



# Annual Governance Statement

London Borough of Camden • 2025/26

# Executive Summary

The Council continues to operate in an exceptionally challenging financial environment. High inflation and the ongoing Cost of Living crisis have placed unprecedented pressure on residents, businesses, and public services, with Camden at the forefront of responding to this emergency.

These recent pressures come on top of more than a decade of real-terms reductions in Government funding, rising demand for services, increasingly complex needs, and an ageing population. Demand-driven areas such as homelessness and Children's Social Care have seen significant growth, creating unprecedented financial pressures on local authorities, with London boroughs collectively spending £5.5 million per day on homelessness in 2024/25.

Since 2010, the Council has delivered around £220 million in savings, and the cumulative impact of these reductions remains substantial. The Government's first multi-year financial settlement in ten years provides welcome stability, supporting the Council's planning through its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The current MTFS, agreed in 2023, set out a framework to address a projected £40 million deficit by 2025/26.

Local government finances continue to remain under increasing pressure. We are not in the same position as some other Councils, but our situation is exceptionally challenging. This is because of the cumulative impact of a range of unprecedented pressures, including rising cases of and temporary accommodation costs, rising social care costs, increased demand to support children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) – on top of rising inflation and increasing need and vulnerability in our communities.

To respond to this unprecedented financial pressure, Camden will need to save £85m to £90m by 2027-30 via the next Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2027–2030 to maintain financial resilience.

Despite these pressures, Camden remains committed to delivering the ambitions of *We Make Camden* and *The Way We Work*.

To achieve these ambitions, the Council recognises that it must have a solid foundation of good governance in place to ensure that it is taking appropriate action in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner, to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for residents.

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.

The Council's code of conduct requires employees to comply with the Nolan Principles of Public Life. Furthermore, in accordance with best practice guidance, the self-assessment and annual governance review process has been undertaken in an open and honest manner, with due regard to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

Building on Lord Nolan's Committee on Standards of Public Life (1995), which sets out the seven principles of public life, the Standards Board for England recommended the following ten principles, adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2001 in Camden's constitution:

- **Selflessness:** Members should act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

- **Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions openly and transparently. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Openness:** Information should be shared with the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons to withhold it.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.
- **Respect for Others:** Holders of public office should promote equality by not discriminating against any person and by treating people with respect regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.
- **Duty to uphold the law:** Holders of public office should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.
- **Stewardship:** Holders of public office should do whatever they can to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

The review considered the Council's performance across all its activities. In summary, this Annual Governance Statement (AGS) indicates that the Council's governance arrangements are operating effectively and reflect a strong commitment to ethical conduct and public accountability. This position is supported by the Head of Internal Audit's 2025/26 moderate assurance opinion, confirming that systems of internal control, risk management and governance are generally sound, with some areas for improvement.

For clarity, the assurance terms used in this Statement follow recognised governance and internal audit conventions. Descriptors such as adequate and moderate assurance represent positive levels of assurance within a defined sector-wide scale. Further detail on the Internal Audit opinion is provided in Section 3: Review of Effectiveness.

A key element of the annual governance review process is to identify any significant internal control issues. The Council has adopted the approach recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which specifies criteria that would make an issue significant – see Section 4 Significant Governance Issues for more detail.

The AGS concludes that the Council had effective governance arrangements in place for the 2025/26 year. Notably, key changes to governance arrangements are summarised in Section 3: Review of Effectiveness.

The following areas have been highlighted and, in line with good governance arrangements, will be monitored during the year ahead for any issues:

- Delivering Council services in line with the community priorities of We Make Camden;
- Developing and implementing an Outcomes and Assurance Framework, aligned to We Make Camden;
- Continuing to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through the better use of customer data;

- Developing and delivering on the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Continuing to work with London Councils as part of any future Fair Funding Reviews;
- Developing and delivering of the next iteration of the Council's General Fund Capital Strategy;
- Developing a refreshed financial strategy for the Housing Revenue Account; and
- Continuing to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.

Below we have summarised key updates to investigations that took place in 2025-26:

### **Housing Ombudsman Special Investigation:**

The Housing Ombudsman carried out a special investigation into Camden's handling of landlord complaints, including repairs and anti-social behaviour, beginning in November 2023 and reporting in November 2024. Many of the issues identified had already been addressed by the Council before publication, which the Ombudsman acknowledged, and the 2024-25 Annual Governance Statement reflected this as an area of improvement. The Council submitted its final action plan in April 2025. These can be found in the link [here](#).

At a follow-up meeting on 12 July 2025, attended by the Borough Solicitor and the appointed Councillor for the Housing Ombudsman, the Ombudsman confirmed it was satisfied with the Council's progress and formally closed the investigation. The Council successfully met all 13 recommendations arising from the special investigation. While some actions remain in progress, the Ombudsman recognised the Council's continued efforts to embed meaningful change and will now move to routine monitoring of casework data. As a result, this is no longer considered a governance improvement area.

### **Corporate Peer Challenge**

In November 2025, Camden undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge led by the Chief Executive of Hackney Council and the Leader of Milton Keynes City Council, supported by peers from other local authorities and the Local Government Association. The review concluded that Camden is a well-run, ambitious and values-led council, with strong leadership, a distinctive culture and high-performing services operating in a challenging financial and demand environment. Key strengths included stable leadership, a collaborative culture, effective partnership working, strong service performance and robust financial management. Areas for improvement included strengthening the link between priorities and measurable outcomes, improving the use of data, addressing financial pressures and adopting a more consistent approach to inclusive growth. Housing affordability and gaps between strategy and delivery were also highlighted. The full Peer Challenge report can be found [here](#).

### **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Youth justice Work Inspection at Camden**

In April 2025, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook an inspection of youth justice work with children and victims in Camden. The findings published in June 2025 confirmed that Camden Youth Justice Service (YJS) received an overall rating of 'Outstanding', the highest possible rating, and the first youth justice service nationally to achieve an outstanding rating under a new inspection framework launched in January 2025. Camden received an outstanding rating across three criteria relating to work with children and a 'good' rating for work with victims.

The inspection found that Camden YJS has an authentic culture of care and innovation for the children, families, and victims it works with, and highlighted that the service is supported by a strong management board that has ensured the needs of YJS children and families are prioritised across the partnership. It found that YJS senior leaders are aspirational and tenacious, and that this is combined with a highly skilled and well-supported operational staff team.

Inspectors made four recommendations as to how Camden YJS, Camden YJS Management Board and The Probation Service could improve services for children in contact with the youth justice system in Camden. These focused on implementing a partnership victim strategy, improving the collation and analysis of victim feedback, enhancing the borough-wide victim support offer, and improving transitions for children to adult services.

Work to address these areas has been built into the refreshed Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 2028.

### **Department for Health and Social Care Public Health Grant inspection**

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced an additional audit in respect of the Public Health Grant (PHG) at the end of 2025. The audit was focused on the 2024/25 PHG outturn and the measurement of its impact at each local authority. The feedback from the audit has not yet been published, but the process has helped us to review the range of controls in place between Health and Wellbeing (HWB) and finance for assuring PH Grant. These controls include a more detailed review of the use of PHG outside the HWB department and will also support the preparations for the peer review anticipated in Q2 2026/27.

### **Greater London Authority (GLA) Audit**

For the Community Investment Programme (CIP), the last GLA audit took place in July 2025 and focused on schemes that received GLA grant and achieved practical completion in 2023/24.

The auditor found two high level (red) breaches, one medium level (amber) breach and four low level (green) breaches. There are also eight findings of 'no breach'. The high-level breaches relate to start on site (SoS) claim submitted ahead of site mobilisation in the North Villas project, and failure to meet a funding requirement relating to building safety standards in the Highgate Newtown project. The medium level breach relates to incorrect unit details submitted on GLA's Open Project System (OPS). The four low level breaches relate to scheme document omissions, inaccurate unit and cost details on OPS, and missing monitoring information to Clearing House.

The GLA recommends that copies of all relevant correspondence with the GLA are retained on project files and made available for review during the compliance audit. This practice ensures alignment with audit requirements and helps maintain proper documentation for future reviews. These recommendations are being actioned and dealt with by the CIP team.

The Council proposes over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance its governance arrangements, and an action plan has been included in Section 4 Significant Governance Issues 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

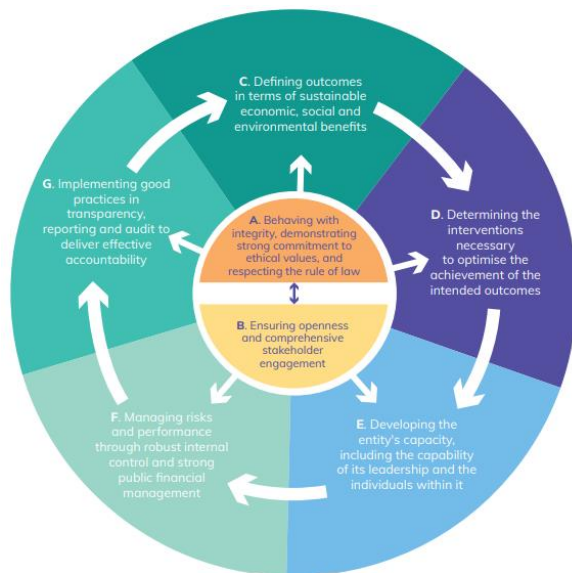
## Introduction

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.

The framework is designed to help local authorities develop and implement high standards of governance, to ensure that:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and priorities;
- there is sound and inclusive decision-making; and
- there is accountability for the use of resources to achieve desired outcomes for residents and communities.

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**

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

The AGS has been structured to provide an update against the following areas, Part A (London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement) and Part B (Summary of the Council's Governance Framework CIPFA/SOLACE Principles).

**Part A: London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement is split into four sections outlined below:**

- **Section 1: 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 2: Key elements of the Council's governance arrangements for 2025/26** – provides a summary of the key elements and highlights of the Council's governance arrangements for the year ending 31 March 2026;
- **Section 3: 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 4: Significant Governance Issues** – provides a summary of any significant and/or general governance issues that have been highlighted and will be monitored during the year ahead.

**Part B: Summary of the Council's CIPFA/SOLACE Principles on Governance outlines the following:**

- Standard elements of the Council's governance arrangements
- How the Council has applied the principles of good governance as set out within the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework.

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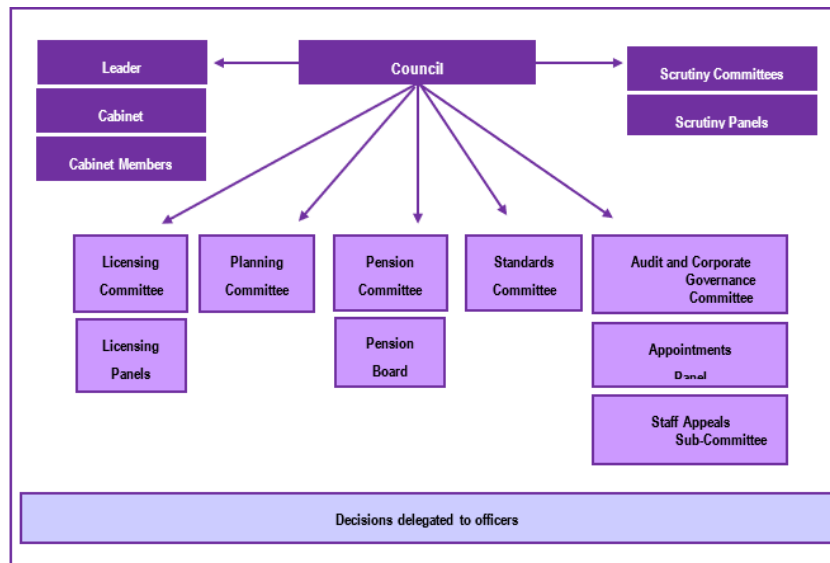
**Part A London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement**

# Section 1: Camden's Governance Framework

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.

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 include 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.

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.



**Figure 2 – Camden Decision-making Framework**

A key feature of the Council's governance framework is the Council's written [Constitution](#), which sets out in detail the framework in which the Council operates. It defines and documents the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and chief officer functions, and sets out procedures for joint arrangements and responsibilities for partnership arrangements. It also sets out how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Another significant and integral aspect of the Council's governance framework is its system of internal control, which is designed in accordance with the Council's key rules and procedures, including the Constitution, Code of Conduct, and Financial Scheme of Delegation. The system of internal control is intended to identify and prioritise the risks that threaten the achievement of the Council's strategic aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control cannot eliminate all risk of failure, and is designed to provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance on the effectiveness of the controls and processes in place to mitigate key risks.

The Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of its governance framework throughout the year, to streamline and improve its processes and ensure that these arrangements remain effective both now and into the future. This process is informed by senior leadership and management, corporate oversight functions (including statutory officers), Internal Audit, External Audit, and other review agencies.

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

## Section 2: Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework for 2025/26

This section of the statement provides a summary of the highlights of the Council's governance for the year ending 31 March 2026 (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 continues to deliver and achieve the desired outcomes for Camden residents and communities. Actions taken to address the issues identified within the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement are also included in the text below.

### Key roles and Subsidiaries

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

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

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 2025/26 until his appointment as Chief Executive Officer in July 2025. Following that appointment, the role of Chief Financial Officer resides with the Director of Finance. 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

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

## Role of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

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

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

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.

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

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

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 coordinate 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.

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 the 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

## Section 3: Review of Effectiveness

Camden's Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for putting in place adequate governance arrangements and effective systems of internal control. The Council uses several ways to review and assess the effectiveness of governance arrangements, as set out below.

The Council undertakes a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework in accordance with best practice advice, as published by CIPFA/SOLACE, in meeting the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015). This incorporates the independent findings from both the External Auditor and Internal Audit, as well as annual self-assessments conducted by each Executive Directorate.

The self-assessment takes account of the methods employed by the Council in providing assurance on the governance framework. Information used includes:

- Local Management Information Systems;
- Interim External Audit outcomes;
- Internal Audit outcomes;
- Scrutiny arrangements;
- Audit and Corporate Governance committee reports;
- Reports from inspectorates;

- Performance information;
- Risk management arrangements; and
- Information governance arrangements

## External Audit

Camden, like many local authorities, has experienced significant delays with the audit of accounts over the past four years. In response to the national issue of outstanding audits, the government has acted – setting out as a three-stage process to address the backlog, with those stages being 1) Reset, 2) Recovery and 3) Reform. The immediate focus has been on incorporating backstop dates in regulation, by which point councils must report accounts, with disclaimed or modified audit opinions where audits are incomplete.

The government has laid before Parliament the amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that implement the revised proposals for backstop dates in relation to outstanding audits via the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which came into force on 30th September 2024 ('the Amending Regulations').

The audits of Camden's 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 financial statements have been signed off with unqualified opinions. Given the delays in previous years, there was insufficient time to conduct a full audit of the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Council accounts prior to the backstop dates. As such, the external auditor Forvis Mazars has issued a disclaimed opinion on the Council accounts for 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, the audit of the Pension Fund accounts being more straightforward, Forvis Mazars completed a full audit for 2023/24. Due to receiving a disclaimed audit in 2022/23, as expected, the auditor was unable to gain sufficient assurance on the prior year comparator data, and as such has issued a qualified opinion in 2023/24.

For 2024/25, Forvis Mazars has been able to undertake a full audit of the Council's accounts, but capacity constraints prevented retrospective testing of balances from the disclaimed years. As a result, the 2024/25 Council accounts received a disclaimed opinion. The Pension Fund audit for 2024/25 was also completed in full, and the auditor issued an unqualified opinion for 2024/25, as the impact of the disclaimed year has now been fully resolved.

Council audit opinions are expected to follow the same trajectory over time, though recovery will take longer due to the complexity of rebuilding assurance on reserve balances.

In instances where a local authority has received a disclaimed opinion, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) and Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) have stated it should be made clear that local authorities should not be adversely judged that such an opinion has been issued. In plain terms, a disclaimer means that they have been unable to form an opinion. In this instance, the reason for this will be the limitation of scope imposed by statute (not by the local authority).

Forvis Mazars will be issuing their Audit Strategy for the 2025-26 financial statements in June 2026 for the pension fund and the main council accounts. In their External Audit Strategy for 2025/26 Forvis Mazars have stated that they plan to conduct a full audit on both the Council and Pension Fund. Forvis Mazars in their 2025-26 external audit strategy have set out a provisional timetable for rebuilding assurance on the Council's accounts, outlining that it would take a minimum of two years to do so, before which assurances can be fully rebuilt.

Given the strong progress made on the accounts resolving the backlog, and with no outstanding audits, the Council does not view the accounts as a serious governance issue as in previous annual governance statements. It now views the accounts as an area of improvement.

## Value for money

The Council has completed its value for money audit for 2024-25 and will perform its audit on value for money on 2025-26 after the publication of draft 2025-26 financial statements on the 30th June 2026 statutory deadline.

In 2024-25, Forvis Mazars did not find any significant weaknesses in the Council's ability to secure value for money – economy, efficiency and effectiveness. For more information, please see the [Auditor's Annual Report for 2024-25](#).

## Internal Audit

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 2025/26 plan was directed towards the key risk areas as identified within the Principal Risk Report.

The effectiveness of the Council's risk management framework is regularly reviewed against industry standards and best practice. This has resulted in continuous improvement to the Council's risk management framework. In 2025/26, risk management oversight by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee continued to be strengthened by the presentation of deep dives on individual principal risks. The Council's risk management framework has also been updated and a risk management e-learning module was rolled out.

The 2025/26 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.

The outcomes of internal audit activity are included 2025-26 Internal Audit Annual Report. In addition to the outcomes of the 2025-26 audit plan, in reaching the Head of Internal Audit's opinion (HIA), the following governance arrangements were also considered:

1. The Council's risk awareness and risk culture had further matured in 2025-26. Risk deep dives have been presented to the Committee. There was also a continued awareness of principal risks and a good level of implementation of actions designed to mitigate principal risks;
2. There was a willingness on the part of management to proactively seek Internal Audit advice in relation to risk and control design outside of the delivery of the audit plan. This was evidenced by the large number of reviews the senior leadership and service management have requested outside of the 2025-26 audit plan;
3. The HIA opinion is also informed by the wider sources of assurance as listed within the governance self-assessment, which will support the annual governance statement.

The implementation of audit recommendations were tracked and monitored by Internal Audit using an open recommendation tracker. Audit recommendations made in 2025/26 are scheduled for follow-up to ensure that management action has been implemented within agreed timescales. This will provide senior management and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee with assurance that control enhancements have been made following Internal Audit reviews.

The wider context of this AGS indicates the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall governance arrangements in place. Per CIPFAs Public Sector application note which supports the Global Internal Audit Standards, the HIA must prepare such an overall conclusion. This overall conclusion must encompass governance, risk management and control

Regarding the annual opinion, the HIA is satisfied that the work undertaken by the audit function during 2025/26 has enabled the HIA to form a reasonable conclusion on the Council's control framework, risk management and governance arrangements. For the year ended 31st March 2026, the HIA has provided a **'Moderate assurance'** opinion; indicating that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall arrangements for the Council's systems of internal control, risk management and governance are adequate, with some improvement required. Weaknesses identified during individual audits and investigations are not significant, in aggregate, to the system of internal control. Although some high risk rated recommendations were made in individual audit reviews, these were broadly isolated to specific systems or processes. None of the individual audit reviews had an overall classification of critical risk. A detailed HIA opinion has been included in the Council's 2025/26 Internal Audit Annual Report which will be presented to the ACGC in July 2026.

## Management Self-Assessment

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.

In addition to the self-assessment referred to above, as part of the AGS production process, each directorate is asked to complete an annual self-assessment. This directorate level self-assessment presents the Directorate's view of its governance arrangements. Directorate self-assessments serve a dual purpose, in that they provided assurance surrounding the governance arrangements in place for 2025/26, and also provided an opportunity for senior management to reflect on good governance requirements.

In 2025/26, the Council's directorates (Children and Learning, Adults and Health, Homes and Communities, Investment, Place and Opportunity, and Corporate Services) completed self-assessments to evaluate governance arrangements and identify significant changes, significant governance issues and areas for improvement.

The table below summarises the key mechanisms in place for monitoring the effectiveness of governance arrangements in each directorate and any directorate arm's length arrangements such as Council subsidiaries and joint ventures. It also provides commentary on the directorate's assessment of the effectiveness of those arrangements in 2025/26.

Directorate	Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of governance	Directorate's overall assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for 2025/26
<b>Children and Learning</b>	<p>The effectiveness of governance arrangements across the directorate is monitored through several key mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Directorate management Team (DMT) and divisional Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings</li> <li>• Quarterly safeguarding reports to CMT.</li> <li>• Fortnightly Cabinet Member Briefings and Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.</li> <li>• Regular performance reporting (Practice &amp; Performance Meetings; QA Executive Board)</li> <li>• Annual Internal Audit programme identifies governance or control weaknesses, with actions implemented to strengthen assurance.</li> <li>• Quarterly reporting against service plans</li> <li>• Schools Forum and High Needs Sub Group to provide statutory oversight of DSG allocations, school funding decisions and High Needs Block spend.</li> </ul> <p>The council monitors the mechanism of Camden Learning (a private company it set up in 2017 as a joint venture between local schools and the council to deliver school improvement work) through a bi-monthly Board to provide oversight of school improvement work, ensuring it is aligned to the Education Strategy</p>	<p>The Children and Learning Directorate has good governance arrangements in place with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of key controls in place, which are overseen at a senior level and with evidence of their operations.</li> <li>• Good engagement between officers and elected Members and evidence of regular challenge and oversight.</li> <li>• A focus on evidence-based decision-making, and this is an area of continuing development with respect to some key strategic priorities such as SEND.</li> <li>• Capacity and capability is regularly assessed and deployed to areas of highest priority and need.</li> <li>• A culture of ongoing review and self-assessment, and continuous improvement is embedded in business-as-usual service planning</li> </ul>
<b>Adults and Health</b>	<p>Adult Social Care monitors the effectiveness of its governance arrangements through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Senior Management Team (SMT) and Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings</li> <li>• Monthly joint DMT meetings across Supporting People</li> <li>• Six-weekly Commissioning and Governance Group meetings</li> <li>• Up-to-date Business Continuity Plans and Risk Registers</li> <li>• Regular financial monitoring with Finance</li> <li>• Ongoing HR monitoring</li> <li>• Implementation of recommendations from annual internal audits</li> </ul>	<p>The Adults and Health Directorate continues to demonstrate effective governance, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong links to corporate governance and decision-making</li> <li>• Clear delegation, accountability and collaborative working across the Council and partners</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of external changes and risks through SMT and active mitigation</li> <li>• Effective information flow between the Directorate and the corporate centre</li> </ul>

Directorate	Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of governance	Directorate's overall assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for 2025/26
<b>Adults and Health Continued</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct reporting from the DASS to the Chief Executive and membership of CMT</li> <li>• Quarterly safeguarding updates to the Chief Executive and Leader</li> <li>• Regular oversight through 1:1 meetings between the DASS and senior ASC leaders</li> <li>• Cross-department assurance provided by the Director of Public Health through attendance at both Adults and Health and Children and Learning Directorate Management Teams</li> <li>• Strategy and policy shaped by inspections, audits and wider system developments, aligned with corporate processes</li> </ul>
<b>Investment, Place and Opportunity</b>	<p>Investment, Place and Opportunity monitors the effectiveness of its governance arrangements via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge from the Executive Director, DMT and the Corporate Management Team (CMT)</li> <li>• Internal Audit investigations, reports and follow-up reports</li> <li>• Quarterly financial monitoring reports and performance reports to DMT and CMT</li> <li>• Oversight of the Culture &amp; Environment and Housing Scrutiny Committees, the Audit &amp; Corporate Governance Committee and the Housing District Management Committees, Community Safety Partnership Board</li> </ul>	<p>The Investment, Place and Opportunity Directorate has good governance arrangements in place with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls are in place and operating in line with management expectations.</li> <li>• Evidence is available to validate that controls are operational, as shown at various performance discussions at DMT/SMT and other levels, such as CIP ED Board. These allow for good oversight and timely challenge.</li> <li>• The directorate has a good understand of the risks per area and, whilst work now is ongoing to enhance data capacity across the directorate, data and sufficient information is used in decision making.</li> <li>• Leadership and officers at all levels are committed to continuous improvement</li> </ul>

Directorate	Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of governance	Directorate's overall assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for 2025/26
<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<p>Homes and Communities monitors the effectiveness of its governance arrangements via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge from the Executive Director, DMT and the Corporate Management Team (CMT)</li> <li>• Internal Audit investigations, reports and follow-up reports</li> <li>• Quarterly financial monitoring reports and performance reports to DMT and CMT</li> <li>• Quarterly compliance monitoring to Housing Safety &amp; Regulatory Board and the Cabinet Member's Portfolio meeting</li> <li>• Monthly KPI performance reporting to SMTs, the Housing Safety and Regulatory Board and the Cabinet Member's Portfolio meeting</li> <li>• Quarterly meeting of the Housing &amp; Building Safety Panel – a resident, councillor and independent expert committee overseeing reporting on safety and compliance issues</li> <li>• Oversight of the Culture &amp; Environment and Housing Scrutiny Committees, the Audit &amp; Corporate Governance Committee and the resident led Housing District Management Committees</li> </ul> <p>For our Tenant Management Organisations, regular reporting goes to the Housing Safety &amp; Regulatory Board and the Cabinet Member's Portfolio. In addition regular meetings are held with each TMO, and an annual meeting for all</p>	<p>Overall, governance effectiveness across Housing and Property-related services shows mixed performance, with improvement underway in key areas.</p> <p><b>Property Management &amp; Housing Services – Requiring Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and oversight have strengthened significantly since the 2023 voluntary undertaking.</li> <li>• Compliance with Consumer Standards has improved, with key gaps closed (e.g., stock condition survey, policies and procedures).</li> <li>• Governance of TMOs is being enhanced following a formal review.</li> <li>• Ongoing monitoring of the Housing Investment Strategy ensures focus on addressing the service's funding gap.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homelessness &amp; Temporary Accommodation – Poor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment on balance, reflecting that on the whole existing governance structures have struggled to keep pace with rapid increases in demand.</li> <li>• A refocused Transformation Programme and a new governance board for housing need, TA and homelessness are being established.</li> <li>• A new division (Communities &amp; Housing Support) has been created to strengthen leadership and accountability.</li> <li>• New financial control arrangements for nightly paid accommodation are being developed.</li> <li>• Strengthening governance, operational processes, controls and information flows remains a critical priority for the year ahead.</li> </ul>

Directorate	Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of governance	Directorate's overall assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for 2025/26
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<p>Corporate Services monitors the effectiveness of its governance arrangements via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporate Management Team (CMT):</b> Oversees major governance and strategic decisions for the organisation.</li> <li>• <b>Corporate Services Directorate Management Team:</b> Meets weekly to set priorities, make decisions and oversee service delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Financial Strategy Group:</b> Monthly cross-functional group, chaired by the Director of Finance, developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</li> <li>• <b>MTFS Leadership Group:</b> Weekly group chaired by the Executive Director for Corporate Services, coordinating day-to-day MTFS development.</li> <li>• <b>Insight, Learning and Impact Report:</b> Twice-yearly report to Scrutiny Committees (Q2 and Q4) combining performance data with service insights to support transparency and evidence-based decisions.</li> <li>• <b>Member Scrutiny:</b> Resources &amp; Corporate Performance Committee and Audit &amp; Corporate Governance Committee scrutinise finance, performance, governance, audit and risk.</li> <li>• <b>Officer Constitutional Review Group:</b> Convenes as needed to review governance issues in the constitution; chaired by the Borough Solicitor.</li> <li>• <b>Annual State of the Borough Report:</b> Provides a shared evidence base on resident outcomes aligned to the Council's missions and strategy.</li> <li>• <b>Central Complaints Monitoring:</b> Weekly reporting to the Chief Executive and Executive Directors on complaint progress and response times.</li> <li>• <b>Community Investment Programme Executive Directors' Board:</b> Reviews and approves capital proposals within delegated authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Overall, self-assessment is considered good with a clear commitment to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Key controls are in place and operating in line with expectations, with evidence available to support their effectiveness. During the period, no material control failings have been identified. There are appropriate oversight and challenge from those charged with governance, supported by positive working relationships between Members and officers. Decision-making is informed by good quality data and information, and there's sufficient capacity and capability in critical areas alongside a sound understanding of risk and risk management.</p>

The table below summaries the key changes in governance arrangements within each directorate in 2025/26 as well as governance changes expected in future years:

Directorate	Key Governance Changes in 2025	Future expected Governance changes
<p><b>Children and Learning</b></p>	<p>In April 2025, Camden established the National Reform Strategic Board to lead the partnership response to national Children’s Social Care reforms, aligning local decisions with DfE guidance. This is supported by a bi-weekly Operational Board overseeing day-to-day delivery.</p> <p>In September 2025, the School Sufficiency Board was created to manage falling school rolls and rising SEND demand, bringing together Directors from across the Council.</p> <p>In early Autumn 2025, a strategic group was convened to coordinate the Council’s response to Operation Lanark, a complex Metropolitan Police investigation involving a private nursery. The group oversaw support for affected families and staff and initiated a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR). By Spring 2026, it evolved into the LCSPR oversight group.</p> <p>In October 2025, the Corporate Parenting Board refreshed its Terms of Reference to align with the new Corporate Parenting Strategy and national recommendations, strengthening participation and impact. Two care-experienced young people, who co-chair the Children in Care Council, joined as permanent Board members.</p> <p>In March 2026, the Directorate strengthened strategic leadership for SEND and Inclusion by replacing the SEND Operational Group with a SEND Programme Board. This reflected the need for greater oversight in preparation for SEND inspection, national reform, and in response to the escalation of SEND funding risk to the corporate principal risk register.</p>	<p>Following the May 2026 local elections, it is possible that there will be some changes to planned governance structures and arrangements, particularly where those are led or steered by elected Members, the nature or impact of this isn’t yet known.</p> <p>Education improvement services in Camden are contracted to Camden Learning, which is overseen by a Board of Directors. The recommissioning of the contract was initiated in 25/26, and it is possible that governance structures will change once it is finalised.</p> <p>From 2026/27, school sufficiency activity will be embedded as core business within the directorate. Given the ongoing pressures of falling rolls and surplus places across the borough, a Strong and Sustainable Schools Development Group will be established to replace the existing group which will utilise existing governance to help inform decision making to manage surplus places.</p>
<p><b>Adults and Health</b></p>	<p>The Supporting People Connecting Communities (SPCC) Programme Steering Group oversaw programme management and operational delivery of the SPCC ambitions and the Adult Social Care (ASC) Programme until it was formally stood down at the end of 2025. ASC projects and programmes now report directly to the ASC Senior Management Team and the Adults and Health Directorate Management Team.</p>	<p>Earlier this year, it was announced that the Local Government Association (LGA) will be coordinating a new public health improvement programme for councils in England. This programme aims to maximise public health benefits from wider local authority spending and the Local Authority Public Health Grant. It will help ensure that councils are better supported to deliver on their statutory duties and public health</p>

Directorate	Key Governance Changes in 2025	Future expected Governance changes
<p><b>Adults and Health Continued</b></p>	<p>In preparation for the new CQC inspection regime, ASC is establishing clearer lines of accountability and strengthened self-assessment processes, mirroring the approach used in Children and Learning for Ofsted readiness. This will support continuous improvement and ensure Camden is well-prepared for future inspections.</p> <p>From 1 April 2026, Camden became part of the newly formed NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board, which now covers 4.5 million residents across 13 boroughs, following the merger of the former North Central London and North West London ICBs.</p> <p>In 2025/26, the Drug and Alcohol Partnership Group was established to bring together partners across the treatment system to address shared challenges related to drug and alcohol use in Camden. Meeting quarterly and chaired by the Head of Service for Drugs, Alcohol and Sexual Health, the group will oversee the impact of Camden's ring-fenced drug and alcohol funding and report to the Senior Management Team.</p> <p>Strategic Co-Production Board is currently developing – with residents and individual who draw on care – a Making it Real Board within Adult Social Care. This board will be an overarching strategic partnership with residents who draw from adult social care and is anticipated to focus on building long-term plans and strategies alongside officers, in equal partnership. It is anticipated that the Strategic Co-Production Board will be established in Autumn 2026.</p>	<p>outcome priorities, including those set out in the Local Outcomes Framework.</p> <p>Camden Council will be part of the first pilot peer reviews that take place before the wider programme begins. It is currently anticipated that Camden's public health peer review will take place in July 2026. The findings from this review, once published, will then be implemented to further improve Camden's approach to improving the health and wellbeing of its residents.</p>
<p><b>Investment, Place and Opportunity</b></p>	<p>The new Investment, Place and Opportunity directorate was created when the previous Executive Director Supporting Communities left the organisation at the end of 2025.</p> <p>The new directorate is led by David Burns as Executive Director. It is made of four divisions: Environment and Sustainability, Recreation and Public Safety, Economy, Regeneration and Investment, and Development.</p> <p>DMT meets weekly with directors, the head of strategy for IPO, the new finance lead and the new HR lead.</p> <p>Regular Meetings are supported by a new Business Support Manager.</p>	<p>A new Asset Management Strategy with new governance around corporate and commercial assets management will be published in 2026.</p> <p>A new Capital Strategy Board is being launched and will meet for the first time at the end of May. The board will make strategic decisions when prioritising which projects to fund. It will address any shortfalls in capital receipts to support future capital initiatives and will support delegated officer decision making by providing a structured, consistent approach to assessing and approving capital bid requests. This will ensure the council makes best use of capital assets and will help the</p>

Directorate	Key Governance Changes in 2025	Future expected Governance changes
<p><b>Investment, Place and Opportunity continued</b></p>	<p>There is also a new Senior Data Analyst role that was created to enhance the data function across the directorate.</p> <p>A joint DMT meeting with the new Housing and Communities directorate is taking place monthly for crosscutting items.</p> <p>The Council has set up two resident led decision making panels this year to make recommendations on investment decisions for the community wealth fund. The first of these was a youth panel consisting of 15 young people who lived, worked or studied in Camden. The second is the diversity panel, which consists of an online panel of 500 Camden residents and an in person panel of 50 Camden residents. The youth fund was set out to carry out Camden’s youth mission to create opportunities for young people. The diversity was set out to carry out Camden’s diversity mission to increase the diversity of people in business leadership positions in Camden. Ultimately, investment decisions as delegated by Cabinet, are signed off by the Council’s section 151 officer based on recommendations from the resident decision-making panels, legal, and the Chief Investment Officer of the Wealth Fund.</p>	<p>council allocate its limited resources effectively supporting strategic objectives.</p>
<p><b>Homes and Communities</b></p>	<p>The directorate was restructured in February 2026, separating from Supporting Communities and creating a new Executive Director for Homes &amp; Communities. The new structure brings together key housing and community functions to strengthen oversight of regulatory and financial risk and to better respond to rising demand and new statutory duties.</p> <p>A new directorate structure has been created covering Property Services, Housing Services, and the newly formed Communities &amp; Housing Support division.</p> <p>Refugee Services, Equalities, and Debt &amp; Financial Resilience have been transferred from Corporate Services to this new directorate to strengthen homelessness prevention and improve oversight of financial pressures.</p> <p>This directorate has a stronger focus on regulatory and financial risk, with a DMT now centred on housing demand pressures, homelessness, and compliance requirements.</p>	<p>A new governance board will be established to strengthen oversight of Temporary Accommodation and homelessness, providing clearer assurance to DMT and CMT. Alongside this, the directorate is developing more robust financial controls for nightly paid accommodation to improve oversight of spending and income collection.</p> <p>Phase 2 of Awaab’s Law, due in October 2026, is driving a structured programme to strengthen hazard case management, including improved triage and risk assessment, better systems and data, clearer resident pathways and strengthened governance to ensure statutory compliance.</p> <p>During 2026/27, the Council will develop a new Medium Term Financial Strategy for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. Governance will follow the Council-wide model, with DMT shaping proposals, CMT providing strategic oversight and the cross-council Financial Strategy Group</p>

Directorate	Key Governance Changes in 2025	Future expected Governance changes
<b>Homes and Communities Continued</b>	<p>The directorate is focused on the implementation of Phase 1 of Awaab's Law (October 2025), strengthen the directorate's approach managing damp and mould in line with new regulatory requirements following phase 1 of Awaab's law which came into effect in 2025.</p> <p>Foundations have been laid for further governance changes in 2026/27, including a revamped governance structure for homelessness.</p>	<p>supporting development. Additional arrangements will ensure Cabinet Members are engaged throughout.</p> <p>Given the directorate's responsibility for the HRA, statutory consultation with tenants and leaseholders will be required on any savings proposals. Bespoke governance arrangements to support this process will be developed over the coming months with senior officers and Members.</p>
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<p>In August, the Executive Director of Corporate Services became Chief Executive, triggering interim arrangements within Corporate Services during recruitment. These were revised in December, including appointing a single interim Executive Director and extending the interim Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communications. Section 151 duties remained with the Director of Finance, and line management of the Director of People and Inclusion transferred in January 2026.</p> <p>In early 2026, the Investment, Place and Opportunity Directorate was created, with some functions moving from Corporate Services and Community Partnerships realigning under Participation, Partnerships and Communications.</p> <p>A permanent Executive Director of Corporate Services was appointed in March 2026 following a member-led process, and the Director of Finance was confirmed as Section 151 Officer. The Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communications remains interim. Corporate Services now includes: Participation, Partnerships and Communications; Strategy, Design and Insight; Finance; Customer, Experience and Digital; Law and Governance; and People and Inclusion.</p> <p>As part of the Full Council meeting held each May, the report of the (Establishment of Bodies within the Constitution) was presented in May 2026, setting out proposed changes to the Constitution. The report outlined the annual requirements relating to the establishment by the Council of the bodies specified within the Constitution (available at <a href="http://www.camden.gov.uk/constitution">http://www.camden.gov.uk/constitution</a>), together with the appointment of Members to those bodies. It sought approval to establish the committee structure for the forthcoming municipal year, confirm political</p>	<p>A review of the Council's constitution is planned, although it remains at an early stage. The aim of the review is to simplify the constitution, support elected members in effective decision-making and governance and enable changes in ways of working</p>

Directorate	Key Governance Changes in 2025	Future expected Governance changes
	appointments, and ensure that governance arrangements remained up to date and effective.	

## Section 4: Significant Governance Issues

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. Indicators include:

- 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.

A governance issue that does not meet the threshold of a significant governance issue as described above is noted as an area of improvement.

The significant governance issues raised through internal self-assessments carried out by each directorate are as follows:

Item	Governance Area	Responsible officer	Target Date	Implementation update
1	<p><b>Overspends in supporting communities Housing Revenue Account and General Fund &amp; Recovery of Temporary Accommodation debtors</b></p> <p>Continuing overspend on Temporary Accommodation (TA) (£27.5m in 25/26), resulting in £18m being diverted to support the service in 2026/27 and in particular the continuing issue with income collection which affects the bad debt provision.</p>	Executive Director – Homes and Communities	Ongoing	Initial benchmarking work and data improvement on TA is showing a path to improved oversight and controls, though a continued focus will be needed to fully realise this. A new board to cover housing need, TA and homelessness is also being created to oversee the work end to end, with a broader remit than the TA taskforce and linking in increased corporate presence. Finally, early work is ongoing to reshape the Council's financial control

	<p>New accounts in arrears in 2025/26 remained a challenge, with around a 50% collection rate for those in nightly paid accommodation, totalled demonstrating process and controls still unfit for purpose. As a result, TA and homelessness has been identified as a key directorate priority.</p> <p>The Council's Housing Revenue Account also overspent in 2025/26 by £2.8m. This was primarily driven by a £9.9m overspend in Property Management due to substantial overspends on repairs and legal disrepair costs. This was offset to some degree by underspends, driven by fluctuating gas prices and improved income collection reducing the bad debt provision. These underspends are not structural (especially given the volatility in energy prices from the Iran war), whilst the largest overspends generally are. It is important that the Council clears these structural overspends as a precursor to delivering a successful Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>			<p>processes around nightly paid temporary accommodation spending and income.</p> <p>In addition to the splitting of the directorate and creation of a focused division, the Housing Transformation Board has been disbanded as of April 2026 and the programme has been revamped to focus on four areas, including Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation (plus continuing the focus on Landlord Services Compliance, Data and digital systems and Relational Practice). A paper was taken to CMT on proposed changes to governance.</p>
2	<p><b>Complaints handling process</b></p> <p>The Council continues to strengthen its complaints handling approach in response to sustained increases in demand. While response times remain important, greater emphasis is now placed on resolution and the quality of outcomes, supported by weekly reporting to the Chief Executive and Executive Directors, led by the Borough Solicitor. The annual complaints report is presented to the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee. This report can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	Executive Director – Corporate Services	Ongoing	<p>Complaints are now being dealt with below the target time for Stage 2 responses. Capacity has increased, performance has improved, and backlogs have reduced, supported by clearer escalation routes and enhanced oversight. A new case management system has improved allocation, tracking, and transparency.</p>

3	<p><b>Cyber Security</b></p> <p>The Council has adopted the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) as its core cyber security assurance model, in line with all local authority expectations. Cyber risk continues to rise in line with national trends. The November 2025 incident impacting several London boroughs underlines the importance of ongoing vigilance.</p>	Executive Director – Corporate Services	Ongoing	<p>The Chief Experience and Information Officer reviews this risk regularly, supported by ongoing testing of the Council’s cyber response. While a structured approach to cyber and data security is strengthening resilience, risk cannot be fully eliminated.</p> <p>A detailed review of the Council’s cyber security arrangements, including policies, controls and risk management processes, was considered by the Audit &amp; Corporate Governance Committee in February 2026.</p> <p>Funding and resources were approved in May 2026 to commence the Council’s transition towards a Zero Trust security architecture. This programme will expand and strengthen identity and access management, device security, network controls and monitoring capabilities across the organisation. The investment is expected to further mitigate cyber security risks and improve the Council’s resilience to evolving cyber threats.</p>
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## Areas of Improvement

In 2023/24, the Regulator of Social Housing concluded that the London Borough of Camden breached its consumer standards – details can be found [here](#). The Council provided detailed information regarding the notice to Full Council and Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2023 and entered into a voluntary undertaking (VU) with the RSH in November 2023. The VU was issued in respect of overdue fire risk assessment (FRA) actions which accrued following the cycle of FRAs undertaken post 2017, and the VU commitment is to clear all overdue actions. The Council is making good progress on these actions and meeting regularly with the RSH, who are pleased with the progress. The Council posts its progress in relation to FRA actions online each month and shares a trajectory with the RSH.

The Council’s work as of May 2026 focuses on:

- Completing the remaining overdue actions, most of which are in the capital programme.
- Ensuring the council has the necessary policies and resources to resolve some remaining difficult actions, such as no access cases or complex design cases, and has appropriate risk mitigations in place where overdue actions remain.
- Embedding the use of a new IT system to manage FRA actions and compliance metrics.

- Acting on audit findings to ensure that the council’s processes and reporting are robust.
- Ensuring the council has a strong long term view of the FRA programme, and the necessary resources to manage actions arising without falling overdue

The Council has cleared the historic backlog of accounts, but the statutory backstop dates resulted in disclaimed opinions on the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 Council accounts. Pension Fund audit opinions followed an improving trajectory over the same period—**disclaimed in 2022/23, qualified in 2023/24 and unqualified in 2024/25**. While these outcomes reflect national audit constraints rather than local failings, they mean assurance on Council reserves will take time to fully rebuild.

Forvis Mazars’ 2025/26 Audit Strategy sets out a multi-year plan to restore full assurance, with a minimum two-year period required. With no audits outstanding and strong progress made, the Council now considers audit assurance an area for improvement rather than a significant governance issue.

### Processes to foster continuous improvement at Camden

The table below highlights key areas that in accordance with good governance practices, must be closely monitored in the coming year:

Item	Governance Area	Responsible officer	Target Date	Implementation update
1	<b>Delivery of We Make Camden Priorities</b> To monitor the delivery of priorities and outcomes of We Make Camden.	Director of Strategy and Design	Ongoing	Priorities agreed by Cabinet in May 2025 with ongoing development of delivery infrastructure, including leadership, governance, resourcing mechanisms, and measurement and evaluation.
2	<b>Performance Management</b> To develop and implement an approach to performance management aligned with the mission-oriented approach articulated in We Make Camden priorities	Director of Strategy and Design	Ongoing	The Council is implementing several mechanisms to review outcomes and impact, including creating the Good Life Camden Wellbeing Index for the Borough to track progress on the delivery of We Make Camden. Quarterly Insight, Learning, and Impact reports are taken to CMT and to scrutiny committees on a bi-annual basis, which set out the key challenges that Council services are experiencing, where there are opportunities to improve and develop, and what learning has been achieved in the last quarter.

Item	Governance Area	Responsible officer	Target Date	Implementation update
3.	<p><b>Implementation of Peer Review Recommendations</b></p> <p>In November 2025, Camden undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge led by the Chief Executive of Hackney Council and the Leader of Milton Keynes City Council, supported by peers from other local authorities and the Local Government Association.</p> <p>The review concluded that Camden is a well-run, ambitious and values-led council, with strong leadership, a distinctive culture and high-performing services operating in a challenging financial and demand environment.</p>	Director of Strategy and Design	Ongoing	<p>The review identified stable leadership, a collaborative culture, effective partnership working, strong service performance and robust financial management as key strengths within Camden.</p> <p>Areas for improvement included strengthening the link between priorities and measurable outcomes, improving the use of data, addressing financial pressures and adopting a more consistent approach to inclusive growth. Housing affordability and gaps between strategy and delivery were also highlighted. The full Peer Challenge report can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
4	<p><b>Better use of customer data</b></p> <p>To continue to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through better use of customer data.</p>	Chief Data Officer	Ongoing	The Council continues to develop its approach to using data under the leadership of the Chief Data Officer. The Council has created teams of Data Analysts within the Supporting People Strategy Team and Supporting Communities Strategy Team that work with the Council's frontline services to make better use of data and support the generation of data-enabled insights and improvements
5	<p><b>New medium term financial strategy</b></p> <p>Local government finances continue to remain under increasing financial pressures. The challenges Camden faces are driven by cumulative impact of a range of unprecedented pressures, including rising cases and temporary accommodation costs, rising social care costs, increased demand to support children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) – on top of rising inflation and increasing need and vulnerability in our communities.</p>	Director of Finance (S151 officer)	On going	To respond to this unprecedented financial pressure, Camden will need to save £85m to £90m by 2027-30 via the next Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2027–2030 to maintain financial resilience.

Item	Governance Area	Responsible officer	Target Date	Implementation update
6	<p><b>General Fund Capital Strategy</b></p> <p>To develop and deliver the next iteration of the General Fund Capital Strategy.</p>	<p>Director of Finance (S151 officer)</p> <p>Head of Finance (Corporate Services)</p>	July 2025	<p>The latest iteration of the General Fund Capital Strategy will be agreed upon via the July 2025 medium-term financial strategy report.</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>
7	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account Financial Strategy</b></p> <p>To develop a refreshed HRA financial strategy, in light of the financial challenges it is facing, and to monitor the implementation of this strategy.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Supporting Communities)</p>	July 2025	<p>The latest iteration of the Housing Revenue Account Financial Strategy will be agreed upon via the July 2025 medium-term financial strategy report.</p>
8	<p><b>Community Investment Programme</b></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>	Ongoing	<p>The programme is now overseen by the Executive Director Board. Every January there is a CIP scrutiny panel to scrutinise CIP's delivery against objectives. There is an externally published CIP annual report which details performance against key delivery targets such as the number of new homes delivered.</p>



**Part B - The Council's CIPFA/SOLACE  
Principles on Governance**

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><b>Principal A:</b></p> <p>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.</p>	<p>The Council maintains a robust framework for policy and decision-making, guided by its written Constitution and the Principles of Public Life. Key documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Constitution:</b> Defines Council operations, updated regularly.</li> <li>• <b>Financial &amp; Contract Standing Orders:</b> Part of the Constitution, detailing financial and contractual procedures.</li> <li>• <b>Councillor &amp; Officers’ Code of Conduct:</b> Outlines expected behaviours, updated in 2021/22 to align with the Local Government Association Model Code.</li> <li>• <b>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy:</b> last updated June 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Whistleblowing Policy:</b> last updated June 2026.</li> <li>• <b>Complaints Policy:</b> Updated July 2024.</li> <li>• <b>Handbooks:</b> Managers’ and Members’ Handbook, Camden’s Data Charter.</li> </ul> <p>Additional policies cover HR, information management, and service-specific areas, all accessible via the Council’s Intranet. New employees are introduced to these during induction.</p> <p>The Camden Management Team ensures compliance with and sets behaviours and standards. The whistleblowing policy, part of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, complies with the 1998 Public Interest Disclosure Act. The policy encourages officers, contractors and others to report concerns without fear of retribution.</p> <p>The outcomes of whistleblowing investigations are reported to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>

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

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<p><b>Principal C:</b></p> <p>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits.</p>	<p><b>We Make Camden Plan:</b></p> <p>The "We Make Camden" plan outlines how the Council will achieve its vision for the borough,</p> <p><b>Tackling Inequalities:</b></p> <p>Financial inequality is not new to Camden and is a core priority central to our We Make Camden goals. The Council Tax Support Scheme plays a crucial role in Camden's response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, providing essential financial relief to low-income households. Currently, over 22,000 residents benefit from the Council Tax Support Scheme, with around 16,100 of them, including c5,300 pension-age claimants, receiving 100% discounts. These residents are entirely exempt from paying council tax, enabling them to allocate their limited financial resources towards other essential needs. This significant level of support ensures that the scheme remains a vital lifeline for many within Camden's diverse community.</p> <p>Our annual £2m cost of living crisis fund continues to support residents and families with essential everyday costs such as energy, food or rent. In 2025/26 it made 4,306 crisis fund payments of up to £500 to households in the borough.</p> <p><b>Climate Emergency:</b></p> <p>Tackling the climate emergency remains a key priority for Camden. In January 2026, the Council approved a new 5-year Climate Action Plan 2026-30 and in February 2026 we published our third "Climate Budget" as part of our publicly available Council Tax Setting report. The Climate budget describes the Council's investment in improving the energy efficiency of our estate as well as the scale of the financial challenge to fully decarbonise our buildings. Notable projects include full energy efficiency retrofits to Swiss Cottage, Highgate and West Hampstead libraries and Talacre Sports Centre funded by secured Government grants and the Council. A further £ 6.5 million has been secured from the Government to deliver major energy efficiency improvements to Swiss Cottage and Kentish Town Sports Centres over 2026-28. We have also trialled new forms of social financing in collaboration with the community energy group Power Up North London, which has seen solar energy systems installed on Regent High and Parliament Hill schools, cutting the schools' energy bills and providing a return on investment to community investors. Across our corporate and schools' estate, carbon dioxide emissions are now 64.5% below 2010 levels.</p> <p>The Council has also introduced a new climate risk to the Corporate Risk Register which focuses on how the Council should prepare for extreme weather events such as heat waves and surface water flooding. A report on the climate risk was considered by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in February 2026</p> <p>The Council changed its Constitution in 2022 to place a new duty on Councillors to consider and limit the environmental impact of all Council decisions and activities. Camden was the first local authority to place environmental stewardship at the heart of its Constitution and decision making. To respond to this constitutional change, officers must clearly set out in decision-making reports how the proposal has either enhanced the environment, or where damage is likely, limited the environmental impact.</p>

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<p><b>Principal D:</b> Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Determining Interventions and Optimising Outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Active Stakeholder Participation:</b> Camden Council continues to emphasise stakeholder participation, building on its "Camden 2025" vision. The Council invites residents, partners, and officers to contribute ideas and tackle challenges collaboratively. A dedicated Participation Team was established to promote a participatory culture and test innovative engagement models, ensuring residents' voices shape decision-making.</p> <p><b>Partnerships and Collaborations:</b> The Council collaborates with various organisations across sectors to deliver services and address key challenges. This includes partnerships with Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs), with a £5.4 million investment in 2025/26 in strategic partners focused on neighbourhoods and equalities. The Council also works closely with agencies to safeguard vulnerable children and adults, supported by statutory boards and multi-agency audits.</p> <p><b>Health and Social Care Integration:</b> The Council and the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (NCL CCG) are developing integrated health and social care arrangements, navigating NHS structural changes. The Health and Wellbeing Board plays a key role in promoting integration and aligning services for better outcomes.</p> <p><b>Business Intelligence and Performance Management:</b> The Council leverages business intelligence to provide data-driven insights for better decision-making. A framework is in place to improve data quality and use it to enhance service performance. Performance is regularly reviewed through inspections, annual reports, and performance indicators reported to key decision-makers.</p>

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<p><b>Principal E:</b></p> <p>Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines how Camden Council operates, detailing the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny, and chief officer functions, as well as procedures for decision-making, joint arrangements, and partnerships to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability.</p> <p>Management control is exercised through the (CMT), which establishes processes, standards of behaviour, and codes of conduct for officers. A Managers' Guide and Members' Handbook provide further guidance, with regular updates available on the Intranet and Learning and Development Hub.</p> <p>The Council supports the professional development of its Members and officers through a comprehensive learning program, including mandatory e-learning modules linked to performance reviews. Members also receive role-specific training and have access to additional learning opportunities to enhance their skills and effectiveness.</p>
<p><b>Principal F:</b></p> <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p><b>Managing Risks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit and Risk Management: These functions are crucial in assessing governance and risk management, providing objective opinions to ensure the Council meets its strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Principal Risk Report: This report updated annually and reviewed bi-annually, outlines key risks and controls, informing Internal Audit's focus areas.</li> <li>• Operational Risk Management: Embedded at service levels through workshops, training, and project support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong Financial Controls: The Council has robust processes for budget planning, monitoring, and financial management, supported by Financial Standing Orders and Regulations.</li> <li>• Oracle System: The Council has integrated HR, Finance, and Procurement through Oracle, enhancing data and process integration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing Performance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Monitoring: Performance is reviewed via external inspections, annual reports, and detailed performance indicators reported to senior management and scrutiny committees.</li> <li>• Pandemic Impact Reporting: New work programs, including pandemic responses, are integrated into regular performance reporting.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Principal F continued:</b></p> <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p><b>Scrutiny:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny Committees: Five committees review Council functions and decisions, with meetings scheduled to provide input on Cabinet reports before decisions are made.</li> <li>• Joint Scrutiny: Chairs of the committees meet to coordinate efforts, and there is a statutory scrutiny officer to support these activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Anti-Fraud and Corruption:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust Anti-Fraud Approach: The Council follows best practices for managing fraud risks, with a zero-tolerance policy outlined in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.</li> <li>• Whistleblowing: A policy is in place for confidential reporting of suspected fraud.</li> <li>• Mandatory Fraud Awareness Training: All officers must complete online fraud awareness training as part of their mandatory learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Information Security &amp; AI:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing Information Security Programme: Continued oversight by the Chief Experience and Digital Officer (CDEO) and Head of Technology, with progress monitored through a monthly Information Security Board and reported through established governance arrangements.</li> <li>• Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF): Adopted as the Council's primary cyber assurance framework, providing a structured approach to assessing cyber maturity, resilience and continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Zero Trust Architecture: Investment approved to commence implementation of a Zero Trust security model, strengthening identity, access, device and network security controls across the organisation.</li> <li>• Joiners, Movers and Leavers (JML): Review and automation of user lifecycle processes completed, improving access governance and reducing risks associated with user account management.</li> <li>• Security Compliance: Compliance maintained with key information security standards and frameworks, including PCI-DSS, PSN requirements and the NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT).</li> <li>• Vulnerability Management: Regular penetration testing, ASV scanning, vulnerability assessments and remediation programmes undertaken to identify and address cyber security risks.</li> <li>• Artificial Intelligence (AI): Governance arrangements, staff guidance and technical controls established to support the safe use of AI, including risk-based web filtering to restrict access to non-approved AI tools.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Principal G:</b></p> <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p>	<p>The Council prioritises transparency and accountability, ensuring residents can access information and hold the Council accountable. Key initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open Data:</b> The Council publishes the Open Data Portal and Open Data Charter online, fulfilling government transparency requirements. In 2022, a Citizen Data Charter was introduced to guide data use for community benefit.</li> <li>• <b>Public Meetings:</b> Council meetings are generally open to the public, with details available online, except when confidentiality is required.</li> <li>• <b>Scrutiny Committees:</b> 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</li> <li>• <b>Annual Reporting:</b> The Council reports annually on performance, finances, audits, and governance, with updates available online.</li> <li>• <b>Complaints Policy:</b> The Council follows a two-stage process to resolve complaints, with escalation options to external ombudsmen if needed.</li> </ul>