applied to all new memorials or celebration of individuals supported by Camden Council.	All council teams.	2023-2028
Review our conservation area appraisals and management strategies to ensure diversity.	Planning.	2023-2028
Review our Planning Guidance and update Equalities policies when appropriate.	Planning.	2023-2025

## Priority:

Ensure Officers work collaboratively to deliver projects and embed diversity in their practice.

Action	Team	Timeframe
Using a communities of practice approach, regularly share learnings related to equalities and some related to the diversity in the public realm work.	Equalities and other teams	2023 onwards

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

<b>Ambition:</b>	To ensure that our public realm is balanced, accessible and inclusive.
<b>Priority:</b>	Ensure our green and open spaces are inclusive.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Conduct a review of existing interpretation and information boards in parks and open spaces focusing on content and accessibility.	Green Spaces with Culture Team.	2023-2026
Commence a review of Camden's outdoor play areas in housing estates to assess whether they are disability accessible.	Green Spaces.	2023-2024

<b>Priority:</b>	Reducing inequality of access to parks and green spaces.
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Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Create new green space closer to those furthest from green space, through the Nature on the Doorstep project, and accessibility improvements.	Green Spaces.	2022-2024

<b>Priority:</b>	Nature trails for families and the community.
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Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Review signage and information as well as developing project to engage everyone in nature. This is incorporated into the Biodiversity Action Plan, and is to be incorporated into wider improvements through the Green Space Investment Programme.	Green Spaces.	2022-2024



# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

## Priority:

Ensure our public art is balanced and appropriate.

### Action:

Develop and deliver a project to interpret all statues and memorials commemorating individuals across Camden using QR code technology.

### Team:

Culture.

### Timeframe:

2023-2025

Apply the Framework for Assessing Memorials, Statues, Artworks, Buildings, Street and Place Names to all works of figurative public art.

Culture.

2023-2028

## Priority:

Ensure of collections of cultural material are reflective of our communities and enable opportunities for celebration in the public realm.

### Action:

Develop and deliver a project to enhance the value of the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre to diverse communities through collection, research and community engagement.

### Team:

Libraries with Culture.

### Timeframe:

2023-2028

Devise an audience development strategy for Swiss Cottage Gallery and review of the Camden Art Collection to ensure diverse participation and representation. Develop programme of cultural exhibitions at Swiss Cottage Gallery that is meaningful and engaging for Camden's communities.

Culture.

2023-2025

Commission research into specific links in Camden to the transatlantic slave trade for publication and/or exhibition.

Culture.

2024-2025

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

**Priority:** Ensuring our place names are balanced and appropriate.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Review street names in Camden to ascertain whether further information and interpretation is needed.	Equalities with Planning, and Culture.	2024-2025

**Ambition:** To understand and address unbalanced power dynamics in the public realm.

**Priority:** Understand the power dynamics in the public realm.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
as part of the Camden 2025 diversity mission, work to increase diversity in positions of power so that those in power are representative of Camden's community e.g. 'Friends of' groups, commissioners, tenants and residents associations.	Equalities, Corporate Strategy and Policy Design (diversity mission).	2023-2025
Conduct a review of Conservation Area Committees and potential for Community Design Review Panels.	Planning.	2024 onwards

**Priority:** Begin to address the power imbalance.

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Deliver equalities and diversity training, talks, learning sessions, and set up a good practice network for key stakeholder groups and residents.	Equalities.	2023 onwards

# 7. Action Plan

How we will deliver our ambitions from 2023-2028:

Action:	Team:	Timeframe:
Review how Neighbourhood Planning Forums are established and how to ensure their members are representative of diverse communities.	Planning (Andrew Triggs) with Equalities Team, diversity mission.	2023-2028
Provide support and opportunity for emerging/grassroots community cultural groups and CICs to grow and develop to enable their participation and leadership in the public realm. Eg: Camden Black Creatives, Bangladeshi community/ Surma, Camden Black British History Group, LGBTQIA groups, Disability groups.	Equalities with Culture and Participation.	2023-2028
Establish an artists' network (visual, performance, music, installation) to support and connect Camden based artists from diverse communities to work, training and development opportunities in the public realm.	Culture.	2023-2028
Work with community groups to design celebratory promotional material in the public realm eg: bus stop posters, banners.	Communications.	2023-2028
Develop diverse steering groups for assessing, interpreting and commissioning public art.	Culture.	2023-2028
Ensure as building projects are developed (dependant on size) include Community Liaison Advisors (CLA) that are reflective of the communities in that neighbourhood.	CIP.	2023-2028



# How will we deliver the strategy and know it is succeeding in achieving its goals?

The Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm is a live and responsive document, shaped by the Camden community. Projects to diversify the public realm will be developed through resident engagement and will follow a process of public consultation. This project-based consultation and engagement will be carried out by the project lead and project delivery team.

Residents, communities and stakeholders will also be able to engage with the strategy at any time, through an open web-space where people can read the strategy, hear about projects and news and make suggestions and comments about our plans.

During the lifetime of the strategy we will work with an external engagement consultant to listen to residents, communities and stakeholders and evaluate the impact of the strategy. This consultation will include engagement with residents at the mid-way point and also a final evaluation when the action plan has been delivered.

The strategy will be delivered by teams across the council working together to ensure diversity is embedded in all of our work. An officer's working group will be set up to oversee the delivery of the action plan, taking a multidisciplinary approach to ensure that the strategy is delivered.

Officers will report quarterly to the Equalities Service and the Public Realm Working group (Directors) to update on progress of the delivery of actions. An annual progress report will be taken to our Corporate Management Team.

In order to mitigate any risks associated with this work, we will develop a risk management framework which will sit alongside the action plan.

# Appendices:

## **1. Findings from the Community Consultation.**

## **2. Current Camden strategies and policies that guide us.**

- [We Make Camden/Camden 2025.](#)
- [Building Equal Foundations.](#)
- [Planning Policy.](#)
- [Transport Strategy.](#)

## **3. Regional and National strategies, policies and statutory obligations that guide us.**

- [Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.](#)
- ['Public London: Creating the best Public Realm'](#) (Mayor's Design Advisory Group).

“It is crucial to create measures for equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Embedding an anti-racist approach at every level of policy-making, and ensuring that it is engrained throughout organisational cultures, is the only method of ensuring that we are, collectively, making every effort to eliminate discrimination. We must remember that these practices not only impact ourselves, but that they are fundamental in ensuring the better health, and wellbeing, of the next generation.”

**L'MYAH SHERAE, Founder and Director Enact Equality**