

## **Local Government Boundary Commission for England electoral review of Camden Borough**

### **Submission from Camden Liberal Democrat Council Group on Council Size**

We strongly support the maintenance of 54 councillors on Camden Council. We consider this is essential in effectively representing the diverse, vibrant and growing population of Camden.

We have considered council size against the three broad areas set out by the LGBCE:

- Governance arrangements – The Council’s Cabinet has comprised ten councillors under different administrations, and we consider this to be the minimum necessary given the scale and complexity of policy issues within their remits. Meanwhile, the Planning and Licensing Committees have heavy workloads in Camden with regular meetings considering large numbers of contested applications and allowing community input. This requires the active participation of large numbers of informed councillors, and it would impair the effectiveness and impartiality of these committees if there were fewer councillors available to sit on them.
- Scrutiny functions – Scrutiny is an essential part of effective local democracy within Camden. The majority of non-Cabinet councillors in Camden serve on one of the scrutiny committees covering each of the Cabinet portfolios and council departments, in addition to outside bodies such as NHS trusts. They have busy agendas, help with community engagement and accountability, inform policy development and regularly feature in the local/social media.
- Representational role of councillors – Camden is a very diverse borough, including in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation etc. A council size of 54 councillors representing multi-member wards plays an important role in giving scope for good representation of Camden’s diversity across the composition of the council. It also provides the necessary numbers of elected representatives to engage effectively with all our community groups and associations at a local level. As councillors we handle considerable casework, receive large numbers of emails from residents, hold regular surgeries and attend many local ward meetings. Indeed, the volume of contacts from residents by email and social media has increased considerably since the number of councillors was last reviewed. It would not be possible to maintain the same quality and level of representation if there were fewer councillors in total.

We would be happy to discuss these points further with the LGBCE if helpful and we look forward to engaging with you on the next stage of the review, regarding our suggestions on revisions to the ward boundaries.

CLLrs Flick Rea, Luisa Porritt, Tom Simon

Camden Liberal Democrat Council Group

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