

London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement 2021/22



1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Camden Council is committed to achieving the ambitions set out within the [We Make Camden](#).
- 1.2 In order to achieve these ambitions, the Council recognises that it must have a solid foundation of good governance in place to ensure that it is doing the right things, 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 has identified what may be considered generally as a significant issue (see paragraph 6.1 below).
- 1.6 The AGS concludes that the Council had effective governance arrangements in place for the 2021/22 year. No significant governance issues were identified during 2021/22 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 Council's as part of the Fair Funding Review;
 - 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

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10) To continue to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.

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 at 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:

Leader

Date

Signed by:

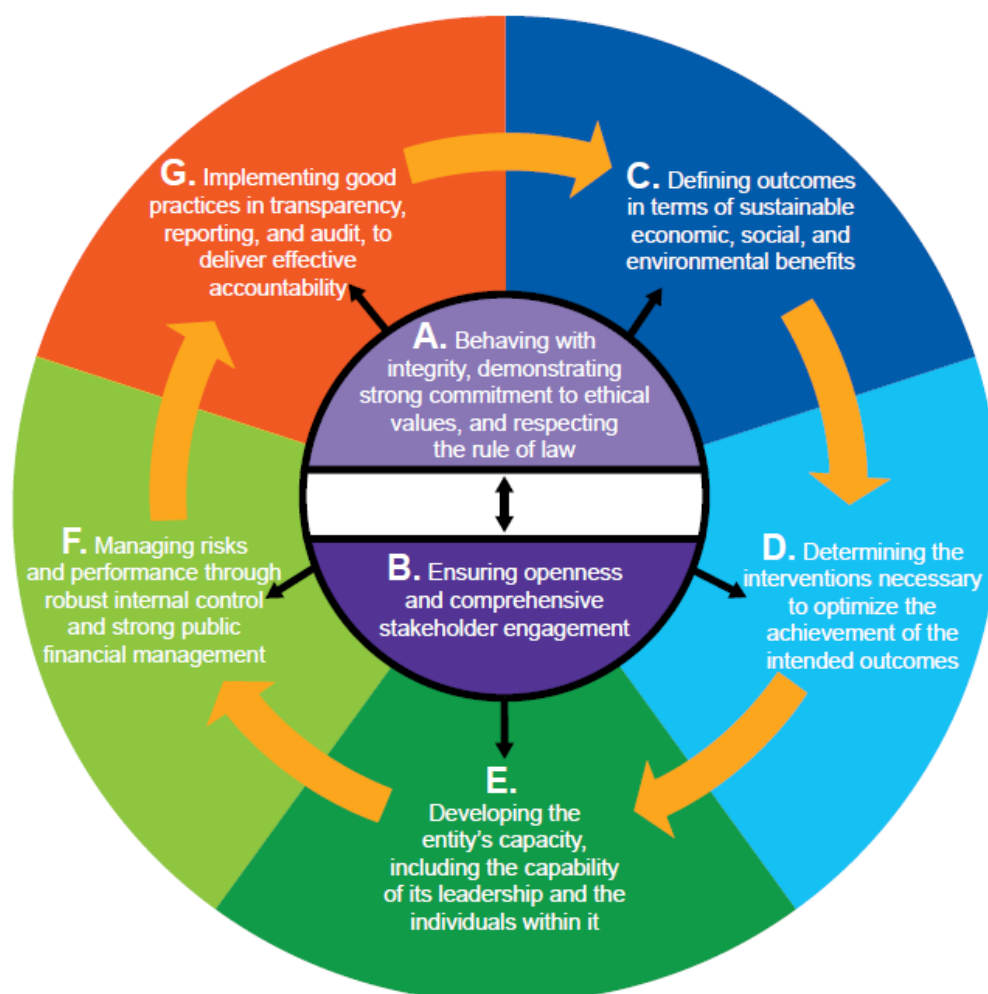
Chief Executive

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 in order 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



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- 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 2021/22** – provides a summary of the key elements and highlights of the Council's governance arrangements for the year ending 31 March 2022;
 - **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.
- 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.

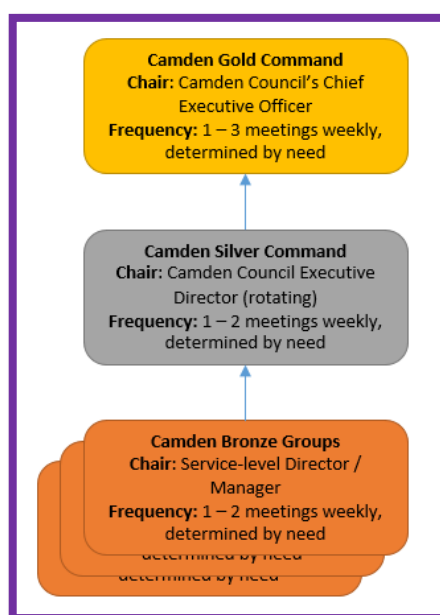
4. Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework for 2021/22

- 4.1 This section of the statement provides a summary of the highlights of the Council's governance for the year ending 31 March 2022 (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 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement are also included in the text below.

Managing and Responding to the Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic

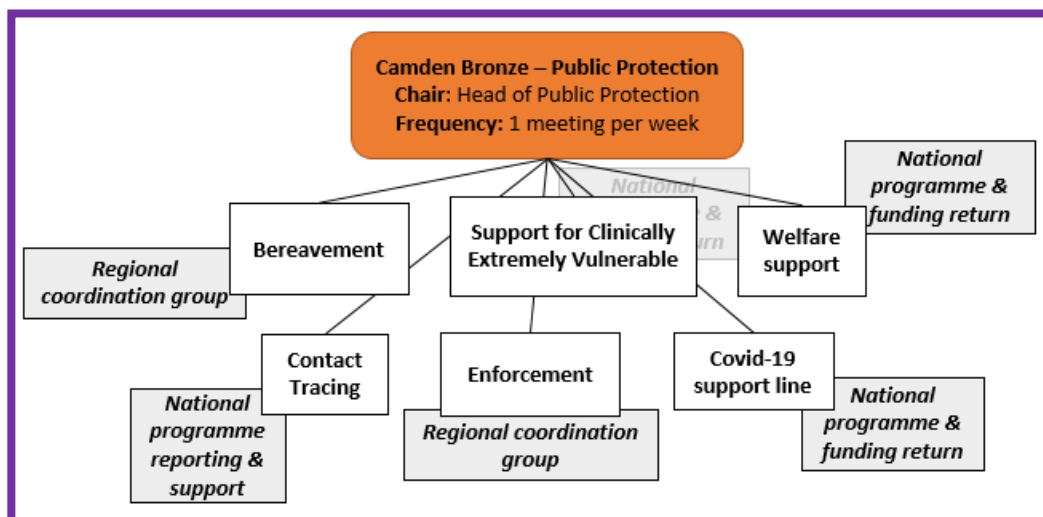
- 4.2 In 2021/22 the Council continued to prioritise its focus on the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergency response across the borough and working with partners to support residents and businesses affected by the pandemic. This ranged from the provision of financial and food support to those residents in need, working with schools and Early Years settings to provide the necessary education and childcare support in line with the government's lockdown rules, supporting local businesses affected by lockdown, enforcing social distancing measures and supporting the rollout of the national vaccination programme.
- 4.3 The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact Camden citizens, partners and businesses and the Council as an organisation. In the second half of the year, the Council moved from response to recovery phase as emergency restrictions were lifted and Covid-19 management were embedded in business-as-usual activities. The Council proactively revisited its Principal Risk Report to reflect the changing nature of the risk profile.
- 4.4 To ensure an effective response to, and management of, the impacts of Covid-19, the Council rapidly put into place a robust set of emergency governance measures at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic. These measures were put in place to facilitate a swift response to the pandemic and its impact across the Council, our services and communities, but also to ensure that the cross-cutting nature of the impact, and its size and scale, could be appropriately governed, managed and monitored. The measures were adapted in 2021/22 to ensure they remained fit for purpose in enabling strong governance remained in pace.
- 4.5 The Council's emergency management structures were set up in-line with the national Emergency Management protocol including a Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure (see **Figure 3** below). This command structure, set up in parallel with other local, regional and national counterparts and partners, helped to facilitate a clear strategic direction for the organisation and clarified key roles and responsibilities. This enabled the quick implementation and coordination of activities to respond to the emergency. With the Director of Public Health and the Public Health team playing a key role in providing health protection advice locally through the reactive team.

Figure 3 – Covid-19 Emergency Management Structure



- 4.6 In response to the requirement for managing the pandemic and its impact, a number of Council services and activities were established over the course of 2020/21 and further adapted in 2021/22. This involved adapting existing services, including the use of the Frontline Presence Team, the expansion of other services, such as a dedicated Covid-19 Contact Camden support line, and the introduction of new services, including a dedicated local contract tracing team, lateral flow testing services, and support for the vaccination roll-out. The Council received a £2.4m Test and Trace grant in support of response to Covid-19 and this funded some of the functions mentioned.
- 4.7 Governance of these services and activities was incorporated within the emergency management structure, as described above, as well as linking closely with regional and national governance arrangements, where appropriate. For example, this included including liaison with, and reporting into the national Department of Health and Social Care community testing programme. An example of how these governance arrangements operated in practice for Public Protection reporting, is illustrated below in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 - Public Protection Covid-19 structure services



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- 4.8 The Council has made a concerted effort to help people protect themselves and their communities from the impact of both the pandemic, and the restrictions required to contain the virus. The Council has helped provide financial and other support to help individuals, businesses and voluntary and community organisations with the social and economic impacts they face on an ongoing basis since the outbreak of the pandemic. In response to the immediate hardship caused by impact of the pandemic the Council has doubled the welfare support it provides to vulnerable residents to £2m and is continuing to invest in Good Work Camden to support Camden residents into good employment.
- 4.9 The Council worked with local and national partners to develop plans to recover and renew our local economy through our new Renewal Commission which focused research and engagement on diversity in leadership, creative & sustainable streets and estates, young people and food. After witnessing the disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on Black, Asian, and other ethnic minority communities. We reported on the recommendations and output of the Renewal Commission in December 2021 and continue to work with partners and communities on the delivery of the four missions outlined in this work. This occurred alongside the Council's work with partners and communities to develop Building Equal Foundations – a plan to tackle the inequalities faced by these communities which we provided an update on in 2022.
- 4.10 During this period, the Council has also ensured that it maintained its role in the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults. Work has been undertaken to refresh two of the Council's strategic plans: Our Corporate Parenting Strategy; and our Supporting People, Connecting Communities plan, to support people to age and live well in Camden. Work is also currently underway to develop a new Health and Well-Being Strategy for Camden, which is a significant priority in the context of the pandemic. The Council has also entered into a number of pan-London Data Sharing Agreements with the Met Police, other councils and other bodies, to streamline the sharing of data to safeguard adults and children.
- 4.11 The Council has also continued to work closely with care providers throughout the pandemic, transitioning from daily virtual contact meetings to weekly contact meetings as the management of Covid-19 matured. Where appropriate, officers also physically visited care homes to investigate concerns and to obtain assurance that the appropriate measures were in place and being followed, working in collaboration with public health. The pandemic has also caused a cyclical safeguarding referral pattern, with falls in referrals during lockdowns, followed by an increase following each lockdown, and the Council has been working closely with families and carers of those receiving support to identify requirements for further support. Staff in Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) continued to visit face to face all children who were deemed to be in need of protection during the pandemic. Children in Need and those who were looked after were seen virtually but this moved to face to face visiting very quickly as lockdown lifted. The cyclic safeguarding referral pattern seen in Adult Social Care was replicated in CSSW with a fall in referrals during lockdown and an increase in volume and complexity as lockdown lifted. Visits to all children were closely tracked on a weekly basis as were review of plans and other areas linked to

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key performance indicators to ensure standards of practice were adhered to during this difficult time.

- 4.12 The work that was underway to introduce a new approach to performance reporting was reignited following the pause in 2019/20 when non-urgent work had to be stood down.
- 4.13 The weekly Covid-19 dashboard continued to report data and insight into the Gold emergency response board. This dashboard sat at the heart of our performance management arrangements for a two-year period. Alongside it CMT (our Camden Management Team) and Cabinet reinstated the wider corporate performance reporting framework to track the delivery of core council services.
- 4.14 The Camden 2025 (C2025) Outcomes Board, made up of CMT and Cabinet, continued to meet regularly throughout 2021/22, having endorsed proposals to develop an Outcomes and Assurance Framework alongside a refresh of C2025. This work was a priority for the Council in 2021/22 to refresh its strategic direction and priorities considering the impact of Covid-19 on resident's lives and on public service provision. We Make Camden (our refresh of C2025) was endorsed by Full Council in March 2022.

Covid-19 Support Grants

- 4.15 In response to the second national lockdown, the Government announced additional financial support packages to support businesses mandated to close during the lockdowns. During 2021/22, the Council had processed over £56m of support packages, £41.700m of this had fixed criteria and the Council had discretion over the award of the remaining £14.527m under the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). The grants were made across the following schemes:
- Local Restrictions Support Grant (closed) - payments to businesses for several periods of national restrictions in November, December and January through to 31 March 2021 totalling £10.8m;
 - Restart Grants - available from 1 April 2021 to support businesses in reopening safely as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, totalling £25.8m;
 - The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) - provides additional funding for local authorities subject to national lockdown or Tier 3 restrictions, to support businesses that have had their trade affected by the restrictions totalling £14.5m.
 - Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant - support to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses, in recognition that the rise of the Omicron variant means that some businesses are likely to struggle, totalling £5m.
- 4.16 In addition to the support grants administered to businesses the Council has also made a large number of payments to local residents. The Council awarded £3.954m in vouchers and cash grants to households in financial hardship in 2021/22 funded from a mixture of government grants such as the Household Support Fund and the council's own resources through its Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.
- 4.17 The Council is currently participating in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), which includes data relating to Covid-19 grants recipients and will seek to identify potential fraud. The Council provided feedback on a number of cases the NFI flagged from the original March 2020 lockdown, and this did not

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identify any cases requiring recovery of grants paid. The Council is currently awaiting requests from the NFI for the later business grant schemes for the same matching exercise. The Council has also provided data to HMRC for the original grant schemes from 2020 and believe HMRC will also request data for the 2021/22 grant payments issued.

- 4.18 For the restart, Omicron and later rounds of ARG schemes the Council moved to the Ascendant grants platform to improve pre-payment and anti-fraud checks. The improved automation and online checks the new system provided enabled the Council to move from inspecting manually paper bank statements to being able to verify in real time the bank account belonging to an expected recipient and obtain online information of businesses on top of basic spotlight or companies house checks. The extra layer of online checks meant less risk of fraud and error. For example, the anti-fraud checks in one case (subsequently reported to NAFIS) flagged a bank account issue that enabled the Council to notice an applicant had doctored manual bank statements in an attempt to display trade to obtain payment (by deception). This resulted in the Council withholding payment in line with guidance.

Financial Management and Strategy

- 4.19 As set out in the [Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 – 2021/22](#) published in December 2018, the Council took a planned longer term approach to achieving the required budget reductions, by focussing on the matters that contribute most to key outcomes set out in Camden 2025 and Our Camden Plan.
- 4.20 The Council has however recognised that the pandemic has had a significant financial impact and will have a longer-term effect on the level of resources available to the Council. In responding to the pandemic, the Council undertook a significant redeployment of resources, including the redeployment of staff to support the Council's front-line emergency response. This has helped to reduce early estimates of additional pressures relating to the pandemic from £80m to £50m during 2020/21. The Council also recognised the need to make additional investment decisions quickly to support the borough and to make a number of one-off savings to ensure the Council remained financially resilient through the pandemic.
- 4.21 The impact of the Covid pandemic has meant that some projects to help deliver the current MTFS have been paused while officers focused on the emergency response to Covid. In order to ensure the MTFS delivered as many savings as possible the current MTFS was extended by 1 year to allow for additional time to deliver the savings programme. In tandem with this the Council began to develop options for a new Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure the Council's continued financial resilience. Officers are currently developing savings proposals for Members to consider later in the financial year that will deliver a balanced budget to 2025/26.
- 4.22 The Council also increased the frequency of reporting to Cabinet on the Council's financial position from three times a year, adding two additional Cabinet reports in May and September 2020 focussing on the financial impact of pandemic on the Council. The frequency of reporting to Departmental Management Teams (DMTs) and the Camden Management Team (CMT) was also increased, and sought to identify Covid-19 specific financial pressures

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within the financial reports presented to management, along with the grants and other financial support available from the Government to help meet some of these financial pressures.

- 4.23 As the Council moved into 2021/22 the financial monitoring returned to a 'business as usual' model with reports to DMT and CMT quarterly but with continued additional information on the estimated impact of Covid on the Council's financial position. As government funding for Covid related pressures came to an end in 2021/22 the Council began to model the longer term impacts of Covid on the Council's medium term financial forecast and the expected medium term budget gap. In order to ensure its continued financial resilience, the Council has set aside reserves to support ongoing Covid pressures.
- 4.24 The pandemic has also had an impact on the collection of business rates. The Council would usually collect over £600m per year in business rates from non-domestic properties in the borough, with income divided between the Council, the Greater London Authority and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; however, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of business rates collected in 2020/21. As part of the response to the pandemic, the Government increased the level of scope of business rates relief for many businesses, which had led to an additional rate relief of over £195m being administered by the Council in year.
- 4.25 Officers continued to closely monitor business rates levels throughout 2021/22 and saw a continuing reduction in the Council's overall tax base. The impact of this on the Council has been an estimated £10m reduction in the level of retained business rates since the start of the Covid pandemic. This reduction has been included in the Council's medium term financial forecast and helped to inform the Council's expected medium term financial gap.
- 4.26 In addition to the financial impacts of the pandemic, the Council continues to operate in a challenging financial environment. The multi-year government finance settlement ended in 2019/20, and since then the government have only provided a one-year settlement each year as part of the annual spending review. This has generated ongoing uncertainty regarding the Council's medium term financial position beyond the end of 2022/23. To this end, the Council is continuing to work with London Councils as part of the fair funding review, which is reviewing the way in which local authorities are funded. This needs to be viewed in conjunction with the Government's 'levelling up' agenda which may result in resources being diverted away from London boroughs. The outcome is vital to the future of local services across London as it will determine how £19bn of funding will be allocated from 2023.
- 4.27 Strong financial management of the Council's finances including Council Tax and other charges enables the Council to maintain a wide range of support and services for residents in line with our aspirations. The impact of ongoing austerity and rising cost and demographic pressures mean that the Council is projecting a new budget deficit of between £35m and £40m by 2025/26. It should be noted that there is still a good deal of uncertainty regarding the Council's medium term financial position both due to the ongoing need to support residents and businesses affected by the impact of the pandemic and because of the lack of information about future government funding and the extent to which the Council's tax base for both Council Tax and Business Rates will recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Housing Revenue Account

- 4.28 In terms of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the monitoring of progress towards delivering the HRA financial strategy is taking place through a strengthened governance process that brings together the HRA and the Community Investment Programme through the creation of the Housing and Property Investment Board. Reports are also shared with stakeholders specific to the Housing Revenue Account, including the Cabinet Member for Better Homes, the Housing Scrutiny Committee, and the Housing District Management Committees. Budget pressures continue to be reviewed annually as part of the budget/rent setting process. These are separately approved by Cabinet in January of each year, and any changes to projects required to meet the revised financial target are considered and implemented through these channels.
- 4.29 For the previous four years, the Housing Revenue Account has had to reduce rents by 1% each year in order to comply with the Welfare and Work Reform Act (2016). The 2019/20 financial year was the first year in which the Council was permitted, under the government's Rent Standard, to raise rents. This pressure from previous years, combined with ongoing inflationary increases on salaries, supplies and services budgets, and particularly on repair costs, has been compounded by the pandemic. This has led to a significant increase in rent arrears from social tenants, leaseholders and commercial tenants. In January 2022 Cabinet agreed a balanced HRA budget for 2022/23 including a further rent increase at the Consumer Price Index +1%. The HRA also continues to face financial pressure from the need to invest in fire safety works across both its capital and revenue programmes.

Monitoring of the Capital Programme and the Community Investment Programme

- 4.30 The Council's capital programme is reliant on the planned sale of assets to generate capital receipts that will be reinvested into building and developing of new Council assets. In 2021/22, the Council budgeted to receive £72.1m in capital receipts, through a combination of the sale of assets built through the Community Investment Programme, the sale of existing under-utilised assets, and Right to Buy sales of social housing. The actual capital receipts received were £82m. Overall the Council's capital programme is expected to generate £422m of capital receipts to support the funding of the capital programme.
- 4.31 The Council acknowledges that there is an inherent risk associated with building cost inflation and uncertainty within the housing market, and therefore officers work with independent experts to ensure that assumptions regarding the sales value of assets remain realistic and up to date. In order to further manage this risk, the Council also schedules the reinvestment of expected capital receipts later than they are expected to be received, leaving a level of capital receipts and borrowing capacity in hand to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans can be fully funded each year. The slowing down of the London property market has also led the Council to trial marketing some properties as private rented properties for a limited period of time while the property market improves. This will allow the Council to generate an income stream, widen the types of housing offered through CIP, and allow the properties to be sold when the sales market has stabilised.

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- 4.32 For Council owned tower blocks where remediation has been required to their external wall systems Camden has been successful in securing £4.3m funding from the Building Safety Fund for three Cromer Street blocks, and an additional £80.6 m for remediating the five Chalcots towers. The qualification threshold for access to government building safety fund grant have been reduced to include buildings 11+ metres in height we have identified further Camden blocks where funding bids will be submitted. To date the Council has agreed and received a payment of £19m from contractors as compensation for the need to remove the previous cladding.
- 4.33 The Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP) is a large and ambitious long-term programme that is delivering new homes, schools and other community assets across Camden.
- 4.34 In order to ensure good governance for CIP, the Council has established a number of checks at various stages of project delivery. Cabinet are responsible for approving new projects within the programme, and where appropriate, delegate the decisions needed to implement the projects to senior officers, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members. The management of the programme is undertaken through the following governance boards:
- *The Housing and Property Investment Executive Directors Board* – this board has expanded from CIP oversight to oversight across all of Housing, including CIP and HRA finance. It mirrors the members group (below). For the CIP, it monitors the delivery of the programme and reviews programme wide risks and funding requirements. The Board is also responsible for steering the long-term planning and strategic direction of the programme. The board is supported by a CIP Gateway Panel, which comprises of officers from Housing, Finance, Legal and Procurement, and reviews projects at key stages.
 - *The Housing and Property Investment Board (previously called the CIP Cabinet Sub-Group)* – the board retains oversight of CIP, as well as a wider remit to include other capital programmes and financial oversight of the Housing Revenue Account. This allows capital investment decisions to be taken in the context of overall affordability. The role of this Group is to share knowledge, offer constructive challenge, agree consistency and key approaches and support the positive integration of HRA and CIP schemes into Camden's existing portfolio. This group consists of relevant Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, and provides political and senior management oversight of the programme and individual projects, providing steer ahead of formal decision making by Cabinet or through delegated powers.

Resident Safety

- 4.35 The Council's Camden Plan 2025 commitment is to ensure the highest standard of resident safety across the borough including learning from past events and the impacts on our residents.
- 4.36 In July 2021, Cabinet reviewed the 2019 resident safety programme in response to the Fire Safety Act and the publication of the draft Building Safety Bill. Cabinet adopted the Camden Fire and Building Safety Charter and

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Delivery Plan developed through a borough wide survey, consultation and resident focus group process. The Charter will enable residents to see what the 2025 Camden Plan commitments mean in practice and hold the Council to account for their delivery through an annual report on performance and progress against Delivery Plan targets for Charter commitments.

- i. Camden carries out 3,263 Fire Risk Assessments and has established extensive governance arrangements to monitor actions identified from the fire risk assessment process including a Capital investment programme that is addressing circa 8,000 actions for which the Council has set aside £59m in addition to the investment on the Chalcots estate.
- ii. The Council has been at the forefront of government led initiatives setting the standards for future requirements for both fire and building safety. As part of the new Fire Safety Act amendments the government accepted that landlords needed a tool to help them prioritise and programme works to their high-rise buildings. The building risk prioritisation tool allows landlords to assess/prioritise fire safety risks, better understand the complexity of their building risk and prioritise what (if any) remediation is required to ensure that an appropriate level of safety is achieved in existing buildings.
- iii. We have been part of the working group defining and developing the risk prioritisation tool with Government influencing government policy and as a sector leader using the tool to assess all of our residential buildings (above 18 m or seven floors). This has been helpful in understanding /assessing the risk of our stock of high-rise buildings and means the Council is in a position to address issues identified from using the building risk prioritisation tool.
- iv. We have used these risk assessments to commission intrusive facade surveys of our high-rise Council homes to indicate whether any mitigation was required. Remediation works following an FRA may include a range of measures including the installation of hard-wired smoke detection and alarm systems, the complete removal of the external wall system, additional compartmentation measures or a combination of these and other works.
- v. We have completed circa 40 intrusive façade surveys as a result of the proactive assessments completed by the fire safety team. As part of the first remediation project at Cromer Street we focused on communications to keep residents informed which was very successful and won a Resident Safety award from Inside Housing. This approach has been adopted as the template for approaching subsequent works at other Camden high rise blocks.

Tackling social and economic inequalities

- 4.37 It is recognised that both social and economic inequalities exist for both residents and staff, and the Council has continued to work to tackle the risks of social and economic inequalities across the Borough. Tackling inequality and disproportionality are a key focus area for We Make Camden. This work became increasingly challenging in-year due to the prolonged pressure on Council services owing to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, in response the

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Council established several working groups and oversight panels to ensure that the equalities agenda and calls to action are progressed and remain a priority. There is now a small team in the Equalities and Disproportionality service and the work is further a more sustainable long-term approach to the Equalities and Disproportionality agenda.

- 4.38 An Equalities, Disproportionality and Cohesion Refresh paper was presented to Cabinet on 13th January 2021, which identified six core priority areas of focus and refreshed the Council's approach to delivering equalities, disproportionality and cohesion through the identification of 140 actions. To ensure that delivery remains a priority, the Council mobilised a Race and Equality Members Working Group, and appointed its first Director of Equalities and Disproportionality to provide strategic leadership to the Council's efforts to tackle inequalities. The Council has subsequently published a "one year on" report updating on the work the Council has undertaken as part of being an anti-racist organisation and to tackle inequality and disproportionality.

Cyber and Data Security

- 4.39 There continues to be an increase in attempted cyber-attacks against local authorities. To ensure that the Council remains resilient and protected against known threats, a significant programme of measures has been put in place to continually review and improve our security stance.
- 4.40 The Borough Solicitor is the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) responsible for the Council's overall information risk policy, and the Council's Data Protection Officer under the Data Protection legislation. The SIRO together with the Chief Digital & Information Officer leads the Corporate Information Governance Group, which is responsible for information governance, including management of data breaches and associated risks, including those surrounding cyber security.

EU Exit

- 4.41 The Council has continued to closely monitor the impacts of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on the Council as an organisation and to residents. The Council's Brexit Preparedness group has previously led on the coordination of Brexit-related activities, including communications and scenario planning.
- 4.42 Following the agreement of a new trade deal between the UK and the EU on 24 December 2020, thus avoiding a potential no-deal scenario, the Council removed its EU Exit Principal Risk from its Principal Risk Report and instead weaved the remaining risks emanating from the exit into the existing Principal Risks (e.g. contract management). Where applicable, the impacts of the EU exit are also being managed via local departmental and service level risk registers. The Council provided undertook proactive communications to EU residents to ensure they were aware of the "settled status" process and the resources and support available to them. The Council will continue to provide support and advice to our EU residents through our funded advice partners and our front-line services and will continue to advocate for the rights and contributions of our EU citizens to our communities.

Workforce

- 4.43 The Council have prioritised employees' wellbeing during the pandemic. Since March 2020 the Council has significantly added to the existing wellbeing

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support available to staff. This includes providing support and resources on a range of topics including mental health, physical health, bereavement, home-schooling and work/life balance. The council ran live wellbeing focused sessions that enabled staff to reflect, connect with others and gain practical tips. In total 225 sessions were ran between March 2020- February 2021, which had an overall attendance of 1,573 people. The council ensured managers were equipped to manage teams remotely and to understand and support their staff's wellbeing. In addition to this support all staff, and their families, have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This is delivered by an external provider and provides a range of confidential support including counselling, Career Coaching and financial advice.

- 4.44 The council has continued to progress its Race Equality Action plan, which has included reviewing and updating our recruitment process and appointing an Inclusion Resourcing advisor, ensuring our policies minimise the risk for disproportionality to the largest extent possible and bringing more scrutiny into our pay and reward systems. Camden's next major focus will be improving the process for reporting and investigating incidents of discrimination.
- 4.45 In May 2021 Camden rolled out our Anti-Racism Learning Offer to all staff which involved Education sessions, Manager's sessions and Reflection sessions aiming to ensure our workforce have a shared understanding of racism in all its forms. Virtual sessions were run for office-based staff, and face to face sessions were run for frontline staff. 84% of staff have attended Education sessions.
- 4.46 The Council has continued to focus on disability inclusion. A Disability Inclusion Learning Offer is currently being developed, which is due to launch in September.
- 4.47 A key priority in Camden's Diversity and Inclusion work is the value of diversity in thinking. The Council recognises that having a diverse range of ways of thinking within our teams leads to better decision making, and has been working to raise more awareness of neurodiversity within the organisation and to ensure neurodiverse colleagues are enabled to thrive at work. The Council has also run a series of awareness sessions, particularly focussing on Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, and also celebrated Neurodiversity Awareness Week and Autism Awareness Week in-year.
- 4.48 The Council has been recognised for its work around LGBTIQ+ inclusion, having been ranked 47th in the 2021 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, and given Stonewall's Gold Award. The Council has conducted some research into the experiences of our LGBTQ+ staff, which, along with the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index feedback, will provide a good framework for taking this work forward.

Partnership Working

- 4.49 The Council has continued to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the statutory sector, third sector, and businesses to deliver services for local residents and to drive forward improvements across the borough.
- 4.50 Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs) are key partners to the Council and relationships have been developed with strategic partners based on shared values and a commitment to improving the lives of people in Camden. During

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2021/22 extensive work with the Voluntary and Community Sector has led to increased openness, transparency and mutual understanding. We are trialling new contracting mechanisms with some of our VCS partners moving into a more collaborative and equal partnerships space through Alliance contracting models.

- 4.51 The Council has developed new governance arrangements with the Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to design new integrated health and social care arrangements, in collaboration with provider organisations. This work continues and will evolve as NCL CCG prepares to transition into its new statutory form from 2022.
- 4.52 Integrated health and care are set to change when NCL CCG moves to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in 2022. We have been working closely with the CCG throughout the year to prepare for these changes and embed new governance systems. The development of Place based Partnerships will be an important factor in how we work with the NHS and providers going forward, The commissioning of the Kings Fund has helped us to think about these changes and the position of the Local Authority as an anchor institution in the borough. Notwithstanding the structural changes, the Council's focus has remained on the development of the Integrated Care Partnership, which is the borough-wide arrangement for integrated health and care at a local level. The Health and Wellbeing Board is key to promoting integration and partnership working between the NHS, social care and public health through the strategic direction it will provide to the Integrated Care Partnership and its ownership of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Members of the Board continue to work together to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the Camden population and to agree priorities and encourage all those providing health and care services to work in a more joined-up way.
- 4.53 The Council has been a lead member of a pan-London data sharing initiative, working with the other London boroughs, the Met Police, Probation Service and other agencies to produce a suite of data sharing agreements to streamline and optimise data sharing with partners on subjects such as adult and child safeguarding, offender management, domestic abuse, and licensing.

Climate Emergency

- 4.54 The Council's response to the 2019 climate emergency declaration continues. In September 2020, the Council made changes to its Constitution to elevate the importance of environmental stewardship in decision making. All formal decision reports now include a mandatory "Environmental implications" section which is supplemented by supporting guidance to help project leads identify and mitigate environmental impacts. Later this year, the Council will launch a new Learning and Development module to build organisational capacity to ensure all Council activities consider and limit their environmental impact.
- 4.55 The Council also published the first Annual Review of our Climate Action Plan in November 2021. The Annual Review was considered prior to publication by the Cabinet member for a Sustainable Camden and can be viewed at www.camden.gov.uk/climate-crisis. The Annual Review's publication coincided with the UN's 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow which sought continued international collaboration on the climate mitigation and

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adaptation. COP26 was attended by the Leader of the Council in her role as the Chair of London Councils.

- 4.56 Camden marked COP26 by holding a second themed full Council debate on the climate crisis on 11 November 2021. The Council also marked the publication of the first annual review of the Climate Action Plan with a public event at the Samsung Space in Kings Cross which celebrated the breadth and depth of climate action in Camden since the Climate Action Plan's adoption in 2020. Further information about the event including a recording can be viewed at [Camden COP26 Celebration Event - YouTube](#) and [Celebrating Climate Action: COP26 in Camden | Camden Climate Change Alliance \(camdencca.org\)](#)
- 4.57 The Climate Action Plan's development continues to be supported by Camden's climate focused Citizens' Panel which was recruited to over the summer of 2020. The panel has met quarterly since the Climate Action Plan's adoption and adds transparency to Camden's climate programme, providing external community oversight on progress, as well as acting as a community level sounding board for environmental projects. The work of the panel, including agendas, minutes and presentations from the meetings, is publicly available at www.camden.gov.uk/citizen-panel.

Peer Review

- 4.58 In January 2020, a Corporate Peer Review of Camden was undertaken and facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA). A peer review forms part of Local Government's alternative to the government inspection regime, and is designed to enable local authorities to challenge each other, share learning, and improve the way we work across the sector.
- 4.59 Camden was keen to utilise the peer review as an opportunity to reflect on progress towards the Camden 2025 vision, and to invite feedback regarding ideas and challenges that will help the Council to achieve its plans, including feedback on the Council's participation model and how the Council may be able to do more to encourage all communities to participate in helping to achieve its shared priorities.
- 4.60 The peer review team focussed on five key areas, which reflected the Council's ambitions for Camden in 2025:
- Understanding of the local place and priority setting
 - Leadership of Place
 - Organisational Leadership and governance
 - Financial planning and viability;
 - Capacity to deliver

Additionally the peer team were also asked to feedback on Camden 2025 and Camden's participation model and effectiveness of engagement.

- 4.61 The Feedback Report, published in July 2020, provided very positive feedback in terms of the ambition, goodwill, and talent within the organisation, including a dedication to succeed and to continue to strive for social justice and delivering for residents. The report also made some observations as to areas in which the Council should continue to address including business planning and performance management. The Council used the 2020/21 autumn/winter period to seek feedback from staff and Members on the peer review recommendations, and was keen to use this feedback to inform the

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Council's overall response. The Council's response to the peer review was formalised and a Peer Review Report went to [Cabinet in December 2021](#).

Key Roles and Subsidiaries

- 4.62 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

- 4.63 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

- 4.64 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 2019/20. 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

- 4.65 There are effective arrangements for the discharge of the Monitoring Officer function, which is carried out by the Borough Solicitor. The Borough Solicitor attends 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 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

- 4.66 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:

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- Annual Governance Statement (bi-annual – a draft version and a final version);
 - 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 (quarterly).
- 4.67 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.
- 4.68 In 2020/21, the Committee also undertook a self-assessment on its overall effectiveness by completing a survey that was designed around the nine good practice principles set out within the CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance (2018). The survey was undertaken as part of the Council’s and the Committee’s commitment to further enhancing the effectiveness of the Council’s overall governance arrangements. Overall, the survey indicated some areas of good practice, though nine recommendations were identified and pulled into an action plan to assist the Committee with further enhancement. These recommendations were grouped under three overarching headings: the purpose and focus of the Committee; enabling the effectiveness of the Committee; and reviewing the impact of the Committee. In 2021/22, significant progress was made towards the implementation of these nine recommendations;
- 4.69 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

- 4.70 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.
- 4.71 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.

Council Subsidiaries

- 4.72 In accordance with the recommendations arising from a review undertaken by the Local Government Committee on Standards in Public Life in 2019, Councils should report on separate bodies they have setup or which they own as part of their annual governance statement. The Council has two subsidiary companies, Camden Learning and Camden Living, both of which make key contributions to the delivery and achievement of the Camden Plan objectives.

Camden Living

- 4.73 Camden Living is a Camden Council owned housing company with its main focus on providing affordable rented housing for people living and working in Camden. Camden Living makes a key contribution towards the achievement of the Camden Plan objectives, by providing an improved and much needed intermediate rentable housing offer for residents in the borough, in accordance with the Intermediate Housing Strategy and Planning policy; and so, addresses a gap in the Camden market.
- 4.74 The homes provided by Camden Living have been built through the Council's Community Investment Programme and provides the Council with income that helps to pay for services in the face of reductions in the funding received from government.
- 4.75 Camden Living is company limited by shares that was established in 2016 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, which prescribes that commercial activities carried out by Council's must be through a company. The Council is the sole shareholder in the company, and the company's Board (Chaired by the Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment) are responsible for carrying out the operational business of Camden Living. The Council, as the only shareholder, exercises appropriate control over Camden Living via the existing CIP Cabinet Sub-Group governance process.
- 4.76 A Funding Agreement is in place between the Council and Camden Living, which enables Camden Living to purchase housing units, and allows the Council to monitor the performance of Camden Living to ensure any risks that arise are mitigated at an early stage. Separate statement of accounts are prepared and audited for Camden Living, however, Camden Living's financial management activities are undertaken within the Council's pre-existing financial systems, processes and controls for carrying out the operational business of Camden Living. The Council's shareholder representative function is delegated to the Executive Director (Supporting Communities) who exercises her strategic function in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members.

Camden Learning

- 4.77 Camden Learning Limited is a not-for-profit school-led partnership created as a joint venture between Camden schools and the Council. The company commenced activity in September 2017. The Company is commissioned by the Council for a portfolio of school improvement services. Camden Learning is a company limited by guarantee, of which the Council owns 19% and the remaining 81% is owned collectively by Camden's schools. All state schools in Camden are members of Camden Learning.
- 4.78 The Council provides over 70% of Camden Learning's revenue, and commissions the company to deliver a range of services on its behalf,

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including improvement services, health and wellbeing services, governor support services, special education needs and disabilities information advice and support services.

- 4.79 Camden Learning is governed by the Camden Learning Board. This comprises an Independent Chair, 2 Council representatives (the Executive Director Supporting People, the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families), the Camden Learning Managing Director, and five representatives from Camden schools (who are either headteachers and or a Chair of Governors). Regular updates on progress are provided to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee, and the company produces an annual report.

5. Review of Effectiveness

- 5.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. 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. Details of the areas considered as part of this assessment are set out below.
- 5.2 The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 5.3 CIPFA guidance also advises that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic should be considered when conducting the annual review for 2021/22, both identifying changes that have resulted from the pandemic and identifying the impact on effectiveness of arrangements in practice.
- 5.4 The Council has undertaken 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. This involved annual meetings between the Head of Internal Audit and senior managers and reviewing the outputs of audit work, as well as self-assessments.
- 5.5 The review conducted has taken 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

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

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- Outcomes of the Peer Review undertaken in January 2020.

External Audit

- 5.6 With regard to External Audit outcomes above, the audit of the 2019/20 statement of accounts has not been signed off at the point of drafting this report. The External Auditor (Mazars) has reported to the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee on a number of occasions during 2021/22 to update on the issues and progress of the audit. Mazars had substantially completed their work on our 2019/20 financial statements in September 2021, issuing a draft Audit Completion Report, pending a revision of a number of property valuations in order to provide the assurance required on these valuations.
- 5.7 In their draft Audit Completion Report from September 2021 Mazars anticipated issuing an unqualified opinion, and in their assessment of Value for Money they concluded that “in all significant respects the Council had proper arrangements in place to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people”.
- 5.8 During the course of the audit, Mazars identified a number of errors within the Statement of Accounts and its working papers, requiring a redraft of the Statements. In response to this, Mazars revised their testing threshold to a lower level, which had the effect of increasing the level of testing they needed to undertake to get the assurance they considered necessary.
- 5.9 Officers acknowledged that the draft accounts submitted to the auditors were subject to significant amendment and took on board a number of internal control recommendations from Mazars’ Audit Completion Report. These were followed up with a report from officers to the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee in [June 2021](#), and by Mazars in the plan for the audit of the 2020/21 accounts.
- 5.10 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 2019/20 accounts. Having reviewed payments, receipts and other transactions Mazars reported no significant findings with regards to Management override of controls, and Revenue recognition, which are reviewed as a matter of course on all audits.
- 5.11 With regards to the pension liabilities, as well as the valuation of properties, due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with these valuations as a result of the COVID pandemic, they identified a significant risk in the valuation of these assets and liabilities, applying a material valuation uncertainty paragraph to the valuations performed as at 31 March 2020. Mazars will include an ‘emphasis of matter’ disclosure within their final report as it is their view that these items are fundamental to the users’ understanding of the financial statements.

Internal Audit

- 5.12 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 2021/22 Internal Audit plan was drawn up to address key risks facing for the Council. The 2021/22 plan was directed towards the key risk areas as identified within the Principal Risk Report.

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- 5.13 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 2021/22, risk management oversight by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee was further strengthened by the presentation of deep dives on individual principal risks.
- 5.14 The 2021/22 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.
- 5.15 The work of Internal Audit is reported within the Internal Audit 2021/22 Annual Report, and has indicated that:
- An awareness of principal risks and a good level of implementation of actions designed to mitigate principal risks;
 - Risk management has been further embedded with action being taken to achieve target risk scores;
 - 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;
 - In areas where Internal Audit issued a less than 'moderate' assurance opinion i.e. where significant control weaknesses were identified, satisfactory management responses to audit recommendations have been obtained. Internal Audit have also noted a good level of implementation of audit recommendations
- 5.16 The implementation of audit recommendations is tracked and monitored by Internal Audit using an open recommendation tracker. Audit recommendations made in 2021/22 will be scheduled for follow up in 2022/23 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.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 With regard to the annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit (HIA), the HIA is satisfied that the work undertaken by the audit function during 2021/22 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 2022, 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

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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 2021/22 Internal Audit Annual Report presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in [June 2022](#).

Management Self Assessment

- 5.19 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.
- 5.20 In addition to the self-assessment referred to above, as part of the AGS production process, each directorate was asked to complete an annual self-assessment. This directorate level self-assessment presented the Directorate's view of its governance arrangements. Directorate self-assessments served a dual purpose, in that they provided assurance surrounding the governance arrangements in place for 2021/22 (including arrangements during the pandemic), and also provided an opportunity for senior management to reflect on good governance requirements.
- 5.21 Directorate self-assessments for 2021/22 were completed in October 2022 for the Council's directorates, i.e. Supporting People, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services. Management reflected on changes to governance arrangements in the year, considered whether any significant governance issues needed to be reported, and provided an overall assessment of arrangements in place.
- 5.22 Directorates reported developments in areas of governance for 2021/22, with examples including the establishment of a cross-council Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) Directors Group, a SEND ((Special Educational Need and Disabilities) Strategy and Improvement Board; and the more recent statutory footing for Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships within the North Central London Integration Care System. They reflected on governance arrangements already in place and the findings of internal audits, enhancements to performance measurement, and the organisational ability to respond flexibly to a changing environment, including diverting resources to address key concerns such as support for the Afghan and Ukrainian refugee crises.
- 5.23 In all Directorates confirmed that there had been no significant governance issues (as defined by criteria recommended by CIPFA) and that overall level of assurance for 2021/22 was good.

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 There were no significant governance issues that met these criteria during 2021/22. However, the following general issues have been highlighted and, in line with good governance arrangements, will be monitored during the year ahead:

Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
1.	<p>Delivery of We Make Camden Priorities</p> <p>To monitor the delivery of priorities and outcomes of We Make Camden.</p>	Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design	February 2022	Priorities agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 with a delivery plan in development.
2.	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>To develop and implement an Outcomes and Assurance Framework aligned with We Make Camden priorities.</p>	Head of Strategy	February 2022	<p>The Council has established a number of mechanisms to review outcomes and impact, including developing a Wellbeing Index for the Borough over the next year that will measure progress in delivering We Make Camden.</p> <p>The Council's Outcomes Board was established to have internal oversight and review of our approach to performance, measurement and</p>

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
				impact. This time-limited work will be mainstreamed into the forward plan for Cabinet/CMT and CMT.
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 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.
6.	<p>Assessing the Financial Impact of Covid-19</p> <p>As part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the Council will continue to assess its medium term financial position and update its assumptions about investment needed to</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Corporate Services)</p>	Ongoing	Work on assessing the Council's medium term financial position is ongoing and is updated regularly to take into account the latest information and forecasts on future pressures including

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Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date (as reported in the 2020/21 AGS)	Implementation update
	<p>respond to the social and economic impact of the Covid pandemic.</p>			<p>inflation and demographic pressures along with the expected impact of government finance reforms.</p> <p>An updated medium term position was presented to Cabinet and Resource and Performance committee in July.</p> <p>The forecast will continue to be updated through out the next Medium Term Financial Strategy period.</p>
7.	<p>Funding</p> <p>To continue to work with London Councils, as part of the Fair Funding Review, which is reviewing the way in which local authorities are funded. The outcome of this review is vital to the future of local services across London as, when enacted it will determine how funding is allocated, and the Council, along with its partners and through representative bodies, will endeavour to influence government decision-making where possible. In addition the Council will seek to influence government policies that may affect the funding available to the Council including the expected reviews of social care</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
	funding and the Business Rates system.			
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.

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 expects the highest conduct and behaviour from all its Members and officers. The Council's policy and decision-making are managed and controlled within a strong, well-established framework and a major feature of this is the Council's written Constitution, which sets out in detail how the Council operates. The Councillor Code of Conduct and Officers' Code of Conduct, which form Part 5 of the Council's Constitution, are underpinned by the Principles of Public Life as set out by Lord Nolan's Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). The Councillor Code of Conduct and accompanying guidance was updated during 2021/22 to adopt the new Local Government Association Model Code while taking account of decisions taken by the Council over recent years.</p> <p>Compliance with policies and legislation is managed through a range of corporate written rules and procedures which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risk. These are regularly reviewed and updated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution (last updated November 2021); • Financial Standing Orders (Part 4 of the Constitution); • Contract Standing Orders (Part 4 of the Constitution); • Councillor Code of Conduct (which sets out a member/officer gifts and hospitality protocol, conflicts of interest, provisions around the use of information technology and how misconduct complaints against members will be dealt with) (Part 5 of the Constitution); • Officers' Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct (Part 5 of the Constitution); • Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (including Whistleblowing policy) (Last updated September 2017); and • Complaints Policy (Last updated May 2019). • Managers' Handbook and Members' Handbook. • Camden's Data Charter - Camden Council

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>A number of other policies are also in place and they are made available to officers via the Council's Intranet pages, including HR policies (including discipline and grievance); Information Management policies; and service-specific policies. All key policies and guidance for officers are highlighted to new starters as part of the on-boarding and induction process and are publicised on the intranet.</p> <p>Management control is exercised through the Camden Management Team (CMT), which defines and establishes processes, communicates and embeds codes of conduct, and defines the standards of behaviour for officers within the Council.</p> <p>The Council has also established a whistleblowing policy (which forms part of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy) in accordance with the requirements of the 1998 Public Interest Disclosure Act. The policy was last updated in September 2017, and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for approving the policy and receives a whistleblowing update bi-annually. The policy is publicised to officers on the Council's intranet and internet sites, and encourages officers, Members and the public to report inappropriate action by fellow employees, Members and external contractors, without fear of victimisation or retribution.</p>
<p>Principal B:</p> <p>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Ensuring Openness</p> <p>The Council believes in transparency and residents have a right to see what is going on and to hold the Council to account. The Camden Council Open Data Open Data Portal and the Open Data Charter are published on the Council's website, and are key mechanisms for meeting the requirements of the government's Transparency Code. The Data Charter to give ethical guidance and principles on the use of data in Camden.</p> <p>Council meetings are also open to the public; however, exceptions are made for matters that require confidentiality. The time, date and location of public meetings are displayed on the Council's website. The Camden Plan commits the Council to further opening up the Council and bringing residents closer to democratic and strategic leaders, for example through the introduction of themed Council debates.</p> <p>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 – who in Camden is the Borough Solicitor. The Council presents an annual report covering cases where there have been routine mistakes or failings and the Council has agreed to make remedies and changes in line with the Ombudsman's recommendation. The report relating to complaints managed within the period 1 April 2020 to 31st March 2021 was presented to Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee on 18th November 2021 and to Cabinet on 10th November 2021.</p> <p>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. The number of FOI requests responded to within the statutory deadline is reported as part of the Council's suite of core performance indicators. In 2021-2022, performance was reported as 99.6% of requests responded to within the statutory timeframe. Camden continues to be recognised as a leading council for FOI performance.</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>The Council also records its commitment to the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 on its website and it continues to give significant focus on complying with its obligations, with the Borough Solicitor being the Council's statutory Data Protection Officer. The Council will prepare for the changes to data protection in the proposed Data Reform Bill as these become clear.</p> <p>The Borough Solicitor is also the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) who is responsible for the overall information risk policy, and the Council's Data Protection Officer under the Data Protection legislation. The SIRO together with the Chief Digital & Information Officer leads the Corporate Information Governance Group, which is responsible for information governance including management of data breaches and associated risks including those surrounding cyber security.</p> <p>Engaging with Stakeholders and Residents</p> <p>Three years ago, the Council invited citizens from across the borough to tell us what they thought Camden should be like in 2025, to develop shared priorities that should be at the heart of our vision for the future of the borough. Over 80 residents joined our Citizens' Assembly, and thousands shared their views online, at public events in libraries and via resident surveys. A central theme was how citizens, community organisations and partners can work together to tackle challenges in new ways, which is why the Council focused on participation. As part of the development of We Make Camden the Council engaged partners and stakeholders and communities in an ongoing dialogue about the ongoing impact of the pandemic and our community priorities. In 2022 we published We Make Camden and the Way We Work, our refreshed community vision for our Borough and an outline of our organisational work to respond to this call to action. The work to implement and deliver on the ambition of We Make Camden is ongoing.</p> <p>The Council uses a variety of other mechanisms to gather resident insights to assess how the Council is viewed by residents and service users, and to benchmark services. These include Citizen's Assemblies, the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and through carrying out regular surveys and interviews with residents across the borough to ensure resident insight is readily available.</p> <p>The Council consults with its residents on local issues and reports on housing issues at District Management Committees (DMC), which are advisory forums made up of tenant representatives and councillors which consider housing and environmental issues relating to Council tenancies and leases. There are five DMCs that meet four times a year, and an additional joint meeting of all DMCs takes place once a year to discuss the setting of rents and service charges.</p>
<p>Principal C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social</p>	<p>Defining Outcomes</p> <p>Our We Make Camden plan, building on the community dialogue that has occurred throughout the pandemic and underlined the priorities at the heart of our vision for the future of the borough, explains how the Council as an organisation will deliver on its ambitions.</p> <p>Tackling Inequalities</p> <p>In respect of its commitment to tackling inequalities, in January 2020 the Council's Cabinet agreed a paper outlining our approach to cohesion and equality. This included developing a council-wide strategic approach, joining the European Intercultural Cities programme,</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
and environmental benefits.	<p>and exploring the range of inequalities across Camden, including socio-economic inequality. An Equalities, Disproportionality and Cohesion Refresh paper was presented to Cabinet on 13th January 2021, which identified six core priority areas of focus and refreshed the Council's approach to delivering equalities, disproportionality and cohesion through the identification of 140 actions. To ensure that delivery remains a priority, the Council mobilised a Race and Equality Members Working Group and appointed its first Director of Equalities and Disproportionality to provide strategic leadership to the Council's efforts to tackle inequalities. There is now a small team in the Equalities and Disproportionality service and the work is further a more sustainable long-term approach to the Equalities and Disproportionality agenda.</p> <p>Climate Emergency</p> <p>In September 2020, the Council made changes to its Constitution to elevate the importance of environmental stewardship in decision making. All formal decision reports now include a mandatory "Environmental implications" section which is supplemented by supporting guidance to help project leads identify and mitigate environmental impacts. Later this year, the Council will launch a new Learning and Development module to build organisational capacity to ensure all Council activities consider and limit their environmental impact.</p> <p>The Council also published the first Annual Review of our Climate Action Plan in November 2021. The Annual Review was considered prior to publication by the Cabinet member for a Sustainable Camden and can be viewed at www.camden.gov.uk/climate-crisis. The Council marked the publication of the first annual review of the Climate Action Plan with a public event at the Samsung Space in Kings Cross which celebrated the breadth and depth of climate action in Camden since the Climate Action Plan's adoption in 2020. Further information about the event including a recording can be viewed at Camden COP26 Celebration Event - YouTube and Celebrating Climate Action: COP26 in Camden Camden Climate Change Alliance (camdencca.org)</p> <p>The Climate Action Plan's development continues to be supported by Camden's climate focused Citizens' Panel which was recruited to over the summer of 2020. The panel has met quarterly since the Climate Action Plan's adoption and adds transparency to Camden's climate programme, providing external community oversight on progress, as well as acting as a community level sounding board for environmental projects. The work of the panel, including agendas, minutes and presentations from the meetings, is publicly available at www.camden.gov.uk/citizen-panel</p>
Principal D:	<p>Determining Interventions</p> <p>The Council has continued to build on its approach to active stakeholder participation that played such a significant role in the development of Camden 2025 as the vision for the borough. This involved working with residents, partners and officers to develop the</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>Determining the necessary interventions to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>long-term vision, inviting everyone who lives and works in Camden to tell us what the borough should be like in 2025, to anticipate future challenges and to consider new and innovative ways to collectively tackling some of our most difficult problems.</p> <p>To achieve the vision set out in Camden 2025, the Council recognises that it needs to inspire a new way of working with Camden's people and organisations. The Council established a new dedicated Participation Team to generate a participatory culture throughout the Council, and to test out innovative models of participation and engagement. New approaches have been piloted and aim to bring residents closer to decision making, to ensure residents voices are at the centre of shaping neighbourhoods and enable social action, dialogue and connection. The Council has adopted a test and learn approach, with evaluation and learning embedded at every stage. The Council continued to build on this approach in the development of We Make Camden when the Council continued its ongoing dialogue with residents and communities about the impact of the pandemic, and met with stakeholders and partners to understand their priorities for working in our communities.</p> <p>Planning Interventions</p> <p>The Council works in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the statutory sector, third sector and business to deliver services for local people and drive forward improvements in Camden. Partnership working includes different types of relationships – from contractual arrangements between the Council and other organisations to deliver services or projects through to strategic forums (some of which are required by statute, others voluntary) which bring partners together to agree how best to tackle key challenges and shared priorities. Some have funding to allocate and targets to meet, others provide a steer to inform individual partners' priorities and commissioning. The governance arrangements vary depending on the nature of partnership working but are designed to ensure that the partnership remains appropriate, effective and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs) are key partners to the Council and relationships have been developed with strategic partners based on shared values and a commitment to improving the lives of people in Camden. In 2016/17, the Council agreed a new annual VSO investment programme of £5.1 million, with funding awarded across a number of Strategic Partners. Funding was awarded based on the aims of two thematic projects; Neighbourhoods (maximising existing strengths, assets and resources, improving residents life chances and opportunities and increasing opportunities for residents from different backgrounds to be involved in local social actions) and equalities (mainstream services that deliver for all, tackling barriers, increasing access to services, and increasing participations of communities currently underrepresented). During 2021/22, extensive work with the Voluntary and Community Sector has led to increased openness, transparency and mutual understanding.</p> <p>The Council also works closely and in partnership with relevant agencies to help prevent the abuse of vulnerable children and adults within Camden. There is strong partnership oversight of the multi-agency aspects of the child-protection system through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant agencies co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children locally. Multi-agency audits were conducted during this period to assure the Board of the quality of the work and any learning for the system.</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>The Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board also has a statutory role in developing policies and procedures, and co-ordinating local work on safeguarding and promotion of the protection of adults at risk of abuse within Camden. Safeguarding is highly integrated within the Council and across partner agencies, and well-established and effective governance arrangements are in place to define roles and responsibilities. In May 2018, Ofsted conducted a focussed visit to Camden's children's services, and reported that child protection concerns are quickly identified and lead to timely interventions to safeguard children. A robust audit and quality assurance programme was delivered during 20/21 and 21/22. In November 21 and annual engagement meeting took place with Ofsted to share our self-assessment of performance including areas of strength and areas of focus for the coming year. Ofsted inspected Children Services including Early Help in April 21 under the ILACS framework which was a full two- week inspection. The outcome will be made public on 21st June 22.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council and NCL CCG have continued to work closely during the year to further develop new integrated health and social care arrangements, in collaboration with provider organizations. The structural changes to the NHS have provided challenges as the health system prepares to move into its new legislative form from 2022. These changes bring new opportunities as Place Based Partnerships begin to emerge and new governance systems are embedded. The Health and Wellbeing Board is also key to promoting integration and partnership working between the NHS, social care and public health through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Members of the Board work together to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the Camden population, agree priorities and encourage the people who buy health and care services to work in a more joined-up way. As a result, patients and the public should experience more joined-up services from the NHS and local councils.</p> <p>Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes</p> <p>Business intelligence is important to the Council in ensuring decision-makers receive objective and rigorous data and information in order to help with the appraisal and analysis of key options and decisions. The Council's use of business intelligence is evolving constantly to ensure that the organisation has a better-informed view of what is happening and can use more robust evidence to take better decisions. The Council has developed an organisational wide framework and approach for data to ensure that it holds the appropriate skills, resources, processes and technology investments, which enables the Council to continuously improve the quality of its data, to utilise the data held to measure and improve the performance of services delivered to residents, and to provide evidence to improve decision-making. However, the Council acknowledges that further work is required to ensure that business information/intelligence is produced in a way that enables relevant and timely monitoring.</p> <p>Performance management is considered through a range of review mechanisms; including external inspection bodies, annual reports for some service areas, and the detailed reporting of performance indicators to DMTs, CMT, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Committees.</p>
Principal E:	The Constitution sets out in detail how the Council operates, and defines and documents the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and chief officer functions, as well as setting out procedures for joint arrangements and responsibilities for

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p>	<p>partnership arrangements. It sets out how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Management control is exercised through the Camden Management Team (CMT), which defines and establishes processes, communicates and embeds codes of conduct, and defines the standards of behaviour for officers within the Council.</p> <p>A Managers' Guide and Members' Handbook are also in place, which outline roles and responsibilities and are updated regularly. To support our people managers, the Council launched a new guide to being a manager in Camden in June 2019 and this is regularly updated. The guide is accessible to all officers via the Intranet and our Learning and Development Hub, and brings together, in one place, an overview of the core people management responsibilities in Camden. The Council has clear expectations of managers in terms of their service management responsibilities (including in areas such as financial management and managing people). This includes their role in communicating with officers to ensure officers understand their roles and are appropriately supported when working with partners and delivering Council services. This is reflected in policies, procedures and guidance available to support managers in various facets of their management role. This information is publicised on the intranet and managers are able to access guidance and support from specialists, (e.g. finance, HR and legal services) when required. Learning and development opportunities are also available to support managers in developing relevant skills e.g. political awareness or working in partnership.</p> <p>The Council is committed to the ongoing professional development of Members and officers. A comprehensive learning offer is available, including on-going investment in e-learning technology to improve development opportunities and support our approach to mandatory learning. The Council also operates a corporate mandatory learning package, which was last refreshed in 2019-20 and will be updated again in Autumn 2022. All officers are required to complete a suite of e-learning training modules, and successful completion of these is linked to officers' performance reviews.</p> <p>Members have access to the Council's learning and development hub to complete a suite six of mandatory training modules: Conscious Inclusion; Fire Safety; Fraud Awareness; Health and Safety; Information Handling; and Introduction to Safeguarding. Role-specific training is also provided to reflect the individual responsibilities and positions held by Members, including Planning Committee training, Licensing Committee training, and risk management and fraud awareness training. Additionally, a number of 'open-to-all' training sessions are provided, including 'effective chairing', 'effectively managing casework' and 'speaking with impact' training. Group Whips have also approved a number of requests from Members to undertake external training or attend relevant conferences to assist in the development of Members both as councillors generally and to support them in fulfilling their other roles.</p>
<p>Principal F:</p>	<p>Managing Risks</p> <p>The Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management functions plays an important role in helping the organisation deliver its strategic objectives by objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and the management of risks; and providing an objective and evidence-based opinion on governance, risk management and internal control.</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p>Strategically, the Council's Principal Risk Report continues to be reported to DMTs, CMT and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee bi-annually. The Principal Risk Report is written in conjunction with risk leads across the Council. Operationally, risk management continues to be embedded through service-level risk management workshops, targeted training sessions and ongoing support to individual projects and initiatives.</p> <p>The Council's Principal Risk Report is reviewed bi-annually and updated annually. Updates are presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. The process is led by the Council's Risk Manager and Head of Internal Audit, in consultation with risk owners, DMTs and CMT. The Principal Risk Report articulates the causes and consequences of principal risks, alongside a summary of controls. Controls are articulated in order to assess whether risks are being effectively managed.</p> <p>The work of Internal Audit, in accordance with their Annual Audit Plans, continues to be directed towards the key risk areas as identified within the Principal Risk Report. The work of Internal Audit seeks to provide assurance to the Executive Director Corporate Services, who is the statutory Chief Financial Officer (known as the Section 151 Officer); management; and Members that the Council complies with relevant laws, regulations, internal policies and procedures. Internal Audit provides bi-annual updates on delivery of the audit plan to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p> <p>Financial Management</p> <p>The financial management of the Council is organised through a wide range of well-established processes and procedures, which deliver strong financial control arrangements. The Council has in place robust budget planning and monitoring processes, supported by the Council's comprehensive Financial Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which are reviewed and updated, as necessary. Information is reported to senior officers quarterly, and to Cabinet at least twice a year in line with the Council's financial standing orders.</p> <p>The Council operates a monthly revenue budget monitoring system, forecasts are formally reported to DMTs and CMT on a quarterly basis with a process to capture significant variances and movements between quarters. Forecast information is also reported to Members alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) updates (see December 2021 update here). When an overspend is reported, directorates take active steps to bring down the forecast overspend. As part of its regular monitoring processes, the Council continues to monitor this financial position and undertake the necessary remedial work to address any forecast under or overspends.</p> <p>Other features of the financial control environment include a consolidated corporate scheme of delegation, which was last reviewed and reissued in September 2016, and guidelines for budget setting and final accounts, which are reviewed annually.</p> <p>In 2020/21, the Council has continued to embed the new integrated HR, Finance and Procurement system, Oracle. The payroll module, the final element of implementation, went live in January 2021. Oracle represents a key part of the Council's digital transformation under the Smarter Working Programme and provides tighter integration of both processes and data across our HR and Finance systems.</p> <p>Managing Performance</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>Performance management is considered through a range of review mechanisms; including external inspection bodies, annual reports for some service areas, and the detailed reporting of performance indicators to DMTs, CMT, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The Council put in reporting mechanisms to monitor the impact of the pandemic on communities and the organisation as part of the emergency management response. Reporting on new work programmes, including Covid response and supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, has been absorbed into our organisational operational and performance reporting.</p> <p>Cabinet Members are provided with regular insight and data updates as part of weekly CMT/Cabinet meetings. A quarterly performance report is taken to all scrutiny committees for consideration and discussion. In line with the reflections and recommendations of the Peer Review the Council is continuing to develop its approach to reporting impact and progress in delivering services and organisational priorities.</p> <p>Scrutiny</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A statutory scrutiny officer has been appointed at an appropriately senior level – the Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design– and all scrutiny committees receive appropriate officer support from corporate strategy, committee services and relevant service departments.</p> <p>The Council, as part of its wider ongoing review of its democratic mechanisms, looked at scrutiny and possible improvements in its functioning. As part of this, initial consultation with Chairs of Scrutiny Committees was undertaken in January 2019, where it was determined that further work was required regarding the proposals. This has been delayed by the resource demands of the Covid-19 pandemic but is expected to resume imminently.</p> <p>Anti-Fraud and Corruption</p>

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>The Council employs a robust anti-fraud approach, which is consistent with best practice defined by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud; National Fraud Strategy – ‘Fighting Fraud Locally’; and the Institute of Counter Fraud Specialists (ICFS) Code of Practice. The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy incorporates the Council's whistleblowing guidance and fraud response plan, and promotes a zero tolerance approach to fraud. Officers and Members are able to access this document on the intranet and it is also publicly available on the Council's website. The Council's whistleblowing policy, which forms part of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, provides a mechanism for suspected fraud, including breaches of law, procedure or policy, to be confidentially reported.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management has overall responsibility for anti-fraud related activity and reports outcomes from the Council's Anti-fraud and Investigations Team and Housing Investigations teams bi-annually to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. Completed anti-fraud work in 2021/22 produced reports with recommendations to strengthen controls and further mitigate fraud risk. An annual counter-fraud report was presented to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee June 2022.</p> <p>All officers are also required to complete online learning on fraud awareness, which forms part of the Council's suite of mandatory learning modules.</p>
<p>Principal G:</p> <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p>	<p>The Council believes in transparency and residents have a right to see what is going on and to hold the Council to account. The Camden Council Open Data Open Data Portal and the Open Data Charter are published on the Council's website, and are key mechanisms for meeting the requirements of the government's Transparency Code. In 2022 the Council published a Citizen Data Charter developed with residents and stakeholders in the Borough on the use of data to benefit communities</p> <p>Council meetings are also open to the public; however exceptions are made for matters that require confidentiality. The time, date and location of public meetings are displayed on the Council's website. The Camden Plan commits the Council to further opening up the Council and bringing residents closer to democratic and strategic leaders, for example through the introduction of themed Council debates.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The following information is reported annually to Members and is available on the Council's website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance in delivering the Council's priorities; ▪ Statement of Accounts; ▪ Annual Internal Audit Report;

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Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Annual External Audit Letter; and▪ Annual Governance Statement. <p>Internal Audit provides bi-annual updates on delivery of the audit plan to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Council has a single corporate complaints policy. The Council's aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and simply as possible and initially this is done informally. If a complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily then a formal procedure is followed. This is a two-stage process. Complainants who remain dissatisfied with how the Council has dealt with a complaint can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman (HO).</p>