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3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the policy context of Greater London is presented. This will include a discussion of the administrative structure, the roles and responsibilities of bodies regulating and providing education, employment, housing, health and social care and policing in the United Kingdom and London.

The Greater London Authority, comprised of the Mayor (currently Boris Johnson) and the London Assembly, is the administrative body for the Greater London area. The Assembly is made up of 25 elected members who act as the scrutiny committee supervising priorities and decision-making for the city. The Greater London Authority oversees many of London's core public services including public transport, housing and policing.³⁴ London Borough Councils are local governing bodies with responsibilities for local services, schools and other social services.

The London borough of Camden is located in the northern part of the city, reaching from Holborn and Bloomsbury in the south to Hampstead Heath in the north. It is 21.81 km², has a population of 198,020 and is the seventh most populated borough in London. In terms of ethnicity, 73.1 percent of the population is white, while 14.9 percent are from a BME background. There are 22 electoral wards for the municipal council in Camden³⁵ (Census 2001). Like many London boroughs, Camden operates via a cabinet system, and a number of committees and sub-committees ensure accountability.³⁶ In Camden there are 54 councillors, the majority of whom are Labour, including one Somali-born councillor, Awale Olad. The Liberal Democrats have the second largest representation with 13 councillors. The Conservatives have 10 councillors and the Green Party one councillor.³⁷

The London borough of Tower Hamlets is located to the east of the City of London and north of the River Thames. It is in the eastern part of London and covers much of the traditional East End and much of the redeveloped Docklands region of London. In the 2010 general election, the borough was split into two parliamentary constituencies: Bethnal Green and Bow, and Poplar and Limehouse. There are 17 wards in Tower

³⁴ See the website of the Greater London Authority at <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly> (accessed 4 August 2014).

³⁵ Census 2001. These wards are Belsize, Bloomsbury, Camden Town with Primrose Hill, Cantelowes, Fortune Green, Frognal and Fitzjohns, Gospel Oak, Hampstead Town, Haverstock, Highgate, Holborn and Covent Garden, Kentish Town, Kilburn, King's Cross, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town, Swiss Cottage and West Hampstead. Camden has been Labour controlled since 2010.

³⁶ See the Camden Council website at <http://camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/about-the-council/how-the-council-is-organised/guide-to-democracy-and-representation.en> (accessed 4 August 2014).

³⁷ See <http://democracy.camden.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> (accessed 4 August 2014).

Hamlets and it has a directly elected Independent Executive Mayor. Lutfur Rahman is the borough's first directly elected Mayor. The Mayor and his cabinet hold decision-making authority and the relevant scrutiny and regulatory committees oversee these decisions.³⁸ Of the 42 councillors in Tower Hamlets Council, there are 20 Labour councillors. Labour councillor Amina Ali is the only councillor of Somali heritage. 18 councillors represent Mayor Lutfur Rahman's Tower Hamlets First Party and four are Conservative. There are three vacant posts for Blackwall and Cubbitt Town ward.³⁹

3.2 Cohesion and Integration

The U.K. government defines integration as "creating the conditions for everyone to play a full part in national and local life".⁴⁰ The premise behind integration is to reduce intolerance between different ethnic groups and to mitigate potential extremism. The integration agenda was introduced by the coalition government following a series of disturbances in urban areas across the United Kingdom, which were seen in part to be characterised by race and conflict. Responsibility for promoting integration is devolved to local authorities and local communities who are encouraged to hold events, for example "The Big Lunch", where different ethnic groups can engage in social contact. In the United Kingdom, the current policy debates on integration tend to focus on the agency of migrants and what they are expected to do/not do in order to integrate in their country of settlement.⁴¹ The idea of integration is very much influenced by New Labour's "Community Cohesion" strategy,⁴² which aimed to foster contact between different ethnic groups with the purpose of improving understanding of other cultures.

Camden Council has defined community cohesion as "a place where everyone who lives, visits, works or studies in the borough feels that they belong and can safely participate in local life. It is a place where people support one another and share their common values amongst and between the borough's diverse communities."⁴³ Camden Council have made available the Equality and Cohesion Fund designed to support "organisations and projects that work towards removing some of the barriers that many excluded Camden communities or residents face in terms of opportunity, access to

³⁸ See the Tower Hamlets website at <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> (accessed 4 August 2014).

³⁹ <http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=PARTY&VW=LIST&PIC=0> (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁴⁰ DCLG (2012), p. 2.

⁴¹ L. Hammond, "Somali transnationalism activism and integration in the UK: Mutually supporting strategies", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39(6) (2013), pp. 1001–1017.

⁴² Beider (2012).

⁴³ See <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/your-local-community/equalities/equality-in-camden.en?page=4> (accessed 4 August 2014).

services and participation”.⁴⁴ The aims of the Equality and Cohesion Fund are to improve access to services, improving life chances and building a more inclusive and cohesive borough for Camden’s residents. An example is the Somali Youth Development Resource Centre, which is working to reduce truancy and exclusion from school amongst Somali young people. The project is already demonstrating a positive impact on some of the 45 young people they have reached in year one and is working closely with the LBC Community Safety team and Camden schools.

Tower Hamlets Community Plan underpins the vision and aspirations of the borough with regard to cohesion. The relevant strands of this plan relate to healthy and supportive communities, safe and cohesive communities and prosperous communities.⁴⁵ Additionally, the overarching aim of “One Tower Hamlets” works to tackle inequality, strengthen cohesion and build community leadership and personal responsibility.

3.3 Education

Responsibility for education in England lies with central government. Most children in England attend state-funded schools. There are a variety of different types of schools,⁴⁶ and Camden and Tower Hamlets Councils have responsibility for overseeing state-funded education in their boroughs. All state-funded schools are accountable to the Department of Education (central government) through regular inspections by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Ofsted gathers information on the quality of education delivered in state-funded schools and publishes performance statistics. If a school is judged to be performing inadequately, it can be placed under “Special Measures”, which means that senior staff and governors can be replaced.

In England, it is compulsory for all children from the ages of five to 16 to attend full-time education that is appropriate for their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs (SEN). State-funded schools must teach the National Curriculum, which determines the subjects taught in schools and also the standards that pupils are

⁴⁴ See <https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/voluntary-organisations-and-funding/voluntary-and-community-sector-review-2010/voluntary-and-community-sector-vcs-investment-and-support-programme-2012-2015.en?page=2> (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁴⁵ See http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/800001-800100/800022_community_plan.aspx (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁴⁶ Community schools, controlled by the local council and not influenced by business or religious groups: foundation schools, with more freedom to change the way they do things than community schools; academies, run by a governing body, independent from the local council—they can follow a different curriculum; grammar schools, run by the council, a foundation body or a trust—they select all or most of their pupils based on academic ability and there is often an exam to get in.

expected to achieve. Under the National Curriculum there are four Key Stages in education.⁴⁷

The National Curriculum consists of a set of core and foundation subjects. The core subjects are English, Maths and Science, and the foundation subjects are Design and Technology, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), History, Geography, Art and Design, Music, Physical Education, Modern Foreign Languages (Key Stage 3 only) and Citizenship (Key Stages 3 and 4 only). Religious Education is taught according to an agreed local syllabus. All pupils in England, except those at independent (i.e. fee paying or private) schools and the new academies are required to adhere to the National Curriculum. Having completed GCSEs, pupils have a choice of whether to continue with further education at school or college through AS-Level, A-Level or vocational qualifications or to undertake employment.⁴⁸

In addition to traditional state-funded schools, there are “Free Schools”, which were introduced by the coalition government following the 2010 election. Free Schools are state funded and still accountable to the Department of Education, but they are not run by local councils. Like state schools, they are free to attend. They also have more flexibility and control in terms of how they deliver education, and they do not have to teach the National Curriculum. Unlike grammar schools, they do not select on the basis of “ability”. Free Schools can be set up by charities, universities, independent schools, community and faith groups, teachers, parents and businesses.⁴⁹ There are also a number of Faith Schools in England. These are run like state schools and follow the National Curriculum apart from religious studies, where they are free to teach about a specific religion. Finally, Private Schools (or Independent Schools) charge fees for attendance. Private Schools do not have to teach the National Curriculum.⁵⁰

3.4 Employment

In the United Kingdom, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for welfare, employment and pensions. Part of its remit is encouraging people into work⁵¹ and managing the benefit system. The DWP’s employment-related services are provided through “Jobcentre Plus”. The DWP is responsible for the management of job centres, and there are 37,000 staff employed in 750 job centres

⁴⁷ Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2 (up to age 7); Key Stage 2: Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (ages 7–11); Key Stage 3: Years 7, 8 and 9 (ages 11–14); Key Stage 4: Years 10 and 11 (ages 14–16).

⁴⁸ See http://www.schoolswork.co.uk/media/files/Understanding_the_UK_education_system.pdf (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁴⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/overview> (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁵⁰ See <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/overview>.

⁵¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions> (accessed 4 August 2014).

across England.⁵² Jobcentre Plus was previously an executive agency, but services offered by Jobcentre Plus are now provided directly by the DWP. Although the Jobcentre Plus corporate brand remains in place at the present time, it functions just as a public brand of the DWP rather than as a separate entity. Jobcentre Plus handles benefits for people who are unemployed or unable to work, and it also directs people who are receiving unemployment benefit towards employment, and sources potential employees for employers. People of working age without disabilities who are not in employment receive Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), which is paid at the rate of £56.80 per week.⁵³ To qualify for JSA, a claimant must be 18 years or over and able and available for work. Claimants need to attend their job centre fortnightly to demonstrate that they have been actively searching for work to continue being eligible for this benefit.⁵⁴

3.5 Health and Social Care

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 makes provisions for a number of changes to the NHS in England Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), and the Strategic Health Authorities, which were previously responsible for the organisation and delivery of local health services, have been abolished and a new body called the NHS Commissioning Board has been created to allocate resources, provide commissioning guidance, oversee the performance of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and deliver some specialised commissioning. Local family doctors—General Practitioners—now form CCGs with powers to commission services on behalf of their patients. Local government has responsibility for Public Health, and each local authority area has Health and Well-being Boards, which bring agencies together to create Joint Health and Well-being Strategies based upon the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, summarising the health and well-being needs of local populations. Local Involvement Networks (LINKs, themselves only three years old and just getting established) have been replaced by local HealthWatch, with unclear lines of accountability and no specification to ensure that the bodies are representative of the local population. It is unclear if they can investigate services.⁵⁵

In London there are 12 CCGs supported by a separate organisation—commissioning support unit, or CSU—which are effectively ex-employees of the PCT, attached to the NHS commissioning board and managed by a separate agency. This will be kept within the NHS for three years and then it will become a separate organisation. Part of

⁵² "Responding to change in jobcentres 2013", Public Accounts Committee Fifth Report, Department for Work and Pensions, at <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Job-Centres-Full-report.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁵³ See <http://www.jobsite.co.uk> (accessed 4 August 2014).

⁵⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-work-pensions>.

⁵⁵ See <http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/our-work/nhs-reform> (accessed 4 August 2014).

the role of the CSU is to oversee strategy, policy and engagement with the community. In every CCG there is a head of engagement responsible for:

- the workforce;
- local practices (GPs);
- local communities.

3.6 Policing

In Greater London, the Metropolitan Police Service (abbreviated to MPS and widely known as “the Met”) is responsible for law enforcement. There is a separate police force, the City of London Police, for the financial district of the City of London. The leader of the MPS is the Commissioner of Police, and the Commissioner is accountable to the Mayor of London’s Office for Policing and Crime.

The area of jurisdiction of the MPS is the Metropolitan Police District (MPD), and the MPS is divided into a number of Borough Operational Command Units, which directly align with the 32 boroughs in Greater London.