

London Borough of Camden

Annual Governance Statement

2022/23



1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Camden Council is committed to achieving the ambitions set out within the strategic visions of [We Make Camden and The Way We Work](#).
- 1.2 To achieve these ambitions, the Council recognises that it must have a solid foundation of good governance in place to ensure that it is taking appropriate action, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner, to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for residents.
- 1.3 In line with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the Council is required to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) within its Statement of Accounts. The AGS provides an opportunity for the Council to undertake a self-assessment and to examine its governance framework to assure itself and key stakeholders that these arrangements are both effective and robust.
- 1.4 In accordance with best practice guidance, the self-assessment and annual governance review process has been undertaken in an open and honest manner and considered the Council's performance across all its activities. In summary, the wider context of this AGS indicates that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall governance arrangements is adequate.
- 1.5 A key element of the annual governance review process is to identify any significant internal control issues. The Council has adopted the approach recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which specifies criteria that would make an issue significant. (see paragraph 6.1 below)..
- 1.6 The AGS concludes that the Council had effective governance arrangements in place for the 2022/23 year. No significant governance issues were identified during 2022/23 that met the criteria as defined by CIPFA. However, the following general issues have been highlighted and, in line with good governance arrangements, will be monitored during the year ahead:
 - 1) Delivering Council services in line with the community priorities of We Make Camden;
 - 2) Develop and implement an Outcomes and Assurance Framework, aligned to We Make Camden;
 - 3) Continue to deliver the Council's response to the peer review as outlined in the December 2021 Cabinet report
 - 4) Continue to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through the better use of customer data;
 - 5) Develop and deliver on the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
 - 6) Continue to assess the Council's financial position and update medium-term financial assumptions regarding resources and investment needs in light of the pandemic;
 - 7) Continue to work with London Councils as part of any future Fair Funding Reviews;
 - 8) Develop and deliver of the next iteration of the Council's General Fund Capital Strategy;
 - 9) Develop a refreshed financial strategy for the Housing Revenue Account; and
 - 10) To continue to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.

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- 1.7 The Council proposes over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance its governance arrangements, and an action plan has been included in Section 6 Significant Governance Issues paragraph 6.2 below. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for further enhancements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and we will monitor the implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed by:



3rd December 2024

Leader

Date

Signed by:



3 December 24

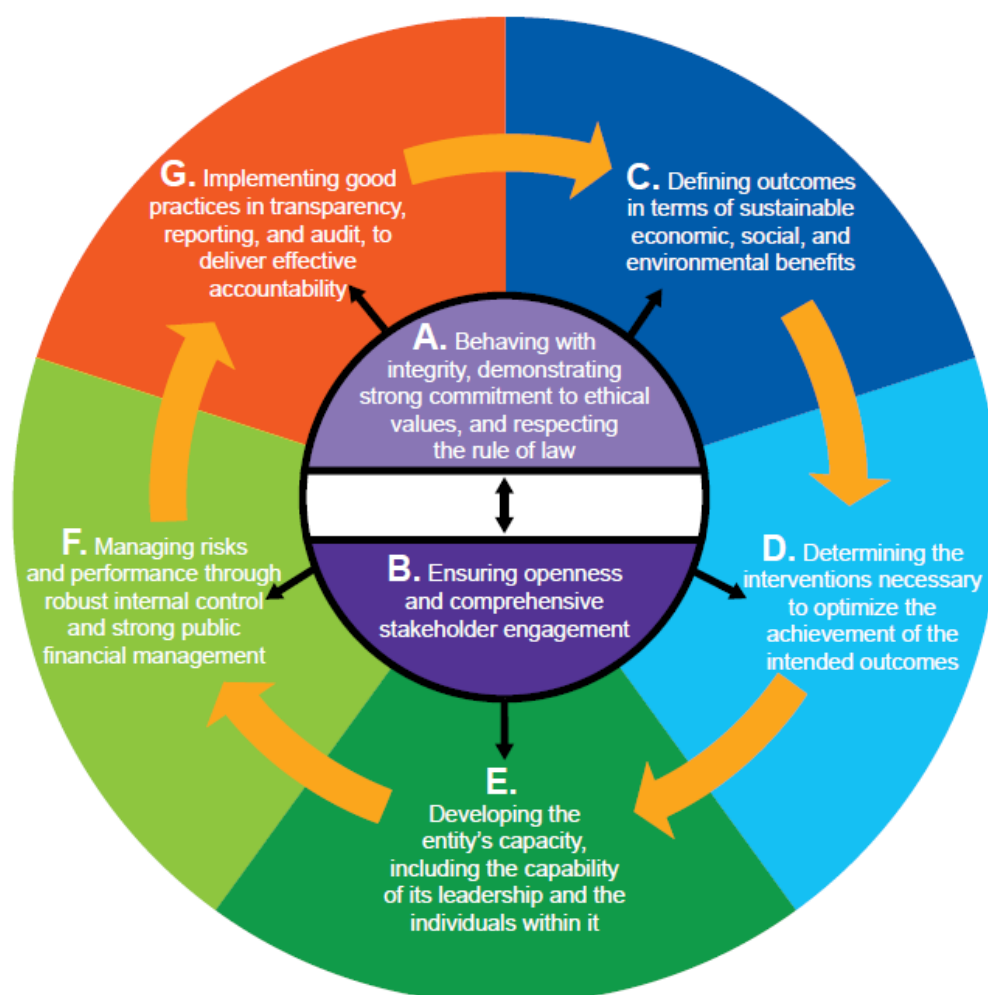
Chief Executive

Date

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework'*, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), in association with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), sets the standard for local authority governance in the United Kingdom.
- 2.2 The framework is designed to help local authorities develop and implement high standards of governance, to ensure that:
- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and priorities;
 - there is sound and inclusive decision-making; and
 - there is accountability for the use of resources to achieve desired outcomes for residents and communities.
- 2.3 The Framework sets out seven core principles, as illustrated in **Figure 1** below, that underpin good governance in the public sector.

Figure 1 – Delivering Good Governance Core Principles



2.4 This statement demonstrates how the Council's governance arrangements deliver to these seven principles in practice.

2.5 The AGS has been structured to provide an update against the following areas:

- **Section 3: Camden's Governance Framework** – provides an overview of how the Council's core governance framework is comprised and includes the Council's scope of responsibility;
- **Section 4: Key elements of the Council's governance arrangements for 2022/23** – provides a summary of the key elements and highlights of the Council's governance arrangements for the year ending 31 March 2023;
- **Section 5: Review of Effectiveness** – details the process followed in conducting a review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework, including the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion; and
- **Section 6: Significant Governance Issues** – provides a summary of any significant and/or general governance issues that have been highlighted and will be monitored during the year ahead.

Part A – London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23

- 2.6 **Part B** summarises governance arrangements that are largely consistent from year to year. The appendix details standard elements of the Council's governance arrangements and how the Council has applied the principles of good governance as set out within the CIPFA/SOLACE *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'* framework.

3. Camden's Governance Framework

- 3.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that it acts in accordance with the law and is **accountable** to its residents and communities for how public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used in a way that represents value for money. Additionally, the Council has a duty under the Local Government Act 2003 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.2 In discharging these responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for a robust system of internal control and the effective management of risk. To this end, the Council has established a corporate governance framework, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.
- 3.3 The Council expects the highest conduct and behaviour from all of its Members and officers. The Council's core governance framework is comprised of a wide range of systems, policies and procedures, and is underpinned by its corporate values, ethos and strategic objectives. Council policy and decision-making processes are managed and controlled within a well-established framework, as illustrated in **figure 2** below.

Part A – London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23

- 3.7 Part B sets out in more detail the core and integral aspects of the Council's governance framework, that generally remain consistent from year-to-year and demonstrates how these align to the seven principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework in practice.

4. Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework for 2022/23

- 4.1 This section of the statement provides a summary of the highlights of the Council's governance for the year ending 31 March 2023 (and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts). It also demonstrates how and where the Council's governance framework has been adapted to reflect *changing* circumstances and to ensure that the Council continued to deliver and achieve the desired outcomes for Camden residents and communities. Actions taken to address the issues identified within the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement are also included in the text below.

Key Roles and Subsidiaries

- 4.2 In addition to the governance arrangements listed above and as outlined in **Part B**, the following key roles are also in place and are key elements of the Council's governance framework:

The Head of Paid Service

- 4.3 The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service. All reports presented to Committee for decision making require the legal, financial, and staffing implications to be explicitly detailed. The Council's Head of Paid Service, the Chief Financial Officer with statutory responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and the Monitoring Officer (Borough Solicitor), or their representatives, consider these reports, along with their implications.

Role of the Chief Financial Officer

- 4.4 The Executive Director Corporate Services (Chief Financial Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972) was the Council's most senior executive role charged with leading and directing financial operations and strategy for 2022/23. In his role as Chief Financial Officer, he is responsible for:
- Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making;
 - Reporting to full Council and the Council's external auditor if he considers that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or if the Council is about to enter an item of account unlawfully; and
 - Providing advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, probity and budget policy framework issues, and preventing maladministration and financial impropriety.

Role of the Monitoring Officer

- 4.5 There are effective arrangements for the discharge of the Monitoring Officer function, which is carried out by the Borough Solicitor. The Borough Solicitor attends Camden Management Team (CMT) and has direct access to both the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, with both of whom he has regular, programmed one-to-ones. In particular, he has access to all decision making and all decision reports must contain comment from either himself or one of his

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legal team. He leads a substantial legal team and has the budget to take specialist external legal advice when necessary. He has appointed a deputy, being the Principal Lawyer (Litigation), who provides cover for this role when he is unavailable.

Role of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

4.6 The Council's Audit and Corporate Governance Committee has responsibility for non-executive functions other than planning, licensing, pensions and standards. It meets approximately six times a year and receives reports on the regulatory framework as follows:

- Annual Governance Statement (annual);
- Statement of accounts and external auditor's opinion (annual);
- External audit plan (annual);
- Internal audit plan (annual);
- Internal audit update (bi-annual);
- Principal risks (bi-annual);
- Counter-fraud (bi-annual); and
- Treasury management (bi-annual).

4.7 The Committee may also consider additional reports on any of those functions should it consider it necessary to provide the assurance sought. Additionally, it has responsibility for the Council's non-executive corporate governance functions, most notably management of the Constitution.

4.8 The Committee also undertakes self-assessment on its overall effectiveness by completing surveys designed around the nine good practice principles set out within the CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance (2018).

4.9 The Council has also continued to subscribe to the CIPFA Better Governance Forum. This has ensured that Members and officers have access to the latest information and guidance.

Role of Scrutiny

4.10 The Council has five scrutiny committees to scrutinise the various functions of the Council and decisions made by the Cabinet, Cabinet Members, and Chief Officers. Scrutiny Committees each meet up to seven times a year and in addition, the chairs of the five scrutiny committees meet collectively, as the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee, to co-ordinate scrutiny work collectively. The scrutiny committees can, and often do, operate scrutiny panels to look at specific matters in a task-and-finish style approach. Camden is also one of the five boroughs participating in the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.11 Each scrutiny committee regularly meets with relevant members of the Cabinet to discuss areas in their portfolios, and the Leader of the Council attends the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. Scrutiny committee meetings are scheduled in such a way as to be able to comment on Cabinet reports prior to decision, allowing for relevant input through an early consideration of the draft proposals or when they have been finalised. In addition, there is a procedure for executive decisions to be called-in for discussion at scrutiny committee meetings.

5. Review of Effectiveness

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- 5.1 Camden's Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for putting in place adequate governance arrangements and effective systems of internal control. The Council uses several ways to review and assess the effectiveness of governance arrangements, as set out below.
- 5.2 The Council undertakes a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework in accordance with best practice advice, as published by CIPFA/SOLACE¹, in meeting the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015). This involves annual meetings between the Head of Internal Audit and senior managers and reviewing the outputs of audit work, as well as self-assessments.
- 5.3 The review takes account of the methods employed by the Council in providing assurance on the governance framework. Information used includes:
- Local Management Information Systems;
 - Interim External Audit outcomes;
 - Internal Audit outcomes;
 - Scrutiny arrangements;
 - Audit and Corporate Governance committee reports;
 - Reports from inspectorates;
 - Performance information;
 - Risk management arrangements; and
 - Information governance arrangements

External Audit

- 5.4 Regarding the External Audit outcomes above, the audit of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 statement of accounts have been signed off. At the point of drafting this report the external audit for 2021/22 is ongoing and Forvis Mazars have provided a draft Audit Completion report for 2021/22.
- 5.5 In their draft Audit Completion Report for the 2021/22 accounts the External Auditor, Forvis Mazars, have stated that they expect to issue an unqualified opinion. The External Auditor reports on significant findings in the process of the audit, identifying significant risks and key areas of management judgement, and any significant difficulties with the audit of the accounts. This review is ongoing as Forvis Mazars work towards finalising the audit for 2021/22 and issuing their final Audit Completion report for 2021/22.
- 5.6 As a result of the delays in accounts production and amendments required during the audit process they consider there to be evidence of a significant weakness in ensuring effective processes and systems are in place to support its statutory financial reporting requirements, and recommended action to improve the timeliness and quality of draft statements and supporting working papers, addressing internal control recommendations, implementing quality control for draft accounts production and improving responsiveness to audit queries. These recommendations are being acted upon and monitored.

¹ The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) collaboration

Part A – London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23

- 5.7 Forvis Mazars' 2022-23 external audit report highlights the Council's significant progress in financial closure and accounts preparation. The 2021-22 draft accounts, submitted on April 8, 2024, were of good quality, with prompt provision of supporting documents. External auditors have concluded that they are satisfied that this recommendation has been met.

Internal Audit

- 5.8 Internal Audit delivers a planned programme of work based on an annual assessment of the key risks facing the Council. Internal Audit also provide advice and guidance on risk and control issues within individual systems. The 2022/23 Internal Audit plan was drawn up to address key risks facing for the Council. The 2022/23 plan was directed towards the key risk areas as identified within the Principal Risk Report.
- 5.9 The effectiveness of the Council's risk management framework is regularly reviewed through benchmarking against other authorities, industry standards and best practice. This has resulted in continuous improvement to the Council's risk management framework. In 2022/23, risk management oversight by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee continued to be strengthened by the presentation of deep dives on individual principal risks.
- 5.10 The 2022/23 Internal Audit plan was drafted from a number of other sources including an Internal Audit risk assessment, audit plans of other local authorities, intelligence from previous audits, and CIPFA good governance guidelines. An annual assurance map is also produced to demonstrate how internal audit resources provide assurance on the actions to mitigate the Council's principal risks.
- 5.11 The outcomes of internal audit activity are included 22-23 Internal Audit Annual Report. In addition to the outcomes of the 2022-23 audit plan, in reaching the Head of Internal Audit's opinion, the following governance arrangements were also considered:
- 5.11.1 The Council's risk awareness and risk culture had further matured in 2022-23. Risk deep dives have been presented to Committee. There was also a continued awareness of principal risks and a good level of implementation of actions designed to mitigate principal risks;
 - 5.11.2 The immediate risk arising from the pandemic continued to reduce in 2022-23, as reflected in the Principal Risk Report. Internal Audit continued to include any new risks arising through individual reviews on the 2022-23 audit plan;
 - 5.11.3 There was a willingness on the part of management to proactively seek Internal Audit advice in relation to risk and control design outside of delivery of the audit plan. This was evidenced by the large number of reviews the senior leadership and service management have requested outside of the 2022-23 audit plan;
 - 5.11.4 The HIA opinion is also informed by the wider sources of assurance as listed within the governance self-assessment which will support the annual governance statement.

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- 5.12 The implementation of audit recommendations were tracked and monitored by Internal Audit using an open recommendation tracker. Audit recommendations made in 2022/23 were scheduled for follow up to ensure that management action has been implemented within agreed timescales. This will provide senior management and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee with a direction of travel in the internal control environment across the Council and will identify areas where further improvement is required.
- 5.13 The wider context of this AGS indicates that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall governance arrangements is adequate. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) also requires that the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides an annual audit opinion that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement.
- 5.14 Regarding, the annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit (HIA), the HIA is satisfied that the work undertaken by the audit function during 2022/23 has enabled the HIA to form a reasonable conclusion on the Council's control framework, risk management and governance arrangements. For the year ended 31 March 2023, the HIA has provided a '**Moderate assurance**' opinion; indicating that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall arrangements for the Council's systems of internal control, risk management and governance are adequate, with some improvement required. Weaknesses identified during individual audits and investigations are not significant, in aggregate, to the system of internal control. Although some high risk rated recommendations were made in individual audit reviews, these were broadly isolated to specific systems or processes. None of the individual audit reviews had an overall classification of critical risk. A detailed Head of Internal Audit opinion was provided in the Council's 2022/23 Internal Audit Annual Report presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in June 2023.

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Management Self Assessment

- 5.15 In accordance with section 5 of the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016 (guidance notes)', a comprehensive self-assessment, largely detailing stable governance arrangements, was completed in previous years and is updated periodically. The self-assessment provides a useful indicator of the Council's effectiveness in applying principles of good governance in practice. The self-assessment also allows authorities to assess how their processes and documentation meet the criteria suggested in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework.
- 5.16 In addition to the self-assessment referred to above, as part of the AGS production process, each directorate is asked to complete an annual self-assessment. This directorate level self-assessment presents the Directorate's view of its governance arrangements. Directorate self-assessments serve a dual purpose, in that they provided assurance surrounding the governance arrangements in place for 2022/23, and also provided an opportunity for senior management to reflect on good governance requirements.
- 5.17 In 2022/23, the Council's directorates (Supporting People, Supporting Communities, and Corporate Services) completed self-assessments to evaluate governance arrangements and identify areas for improvement. Key changes include the division of the Supporting People Directorate into two new directorates: Children and Learning, and Adults and Health. The Supporting Communities Directorate launched a Damp and Mould Project Board to address risks related to damp, following the Awaab Ishak case, and a Violence Against Women and Girls Board to promote a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against women and girls. The Corporate Services Directorate did not report any significant governance changes.
- 5.18 All directorates, except Supporting Communities, reported no significant governance issues based on CIPFA criteria. The Supporting Communities Directorate identified that the effectiveness of governance arrangements needed improvements due to a significant overspend in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget, largely caused by unexpected increases in gas and electricity costs, which were beyond the council's control. To mitigate the impact of future cost increases, the HRA now conducts mid-year checks on energy cost forecasts and frequently models energy costs to ensure energy prices charged to residents are better aligned with actual procurement costs for energy.
- 5.19 While the Council can implement further cost mitigations, Councils are limited by statute regarding what they can charge to residents and their ability to increase rental income from residential properties within the Housing Revenue Account. Further work is underway across the sector to make the case for further national funding for social housing.

6. Significant Governance Issues

- 6.1 A key element of the annual governance review process is to identify any significant internal control issues. The Council has adopted the approach recommended by the CIPFA, which has identified what may be considered generally as a significant issue. These include:

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- The issue has seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective;
- The issue has resulted in a need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved;
- The issue has resulted in significant diversion of resources from another aspect of the business;
- The issue has led to a material impact on the accounts;
- The Audit Committee, or equivalent, has advised that it should be considered significant for this purpose, or
- The Head of Internal Audit has reported on it as significant in the annual opinion on the internal control environment.

6.2 The significant governance issue raised by the External Auditor on the 2020/21 Audit Completion Report has been recorded and all recommendations are being monitored, those being:

Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Implementation update
1.	<p>Addressing Internal Control recommendations</p> <p>These include: Addressing the segregation of duties on posting and approving journals. Ensuring proper procedures in place for review and reconciliation of debtor and creditor balances Reviewing the Council's approach for asset valuations Ensuring regular rent reviews on commercial lease properties</p>	Director of Finance	February 2022	<p>System controls put in place to ensure segregation of duties</p> <p>Review of debtor and creditor ledger balances instilled as part of accounts production</p> <p>5-year programme of property valuation prepared, and procedures documented.</p> <p>5-year cycle on rent reviews in place.</p>
2.	<p>Quality Control for Statement of Accounts</p> <p>To implement a robust quality control procedure for its draft accounts.</p>	Director of Finance	2021/22 draft accounts production	Increased resource within the Financial Reporting function including quality control review processes for draft statements and working papers.
3.	<p>Improving responsiveness to audit queries</p>	Director of Finance	Apr-Sept 2024	Principals agreed with Mazars for the

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Implementation update
	Working to achieve agreed deliverables			audit of the 2021/22 accounts

6.3 The table below highlights key issues that have been identified and, in accordance with good governance practices, will be closely monitored in the coming year. A number of these issues are continuation of work from previous years. Where this is the case the council regularly updates and adapts its approach to factors that influence the nature of these issues. For example, wider economic climate, Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis have impacted the Council’s medium term financial strategy, (see item 5 in the table below).

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
1.	Delivery of We Make Camden Priorities To monitor the delivery of priorities and outcomes of We Make Camden.	Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design	February 2022	Priorities agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 with a delivery plan in development.
2.	Performance Management To develop and implement an Outcomes and Assurance Framework aligned with We Make Camden priorities.	Head of Strategy	February 2022	The Council is implementing several mechanisms to review outcomes and impact, including creating a Wellbeing Index for the Borough to track progress on the “We Make Camden” initiative. An Outcomes Board has been set up for internal oversight of performance and impact, and this work will be integrated into the future plans for the Cabinet and CMT.

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
3.	<p>Implementation of Peer Review Recommendations</p> <p>Building on the report to Cabinet of December 2021 responding to the report of the LGA Peer Review, the Council is continuing to respond and deliver against the recommendations outlined in this report.</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design</p> <p>Head of Corporate Strategy</p>	December 2021	The Council through We Make Camden, picked up a number of the Peer Review recommendations and will update on wider implementation through appropriate scrutiny and audit channels.
4.	<p>Better use of customer data</p> <p>To continue to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through better use of customer data.</p>	Head of Strategy	March 2022	The Council continues to develop its approach to using data, including through appointing a Chief Data Officer who joined in the summer of 2022.
5.	<p>New Medium-term Financial Strategy</p> <p>To develop and deliver the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design</p>	April 2023	Work to develop the strategy has continued and remains on target for April 2023.
7.	<p>Funding</p> <p>Continue working with London Councils on the Fair Funding Review, which is crucial for determining future local authority funding. The Council will seek to influence government decisions on funding allocation and policies, including social care funding and the Business Rates system.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Corporate Services)</p>	Ongoing	<p>To date the government has not formally begun the latest iteration of the Fair Funding review.</p> <p>Officers have contributed to a number of London Council's lobbying efforts by providing details of the financial pressures the Council is facing.</p>

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
8.	<p>General Fund Capital Strategy</p> <p>To develop and deliver the next iteration of the General Fund Capital Strategy.</p>	Head of Finance (Corporate Services)	February 2022	<p>The latest iteration of the General Fund Capital Strategy was agreed by Council in March 2022.</p> <p>Officers will continue to develop the pipeline of capital projects to be included in future iterations of the General Fund Capital Strategy</p>
9.	<p>Housing Revenue Account Financial Strategy</p> <p>To develop a refreshed HRA financial strategy, in light of the financial impact of the pandemic, and monitor the implementation of this strategy.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Supporting Communities)</p>	February 2022	This was included in the HRA rent-setting report that was approved by Cabinet in January 2022
10.	<p>Community Investment Programme</p> <p>To continue to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.</p>	<p>Director of Development</p> <p>Head of CIP Programme Office</p>	March 2022	The programme is now overseen by the Housing and Property Investment Board.

Part B - Summary of the Council's Governance Framework - CIPFA/SOLACE Principles

This section details the stable elements of the Council's governance framework, which remain largely consistent from year-to-year. The section demonstrates how the core principles of good governance, as set out within the CIPFA/SOLACE *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'* framework, are applied in practice. This is not an exhaustive list and is therefore not indicative of all of the Council's governance arrangements; however key governance arrangements in relation to core principles of the CIPFA framework are listed.

Part B - Summary of the Council's Governance Framework - CIPFA/SOLACE Principles

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>Principal A:</p> <p>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.</p>	<p>The Council maintains a robust framework for policy and decision-making, guided by its written Constitution and the Principles of Public Life. Key documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitution: Defines Council operations, updated November 2021.• Financial & Contract Standing Orders: Part of the Constitution, detailing financial and contractual procedures.• Councillor & Officers' Code of Conduct: Outlines expected behaviours, updated in 2021/22 to align with the Local Government Association Model Code.• Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy: Includes a Whistleblowing policy, last updated June 2023.• Complaints Policy: Updated May 2019.• Handbooks: Managers' and Members' Handbook, Camden's Data Charter. <p>Additional policies cover HR, information management, and service-specific areas, all accessible via the Council's Intranet. New employees are introduced to these during induction.</p> <p>The Camden Management Team ensures compliance with and sets behaviours and standards. The whistleblowing policy, part of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, complies with the 1998 Public Interest Disclosure Act and is reviewed bi-annually by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. It encourages officers, Members and the public to report inappropriate action by employees, Members and external contractors without fear of retribution.</p>

Part B - Summary of the Council's Governance Framework - CIPFA/SOLACE Principles

<p>Principal B:</p> <p>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Ensuring Openness</p> <p>The Council is committed to openness and transparency, ensuring public access to its operations and decision-making processes. This is done via ensuring openness and transparency and community engagement.</p> <p>Ensuring Openness and Transparency</p> <p>Transparency Initiatives: The Council ensures transparency, publishing its Open Data Portal and Open Data Charter online, which meet the requirements of the government's Transparency Code. The data charter provides ethical guidelines and principles regarding data use at Camden.</p> <p>Public Access to Meetings: Council meetings are open to the public, with exceptions for confidential matters, and schedules are posted online. The Camden Plan further promotes openness bringing residents closer to democratic and strategic leaders through for example themed debates.</p> <p>Legal Compliance and Reporting: Part III of the Local Government Act 1974 sets out the role of the Ombudsman in terms of investigating and reporting maladministration. Section 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 also sets out requirements for the Monitoring Officer of a local authority – Camden's Borough Solicitor. The Council presents an annual report covering cases where there have been routine mistakes or failings incurred and the actions agreed by Council to resolve which is in line with the Ombudsman's recommendation.</p> <p>Data Protection and Governance: The Borough Solicitor, serving as the Data Protection Officer and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), oversees information governance and cybersecurity, ensuring compliance with data protection laws. The Council sets also out its commitment to Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Subject Rights (DSR) in a dedicated section on its website.</p> <p>Engaging with Stakeholders and Residents</p> <p>Community Engagement: The Council actively involves residents through initiatives like the Citizens' Assembly, contributing to the "We Make Camden" and "The Way We Work" vision, which guides ongoing community-focused work.</p> <p>Resident Feedback: Insights are gathered via Citizen's Assemblies, the STAR survey, and other regular feedback methods to evaluate and benchmark Council performance.</p> <p>Housing Consultation: Housing issues are discussed quarterly through District Management Committees (DMCs), which include tenant representatives and councillors, with an annual joint meeting to address rent and service charges.</p>
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Part B - Summary of the Council's Governance Framework - CIPFA/SOLACE Principles

<p>Principal C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits.</p>	<p>We Make Camden Plan: The "We Make Camden" plan outlines how the Council will achieve its vision for the borough,</p> <p>Tackling Inequalities: In January 2020, the Council developed a strategic approach to cohesion and equality, including joining the European Intercultural Cities programme and addressing various inequalities, such as socio-economic disparities. A refreshed approach was presented in January 2021 in the council's Equalities, Disproportionality and Cohesion Refresh paper identifying six priority areas and 140 actions. To ensure focus, the Council established a Race and Equality Members Working Group and appointed a Director of Equalities and Disproportionality.</p> <p>Climate Emergency: In September 2020, the Council amended its Constitution to prioritize environmental stewardship in decision-making. All formal reports now include an "Environmental implications" section. The Council also launched a Climate Action Plan, with an annual review published in November 2021. The plan's progress is supported by a Citizens' Panel, providing community oversight and input.</p>
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Part B - Summary of the Council's Governance Framework - CIPFA/SOLACE Principles

<p>Principal D:</p> <p>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Determining Interventions and Optimizing Outcomes</p> <p>Active Stakeholder Participation:</p> <p>Camden Council continues to emphasize stakeholder participation, building on its "Camden 2025" vision. The Council invites residents, partners, and officers to contribute ideas and tackle challenges collaboratively. A dedicated Participation Team was established to promote a participatory culture and test innovative engagement models, ensuring residents' voices shape decision-making.</p> <p>Partnerships and Collaborations:</p> <p>The Council collaborates with various organisations across sectors to deliver services and address key challenges. This includes partnerships with Voluntary Sector Organizations (VSOs), with a £5.1 million annual investment in strategic partners focused on neighbourhoods and equalities. The Council also works closely with agencies to safeguard vulnerable children and adults, supported by statutory boards and multi-agency audits.</p> <p>Health and Social Care Integration:</p> <p>The Council and the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (NCL CCG) are developing integrated health and social care arrangements, navigating NHS structural changes. The Health and Wellbeing Board plays a key role in promoting integration and aligning services for better outcomes.</p> <p>Business Intelligence and Performance Management:</p> <p>The Council leverages business intelligence to provide data-driven insights for better decision-making. A framework is in place to improve data quality and use it to enhance service performance. Performance is regularly reviewed through inspections, annual reports, and performance indicators reported to key decision-makers.</p>
<p>Principal E:</p> <p>Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines how Camden Council operates, detailing the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny, and chief officer functions, as well as procedures for decision-making, joint arrangements, and partnerships to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability.</p> <p>Management control is exercised through the (CMT), which establishes processes, standards of behaviour, and codes of conduct for officers. A Managers' Guide and Members' Handbook provide further guidance, with regular updates available on the Intranet and Learning and Development Hub.</p> <p>The Council supports the professional development of its Members and officers through a comprehensive learning program, including mandatory e-learning modules linked to performance reviews. Members also receive role-specific training and have access to additional learning opportunities to enhance their skills and effectiveness.</p>

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<p>Principal F:</p> <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p>Managing Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal Audit and Risk Management: These functions are crucial in assessing governance and risk management, providing objective opinions to ensure the Council meets its strategic objectives.• Principal Risk Report: This report updated annually and reviewed bi-annually, outlines key risks and controls, informing Internal Audit's focus areas.• Operational Risk Management: Embedded at service levels through workshops, training, and project support. <p>Financial Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong Financial Controls: The Council has robust processes for budget planning, monitoring, and financial management, supported by Financial Standing Orders and Regulations.• Oracle System: The Council has integrated HR, Finance, and Procurement through Oracle, enhancing data and process integration. <p>Managing Performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance Monitoring: Performance is reviewed via external inspections, annual reports, and detailed performance indicators reported to senior management and scrutiny committees.• Pandemic Impact Reporting: New work programs, including pandemic responses, are integrated into regular performance reporting. <p>Scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrutiny Committees: Five committees review Council functions and decisions, with meetings scheduled to provide input on Cabinet reports before decisions are made.• Joint Scrutiny: Chairs of the committees meet to coordinate efforts, and there is a statutory scrutiny officer to support these activities. <p>Anti-Fraud and Corruption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robust Anti-Fraud Approach: The Council follows best practices for managing fraud risks, with a zero-tolerance policy outlined in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.• Whistleblowing: A policy is in place for confidential reporting of suspected fraud.• Mandatory Fraud Awareness Training: All officers must complete online fraud awareness training as part of their mandatory learning.
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<p>Principal G:</p> <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p>	<p>The Council prioritises transparency and accountability, ensuring residents can access information and hold the Council accountable. Key initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Data: The Council publishes the Open Data Portal and Open Data Charter online, fulfilling government transparency requirements. In 2022, a Citizen Data Charter was introduced to guide data use for community benefit.• Public Meetings: Council meetings are generally open to the public, with details available online, except when confidentiality is required.• Scrutiny Committees: There are five scrutiny committees within the Council, which support and hold the work of the Cabinet and the Council to account. Scrutiny committees play an important role in accountability, openness and transparency• Annual Reporting: The Council reports annually on performance, finances, audits, and governance, with updates available online.• Complaints Policy: The Council follows a two-stage process to resolve complaints, with escalation options to external ombudsmen if needed.
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