

London Borough of Camden Annual Governance Statement 2020-21



1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Camden Council is committed to achieving the ambitions set out within the [Camden 2025 plan](#).
- 1.2 In order to achieve these ambitions, the Council recognises that it must have a solid foundation of good governance in place to ensure that it is doing the right things, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner, to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for residents.
- 1.3 In line with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the Council is required to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) within its Statement of Accounts. The AGS provides an opportunity for the Council to undertake a self-assessment and to examine its governance framework to assure itself and key stakeholders that these arrangements are both effective and robust.
- 1.4 In accordance with best practice guidance, the self-assessment and annual governance review process has been undertaken in an open and honest manner, and considered the Council's performance across all of its activities. In summary, the wider context of this AGS indicates that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall governance arrangements is adequate.
- 1.5 A key element of the annual governance review process is to identify any significant internal control issues. The Council has adopted the approach recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which has identified what may be considered generally as a significant issue (see paragraph 6.1 below). No significant governance issues were identified during 2020-21 that met the criteria as defined by CIPFA. However, the following general issues have been highlighted and, in line with good governance arrangements, will be monitored during the year ahead :
 - 1) Review and refresh of the Our Camden Plan and Camden 2025 priorities;
 - 2) Develop and implement an Outcomes and Assurance Framework, alongside the refresh of Camden 2025 priorities;
 - 3) Formalise the Council's response to the peer review;
 - 4) Continue to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through the better use of customer data;
 - 5) Develop and deliver on the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
 - 6) Continue to assess the Council's financial position and update medium-term financial assumptions regarding resources and investment needs in light of the pandemic;
 - 7) Continue to work with London Council's as part of the Fair Funding Review;
 - 8) Develop and deliver of the next iteration of the Council's General Fund Capital Strategy;
 - 9) Develop a refreshed financial strategy for the Housing Revenue Account; and
 - 10) To continue to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

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

Signed by:

Leader

Date

Signed by:

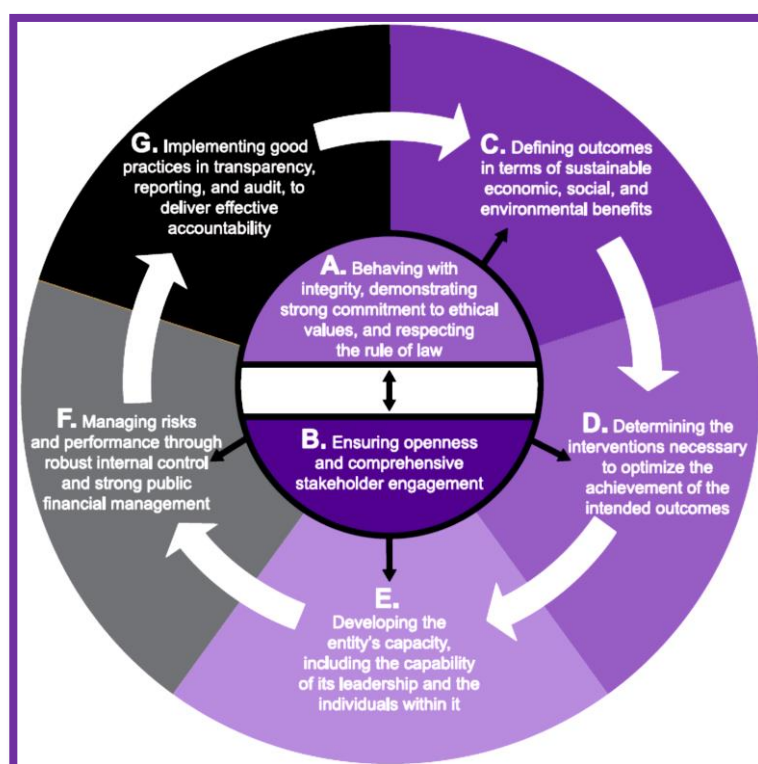
Chief Executive

Date

2. Introduction

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

Figure 1 – Delivering Good Governance Core Principles



- 2.4 This statement demonstrates how the Council's governance arrangements deliver to these seven principles in practice.
- 2.5 The AGS has been structured to provide an update against the following areas:
- **Section 3: Camden's Governance Framework** – provides an overview of how the Council's core governance framework is comprised and includes the Council's scope of responsibility;

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

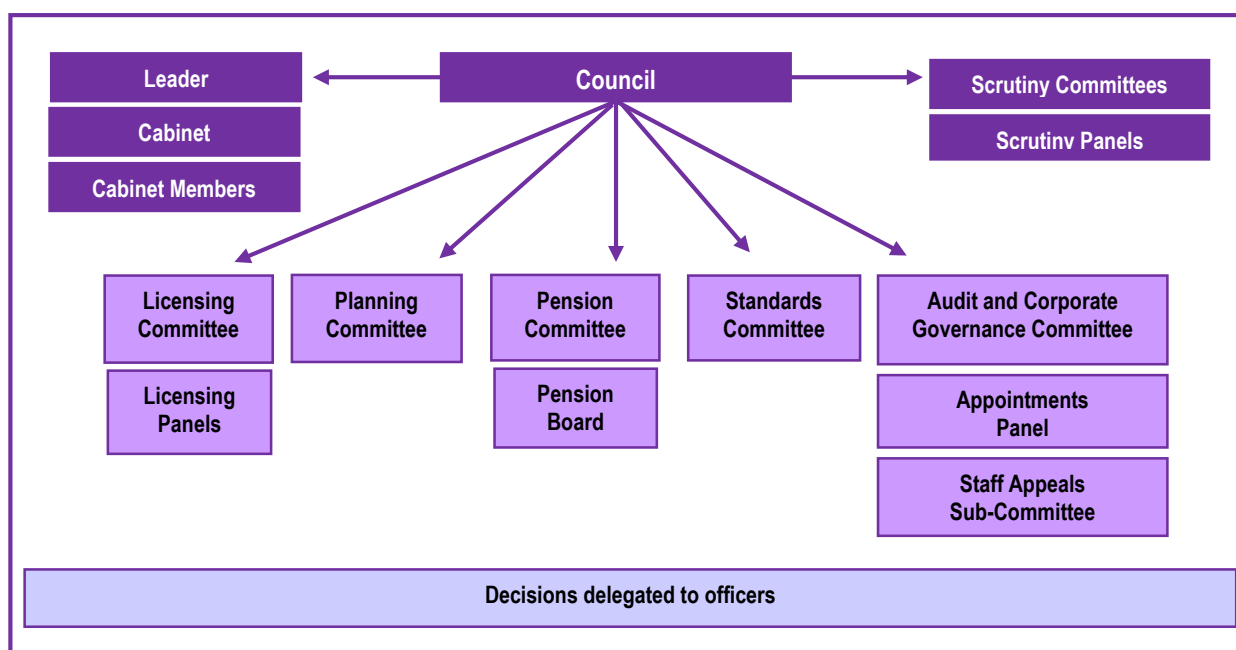
- **Section 4: Key elements of the Council’s governance arrangements for 2020-21** – provides a summary of the key elements and highlights of the Council’s governance arrangements for the year ending 31 March 2021;
- **Section 5: Review of Effectiveness** – details the process followed in conducting a review of the effectiveness of the Council’s governance framework, including the Head of Internal Audit’s annual opinion; and
- **Section 6: Significant Governance Issues** – provides a summary of any significant and/or general governance issues that have been highlighted and will be monitored during the year ahead.

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

3. Camden’s Governance Framework

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

Figure 2 – Camden Decision-making Framework



- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 Standing Orders. 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.
- 3.6 The Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of its governance framework throughout the year, in order 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.
- 3.7 **Part B** sets out in more detail the core and integral aspects of the Council’s governance framework, that generally remain consistent from year-to-year, and also demonstrates how these align to the seven principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework in practice.

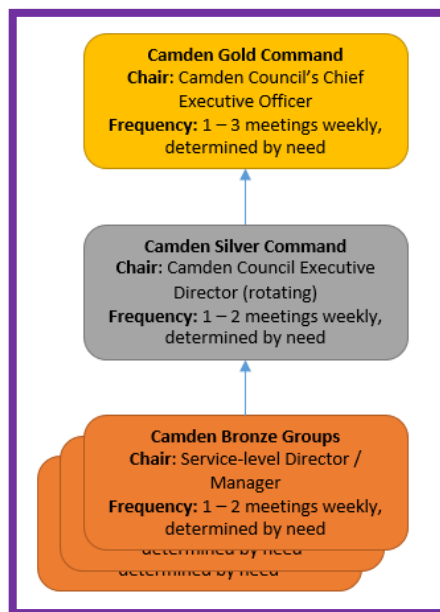
4. Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework for 2020-21

- 4.1 This section of the statement provides a summary of the highlights of the Council's governance for the year ending 31 March 2021 (and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts). It also demonstrates how and where the Council's governance framework has been adapted to reflect *changing* circumstances and to ensure that the Council continued to deliver and achieve the desired outcomes for Camden residents and communities. Actions taken to address the issues identified within the 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement are also included in the text below.

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

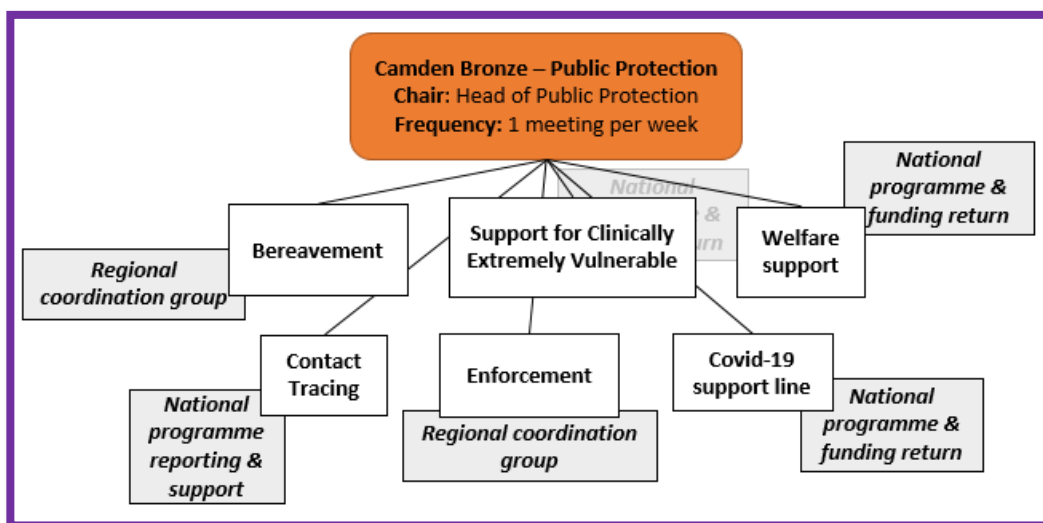
- 4.2 The Council's key focus during 2020-21 has been the management of the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergency response across the borough, and working with partners to support residents and businesses affected by the pandemic. This has ranged from the provision of food support to those residents asked to shield in the first period of lockdown, working with schools and Early Years settings to provide the necessary education and childcare support in line with the government's lockdown rules, to ensuring that we were enforcing rules around business closure and social distancing.
- 4.3 The Covid-19 pandemic caused wide-ranging and large scale impact on Camden as a borough – affecting our citizens, partners and businesses and the Council as an organisation. This resulted in shifts in the delivery of services, changes in where and how people work, and resourcing and financial challenges. The Council proactively revisited its Principal Risk Report following the first lockdown, to ensure that a revised risk profile was articulated to reflect the risks associated with the pandemic.
- 4.4 To ensure an effective response to, and management of, the impacts of Covid-19, the Council rapidly put into place a robust set of emergency governance measures at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic. These measures were put in place to facilitate a swift response to the pandemic and its impact across the Council, our services and communities, but also to ensure that the cross-cutting nature of the impact, and its size and scale, could be appropriately governed, managed and monitored.
- 4.5 The Council's emergency management structures were set up in-line with the national Emergency Management protocol including a Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure (see **Figure 3** below). This command structure, set up in parallel with other local, regional and national counterparts and partners, helped to facilitate a clear strategic direction for the organisation and clarified key roles and responsibilities. This enabled the quick implementation and coordination of activities to respond to the emergency.

Figure 3 – Covid-19 Emergency Management Structure



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

Figure 4 - Public Protection Covid-19 structure services



Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- 4.8 The Council has made a concerted effort to help people protect themselves and their communities from the virus, as well as providing financial and other support to help individuals, businesses and voluntary and community organisations with the social and economic impacts they face.
- 4.9 The Council is also working with local and national partners to build back our local economy through a new Renewal Commission focused on diversity in leadership, creative & sustainable streets and estates, young people and food. After witnessing the disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on Black, Asian, and other ethnic minority communities, the Council worked with partners and communities to develop Building Equal Foundations – a plan to tackle the inequalities faced by these communities.
- 4.10 During this period, the Council has also ensured that it maintained its role in the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults. Work has been undertaken to refresh two of the Council's strategic plans: Our Corporate Parenting Strategy; and our Supporting People, Connecting Communities plan, to support people to age and live well in Camden. Work is also currently underway to develop a new Health and Well-Being Strategy for Camden, which is a significant priority in the context of the pandemic.
- 4.11 The Council has also continued to work closely with care providers throughout the pandemic, transitioning from daily virtual contact meetings to weekly contact meetings as the management of Covid-19 matured. Where appropriate, officers also physically visited care homes to investigate concerns and to obtain assurance that the appropriate measures were in place and being followed, working in collaboration with public health. The pandemic has also caused a cyclical safeguarding referral pattern, with falls in referrals during lockdowns, followed by an increase following each lockdown, and the Council has been working closely with families and carers of those receiving support to identify requirements for further support.
- 4.12 The work that was underway in 2019-20 to introduce a new approach to performance reporting was paused in the early stages of the pandemic as the Council moved into its emergency response and needed to stand down non-urgent work and re-deploy staff.
- 4.13 A weekly Covid-19 dashboard was developed instead, which reported data and insight into the Gold emergency response board. This dashboard has sat at the heart of our performance management arrangements with other data relating to core service delivery sitting at Departmental and Service management levels. Cabinet Members were also provided with regular insight and data updates as part of weekly CMT/Cabinet meetings. A Covid Oversight Scrutiny Panel was also put in place throughout the period of the pandemic and received regular data and insight on the council's pandemic response.
- 4.14 At the end of 2020 a new C2025 Outcomes Board, made up of CMT and Cabinet, was also put in place. The Board endorsed proposals to develop an Outcomes and Assurance Framework alongside a refresh of C2025. This work is a priority for the Council in 2021 to refresh its strategic direction and priorities in light of the impact of Covid-19 on resident's lives and on public service provision.

Covid-19 Support Grants

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- 4.15 In response to the pandemic and the first national lockdown in March 2020, the Government announced financial support packages for small businesses, and those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The support took the form of two grant funding schemes; the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLG). Local authorities were responsible for administering these schemes, and the Government have committed to providing the funding for these payments.
- 4.16 As at the closing date for these grant payment scheme (30th September 2020), the Council had processed 1,257 SBGF grant payments of £10,000, totalling £12.57m; 391 RHLG payments of £10,000 to eligible business properties that have a rateable value below £15k and not in receipt of SBRR, totalling £3.91m; and 2,258 RHLG payments of £25,000 to eligible business properties that have a rateable value of above £15k and below £51k and are not in receipt of SBRR, totalling £56.45m. In addition, under the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, 300 payments of £10,000 were awarded to businesses with shared workplaces; 24 payments of £25,000 and one payment of £5,250 were awarded to hardship cases; and 39 payments of £1,000 were awarded to market traders; totalling £3.64m.
- 4.17 In response to the second national lockdown, the Government announced additional financial support packages to support businesses mandated to close during the lockdowns. As at 22nd March 2021, the Council had processed over £35.5m of grants across the following schemes:
- 2,341 Local Restrictions Support Grant (closed) payments to businesses for several periods of national restrictions in November, December and January through to 31 March 2021 totalling £21.4m;
 - 2,056 One-off Coronavirus Business Lockdown Payments to businesses in January totalling £13.34m;
 - 222 Local Restrictions Support Grant (open) payments to businesses disrupted by the Tier 2 restrictions in October and December totalling £486k;
 - 107 'wet-pub' Christmas Support Payments, totalling £107k;
 - 77 discretionary Additional Restriction Grant payments, totalling £165k.
- 4.18 To help ensure that the grants were paid correctly to eligible businesses, and to help mitigate the risk of fraud, the Council implemented a pre-payment controls process. This included the Council's Anti-Fraud and Investigations Team (AFIT) working with the Business Rates team to undertake assessments to identify key fraud risks and design controls to mitigate these risks. AFIT also continued to liaise with the Business Rates team in-year to provide fraud risk and control advice as required. This also included, where required, a review of specific grant applications where concerns were raised relating to suspected fraudulent applications.
- 4.19 A Fraud Risk Assessment and Post Payment Assurance Plan were also completed and was returned to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in year. Due to the reliance and assurance placed on the pre-payment controls, only a small sample of post payment testing was undertaken in year, which did not identify any issues or concerns relating to

ineligible or fraudulent applications. Going forward, the Council will also be participating in the National Fraud Initiative exercise for 2020-21, which will include data relating to Covid-19 grants recipients and will seek to identify potential fraud, including where multiple grants were paid to businesses within or between local authorities; duplication between grant schemes; and payments to businesses or individuals flagged in proved fraud 'watchlists'.

Financial Management and Strategy

- 4.20 As set out in the [Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 – 2021/22](#) published in December 2018, the Council took a planned longer term approach to achieving the required budget reductions, by focussing on the matters that contribute most to key outcomes set out in Our Camden Plan.
- 4.21 The Council has however recognised that the pandemic has had a significant financial impact and will have a longer-term effect on the level of resources available to the Council. In responding to the pandemic, the Council undertook a significant redeployment of resources, including the redeployment of staff to support the Council's front-line emergency response. This has helped to reduce early estimates of additional pressures relating to the pandemic from £80m to £50m during 2020-21. The Council also recognised the need to make additional investment decisions quickly to support the borough and to make a number of one-off savings to ensure the Council remained financially resilient through the pandemic.
- 4.22 The Council also increased the frequency of reporting to Cabinet on the Council's financial position from three times a year, adding two additional Cabinet reports in May and September 2020 focussing on the financial impact of pandemic on the Council. The frequency of reporting to Departmental Management Teams (DMTs) and the Camden Management Team (CMT) was also increased, and sought to identify Covid-19 specific financial pressures within the financial reports presented to management, along with the grants and other financial support available from the Government to help meet some of these financial pressures.
- 4.23 The pandemic has also had an impact on the collection of business rates. The Council would usually collect over £600m per year in business rates from non-domestic properties in the borough, with income divided between the Council, the Greater London Authority and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; however, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of business rates collected in 2020-21. As part of the response to the pandemic, the Government increased the level of scope of business rates relief for many businesses, which had led to an additional rate relief of over £195m being administered by the Council in year.
- 4.24 In addition to the financial impacts of the pandemic, the Council continues to operate in a challenging financial environment. The multi-year government finance settlement ended in 2019-20, and since then the government have only provided a one-year settlement each year as part of the annual spending review. This has generated ongoing uncertainty regarding the Council's medium term financial position beyond the end of 2021-22. To this end, the Council is continuing to work with London Councils as part of the fair funding review, which is reviewing the way in which local authorities are funded. The

outcome is vital to the future of local services across London as it will determine how £19bn of funding will be allocated from 2021.

Housing Revenue Account

- 4.25 In terms of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the monitoring of progress towards delivering the HRA financial strategy is taking place through a strengthened governance process that brings together the HRA and the Community Investment Programme through the creation of the Housing and Property Investment Board. Reports are also shared with stakeholders specific to the Housing Revenue Account, including the Cabinet Member for Better Homes, the Housing Scrutiny Committee, and the Housing District Management Committees. Budget pressures continue to be reviewed annually as part of the budget/rent setting process. These are separately approved by Cabinet in January of each year, and any changes to projects required to meet the revised financial target are considered and implemented through these channels.
- 4.26 For the previous four years, the Housing Revenue Account has had to reduce rents by 1% each year in order to comply with the Welfare and Work Reform Act (2016). The 2019-20 financial year was the first year in which the Council was permitted, under the government's Rent Standard, to raise rents. This pressure from previous years, combined with ongoing inflationary increases on salaries, supplies and services budgets, and particularly on repair costs, has been compounded by the pandemic. This has led to a significant increase in rent arrears from social tenants, leaseholders and commercial tenants. Based on this, it is expected that the HRA will operate a budget deficit for the 2020-21 financial year. Appropriate measures to manage arrears and bad debts are being carried out as part of the Council's overall credit control functions. In January 2021, Cabinet agreed a balanced HRA budget for 2021-22 including a further rent increase at the Consumer Price Index +1%. The HRA also continues to face financial pressure from the need to invest in fire safety works across both its capital and revenue programmes.

Monitoring of the Capital Programme and the Community Investment Programme

- 4.27 The Council's capital programme is reliant on the planned sale of assets to generate capital receipts that will be reinvested into building and developing of new Council assets. In 2020-21, the Council budgeted to receive £33.1m in capital receipts, through a combination of the sale of assets built through the Community Investment Programme, the sale of existing under-utilised assets, and Right to Buy sales of social housing.
- 4.28 The Council acknowledges that there is an inherent risk associated with building cost inflation and uncertainty within the housing market, and therefore officers work with independent experts to ensure that assumptions regarding the sales value of assets remain realistic and up to date. In order to further manage this risk, the Council also schedules the reinvestment of expected capital receipts later than they are expected to be received, leaving a level of capital receipts and borrowing capacity in hand to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans can be fully funded each year. The slowing down of the London property market has also led the Council to trial marketing some properties as private

rented properties for a limited period of time while the property market improves. This will allow the Council to generate an income stream, widen the types of housing offered through CIP, and allow the properties to be sold when the sales market has stabilised.

- 4.29 Separately, significant expenditure on fire safety across the housing stock is continuing to put pressure on the Council's capital resources. The Government has committed grant funding of £80.6m to help fund the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding on five buildings at Chalcots. The cladding was removed in 2018-19 and the Council has been progressing work to enter into a contract to replace the cladding, as well as continuing to progress the legal claim against the PFI contractor and a number of sub-contractors to recover these costs.
- 4.30 The Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP) is a large and ambitious long term programme that is delivering new homes, schools and other community assets across Camden.
- 4.31 In order to ensure good governance for CIP, the Council has established a number of checks at various stages of project delivery. Cabinet are responsible for approving new projects within the programme, and where appropriate, delegate the decisions needed to implement the projects to senior officers, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members. The management of the programme is undertaken through the following governance boards:
- *The CIP Executive Directors Board* – which monitors the delivery of the programme and reviews programme wide risks and funding requirements. The Board is also responsible for steering the long-term planning and strategic direction of the programme. The board is supported by a CIP Gateway Panel, which comprises of officers from Housing, Finance, Legal and Procurement, and reviews projects at key stages.
 - *The Housing and Property Investment Board (previously called the CIP Cabinet Sub-Group)* – the board retains oversight of CIP, as well as a wider remit to include other capital programmes and financial oversight of the Housing Revenue Account. This allows capital investment decisions to be taken in the context of overall affordability. The role of this Group is to share knowledge, offer constructive challenge, agree consistency and key approaches and support the positive integration of HRA and CIP schemes into Camden's existing portfolio. This group consists of relevant Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, and provides political and senior management oversight of the programme and individual projects, providing steer ahead of formal decision making by Cabinet or through delegated powers.

Resident Safety

- 4.32 The Council's Camden Plan 2025 commitment is to ensure the highest standard of resident safety across the borough including learning from past events and the impacts on our residents. The key actions from the 2018 Independent Review of the Chalcots evacuation have been implemented and a wide range of organisational and operational changes are now complete. These measures include:

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- Establishing a Chalcots Remedial Works Project Board and estate-wide resident engagement and communication structures;
- Creating the Camden Safety Leadership Board as a mechanism for the Camden Management Team to have oversight on strategic risk, and to set priorities as well as to share information and knowledge.
- Implementing a neighbourhood patch delivery model to Housing Management, where Neighbourhood Officers make contact with all individual households in their patches and maintain records of vulnerable residents, in liaison with Adult Social Care and Children's Services;
- The reorganisation of the Property Management division and the creation of a new Capital Works Team that is responsible for delivering an integrated service for planned works, building safety works, and compliance related investment works across all housing and school properties.
- Delivery of Fire Safety works by a new team, led a Fire Safety Programme Manager with support from a dedicated team of project managers.
- Recruiting a team of fire alarm testers to carry out regular testing of smoke alarms in street property communal areas, check that door closers are in place and report on any fire safety concerns.
- Expanding the work of the Fire Safety Advisory Panel to include wider building safety compliance, in response to the prospective Fire and Building Safety legislation, and in 2021 the Panel will begin looking at Camden's approach to the provision of information and training for both staff and residents.
- In July 2021, Cabinet will review the 2019 resident safety programme in response to the Fire Safety Act and the publication of the draft Building Safety Bill. The July Cabinet report will invite members to adopt a Fire and Building Safety Charter developed through a borough wide survey, consultation and resident focus group process. The Charter will enable Residents to see what the 2025 Camden Plan commitments mean in practice and hold the Council to account for their delivery.
- The Council is participating in Hackitt Review 'Work Group 8', which is developing the role of Building Safety Manager that will be incorporated in a new legislative framework, and was the first local authority to be invited to join the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Early Adopters Group, which is piloting the development of building safety cases Planning construction Gateway 1 design trials, helping to formulate legislation. The Council is also working with the Health and Safety Executive/shadow Joint Regulatory Group on fire safety in high rise buildings.

Tackling social and economic inequalities

- 4.33 It is recognised that both social and economic inequalities exist for both residents and staff, and the Council has continued to work to tackle the risks of social and economic inequalities across the Borough. This work became increasingly challenging in-year due to the prolonged pressure on Council services owing to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, in response the Council established a number of working groups and oversight panels to ensure that the equalities agenda and calls to action are progressed and remain a priority.

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- 4.34 An Equalities, Disproportionality and Cohesion Refresh paper was presented to Cabinet on 13th January 2021, which identified six core priority areas of focus and refreshed the Council's approach to delivering equalities, disproportionality and cohesion through the identification of 140 actions. To ensure that delivery remains a priority, the Council mobilised a Race and Equality Members Working Group, and also appointed its first Director of Equalities and Disproportionality to provide strategic leadership to the Council's efforts to tackle inequalities.

Cyber and Data Security

- 4.35 There continues to be an increase in attempted cyber-attacks against local authorities. To ensure that the Council remains resilient and protected against known threats, an internal Cyber Risk Assessment was carried out in year, and a further Cyber Health Check review is due to be carried out in 2021-22. The Council also ran a cyber-awareness and education tool across the organisation to raise awareness of common cyber security threats.
- 4.36 The Borough Solicitor is the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) responsible for the Council's overall information risk policy, and the Council's Data Protection Officer under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation. The SIRO leads the Corporate Information Governance Group, which is responsible for information governance, including management of data breaches and associated risks, including those surrounding cyber security.

EU Exit

- 4.37 The Council has continued to closely monitor the potential impacts of the EU Exit on the Council as an organisation and also to residents. Prior to the agreement of a new trade deal between the UK and the EU, the Council's Brexit Preparedness group led on the coordination of Brexit-related activities, including communications and scenario planning for a no-deal scenario.
- 4.38 Following the agreement of a new trade deal between the UK and the EU on 24 December 2020, thus avoiding a potential no-deal scenario, the Council removed its EU Exit Principal Risk from its Principal Risk Report and instead weaved the remaining risks emanating from the exit into the existing Principal Risks (e.g. contract management). Where applicable, the impacts of the EU exit are also being managed via local departmental and service level risk registers.

Workforce

- 4.39 The Council have prioritised employees' wellbeing during the pandemic. Since March 2020 the Council has significantly added to the existing wellbeing support available to staff. This includes providing support and resources on a range of topics including mental health, physical health, bereavement, home-schooling and work/life balance. The council ran live wellbeing focused sessions that enabled staff to reflect, connect with others and gain practical tips. In total 225 sessions were ran between March 2020- February 2021, which had an overall attendance of 1,573 people. The council ensured managers were equipped to manage teams remotely and to understand and support their staff's wellbeing. In addition to this support all staff, and their families, have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This is delivered by an external provider and provides a range of confidential support including counselling, Career Coaching and financial advice.
- 4.40 Separately, following the emerging data that Covid-19 was disproportionately affecting Black, Asian and other marginalised ethnic communities, as well as

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to inclusion. The Council ran 8 focus groups with Black, Asian and staff of other marginalised ethnic communities in order to hear staff's thoughts, feelings and experiences. The insight from these sessions helped to form a Race Equality Action Plan, which sets out over 30 actions that the Council has committed to take, in order to tackle the structural and systemic organisational barriers that prevent our Black staff, Asian staff and staff of other non-white ethnicities from accessing opportunities equally and to ensure that staff will not be disadvantaged due to their ethnicity.

- 4.41 The Race Equality Action Plan has also led to the Council undertaking a number of actions in-year, including reviewing and updating our recruitment process, commissioning an independent evaluation of our Sponsorship and Mentoring scheme and examining the way we manage performance. As a result of the plan, all staff will receive mandatory Anti-Racism learning, which will include educational sessions, reflective sessions and sessions specifically for managers.
- 4.42 Within the last year, the Council has also heightened its focus on disability equality and disabled staff members formed a Disability Staff Network. The network helped to develop a Camden Disability Charter, which was signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and sets out a series of commitments around disability equality that the Council has committed to, including the creation of a Wellbeing Passport, the appointment of a Senior Staff Disability Champion, and a Disability Leave Policy.
- 4.43 A key priority in Camden's Diversity and Inclusion work is the value of diversity in thinking. The Council recognises that having a diverse range of ways of thinking within our teams leads to better decision making, and has been working to raise more awareness of neurodiversity within the organisation and to ensure neurodiverse colleagues are enabled to thrive at work. The Council has also run a series of awareness sessions, particularly focussing on Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, and also celebrated Neurodiversity Awareness Week and Autism Awareness Week in-year.
- 4.44 The Council also continued its work on LGBT+ inclusion in-year, and despite not being able to celebrate Pride Month in person, a comprehensive internal communications campaign was run, which included events, staff stories and educational resources. In line with Stonewall's recommendations, the Council's inclusion work in this area also focused on more marginalised LGBT+ identities, including trans and non-binary staff. Staff are now able to add their gender pronouns to their signature, and the Commitment to Trans Equality has been updated to include guidance for managers and colleagues. The Council is once again taking part in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index in order to benchmark itself in this area, and will enter its submission in Summer 2021.

Partnership Working

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

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

values and a commitment to improving the lives of people in Camden. During 2020-21 extensive work with the Voluntary and Community Sector has led to increased openness, transparency and mutual understanding.

- 4.47 The Council had also been developing new governance arrangements with the Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to design new integrated health and social care arrangements, in collaboration with provider organisations. This work is now being taken on by the North Central London CCG, following the merger of the five local CCGs in April 2020.
- 4.48 The integration developments has progressed more slowly in-year than anticipated as a result of the pandemic, however there have already been some examples of very effective joint working in response to the pandemic, which has deepened local relationships. There has been a renewal of the integration plans and discussions more recently, and at the same time there is a focus nationally on health and care integration following the recent publication of the Health and Care White Paper. For Camden, the Council's focus has been the development of the Integrated Care Partnership, which is the borough-wide arrangement for integrated health and care at a local level. The Health and Wellbeing Board is key to promoting integration and partnership working between the NHS, social care and public health through the strategic direction it will provide to the Integrated Care Partnership and its ownership of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Members of the Board continue to work together to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the Camden population and to agree priorities and encourage all those providing health and care services to work in a more joined-up way.

Climate Emergency

- 4.49 In October 2019, the Council held a themed full Council debate to consider the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on the Climate crisis held over the summer of 2019. The full council debate allowed Assembly members to present their seventeen proposals for how Camden should address the climate crisis. The seventeen proposals were supported by full Council and subsequently formed the basis for Camden's new Climate Action Plan which was adopted by Cabinet in June 2020 and publically launched in July 2020. The Climate Action Plan is the produce of unprecedented levels of community engagement with over 2,500 residents and community groups involved in its development.
- 4.50 To help oversee the new Climate Action Plan, a Citizens' panel was recruited to over the summer of 2020. The establishment of a Citizens' panel to monitor and support the delivery of Camden's Climate Action Plan was a direct recommendation from the Citizens' Assembly. The panel adds a new transparency dimension to Camden's climate governance, providing external community oversight on Climate Action Plan progress, as well as acting as a community level sounding board for environmental projects.
- 4.51 The recruitment process for the panel opened in July 2020, to coincide with the launch of the Climate Action Plan. Recruitment ran over the summer, with 86 applications received for 16 places on the panel. Applications were anonymised and evaluated by Camden Friends of the Earth, and the Council's Sustainability and Participation teams. As with Camden's Citizens' Assembly on the climate crisis, the selection process was designed to ensure that the final Citizens' panel composition closely mirrored the demographic profile of Camden.

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- 4.52 The Citizens' panel has met virtually on four occasions since October 2020. The work of the panel is open and transparent, with agendas, minutes and presentations from the meetings publically available at www.camden.gov.uk/citizen-panel

Peer Review

- 4.53 In January 2020, a Corporate Peer Review of Camden was undertaken and facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA). A peer review forms part of Local Government's alternative to the government inspection regime, and is designed to enable local authorities to challenge each other, share learning, and improve the way we work across the sector.
- 4.54 Camden was keen to utilise the peer review as an opportunity to reflect on progress towards the Camden 2025 vision, and to invite feedback regarding ideas and challenges that will help the Council to achieve its plans, including feedback on the Council's participation model and how the Council may be able to do more to encourage all communities to participate in helping to achieve its shared priorities.
- 4.55 The peer review team focussed on six key areas, which reflected the Council's ambitions for Camden in 2025 i.e. understanding of place and prioritisation; participation; leadership of place; financial planning and viability; governance; and leadership and capacity.
- 4.56 The Feedback Report, published in July 2020, provided very positive feedback in terms of the ambition, goodwill, and talent within the organisation, including a dedication to succeed and to continue to drive for social justice and delivering for residents. The report also made some observations as to areas in which the Council should continue to address including business planning and performance management. The Council used the 2020/21 autumn/winter period to seek feedback from staff and Members on the peer review recommendations, and was keen to use this feedback to inform the Council's overall response. The intention is to formalise the Council's response to the peer by Summer 2021.

Key Roles and Subsidiaries

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

The Head of Paid Service

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

Role of the Chief Financial Officer

- 4.59 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

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

financial operations and strategy for 2019-20. In his role as Chief Financial Officer, he is responsible for:

- Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making;
- Reporting to full Council and the Council's external auditor if he considers that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or if the Council is about to enter an item of account unlawfully; and
- Providing advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, probity and budget policy framework issues, and preventing maladministration and financial impropriety.

Role of the Monitoring Officer

- 4.60 There are effective arrangements for the discharge of the Monitoring Officer function, which is carried out by the Borough Solicitor. The Borough Solicitor attends CMT and has direct access to both the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, with both of whom he has regular, programmed one-to-ones. In particular, he has access to all decision making and all decision reports must contain comment from either himself or one of his legal team. He leads a substantial legal team and has the budget to take specialist external legal advice when necessary. He has appointed a deputy, being the Principal Lawyer (Litigation), who provides cover for this role when he is unavailable.

Role of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

- 4.61 The Council's Audit and Corporate Governance Committee has responsibility for non-executive functions other than planning, licensing, pensions and standards. It meets approximately six times a year and receives reports on the regulatory framework as follows:
- Annual Governance Statement (bi-annual – a draft version and a final version);
 - Statement of accounts and external auditor's opinion (annual);
 - External audit plan (annual);
 - Internal audit plan (annual);
 - Internal audit update (bi-annual);
 - Principal risks (bi-annual);
 - Counter-fraud (bi-annual); and
 - Treasury management (quarterly).
- 4.62 The Committee may also consider additional reports on any of those functions should it consider it necessary to provide the assurance sought. Additionally, it has responsibility for the Council's non-executive corporate governance functions, most notably management of the Constitution.
- 4.63 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Committee meetings in 2020-21 were held remotely using audio and visual technology, following the Government passing legislation to temporarily allow remote meetings.
- 4.64 In 2020-21, the Committee also undertook a self-assessment on its overall effectiveness by completing a survey that was designed around the nine good practice principles set out within the CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance (2018). The survey was undertaken as part of the Council's and the Committee's

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

commitment to further enhancing the effectiveness of the Council's overall governance arrangements. Overall, the survey indicated some areas of good practice, though nine recommendations were identified and pulled into an action plan to assist the Committee with further enhancement. These recommendations were grouped under three overarching headings: the purpose and focus of the Committee; enabling the effectiveness of the Committee; and reviewing the impact of the Committee.

- 4.65 To support the work of the Committee, an independent member is appointed to the Committee to offer insight and additional assurance. The survey undertaken in 2020-21 has resulted in a recommendation for further enhancement of the Committee's use of the expertise of the independent member. The Council has also joined the CIPFA Better Governance Forum. This will ensure that Members and officers have access to the latest information and guidance.

Role of Scrutiny

- 4.66 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. Ordinarily, Scrutiny Committees each meet up to seven times a year and in addition, the chairs of the five scrutiny committees meet collectively, as the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee, to co-ordinate scrutiny work collectively. The scrutiny committees can, and often do, operate scrutiny panels to look at specific matters in a task-and-finish style approach. Camden is also one of the five boroughs participating in the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.67 Ordinarily each scrutiny committee regularly meets with relevant members of the Cabinet to discuss areas in their portfolios, and the Leader of the Council attends the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. Scrutiny committee meetings are scheduled in such a way as to be able to comment on Cabinet reports prior to decision, allowing for relevant input through an early consideration of the draft proposals or when they have been finalised. In addition, there is a procedure for executive decisions to be called-in for discussion at scrutiny committee meetings.
- 4.68 Since the onset of the pandemic in late 2019-20, the Scrutiny model has been temporarily modified to reflect the fact that the Council's primary focus during this period had been on the pandemic response. The five scrutiny committees continue to meet to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on non-Covid items going to Cabinet, and the ability for members to call in decisions remains. However, the wider work programmes of the Scrutiny committees have largely been on hold and a separate Covid-19 Oversight Cross Party Panel has been established. This meets approximately monthly to consider Covid-related Cabinet reports and to take a wider overarching report on how the Council is responding to the pandemic.

Council Subsidiaries

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

Camden Living

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

Camden Learning

- 4.74 Camden Learning Limited is a not-for-profit school-led partnership created as a joint venture between Camden schools and the Council. The company commenced activity in September 2017. The Company is commissioned by the Council for a portfolio of school improvement services. Camden Learning is a company limited by guarantee, of which the Council owns 19% and the remaining 81% is owned collectively by Camden's schools. All maintained schools in Camden are members of Camden Learning.
- 4.75 The Council provides over 70% of Camden Learning's revenue, and commissions the company to deliver a range of services on its behalf, including improvement services, health and wellbeing services, governor support services, special education needs and disabilities information advice and support services.
- 4.76 Camden Learning is governed by the Camden Learning Board. This comprises an Independent Chair, 2 Council representatives (the Executive Director Supporting People, the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families), the Camden Learning Managing Director, and five representatives from Camden schools (who are either headteachers and or a Chair of Governors). Regular updates on progress are provided to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee, and the company produces an annual report.

The Council's Audit and Corporate Governance Committee also scrutinised Camden Learning's accounts for 2019-20 in February 2021.

5. Review of Effectiveness

- 5.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The AGS provides an opportunity for the Council to undertake a self-assessment and to examine its governance framework to assure itself and key stakeholders that these arrangements are both effective and robust. Details of the areas considered as part of this assessment are set out below. The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 5.2 CIPFA guidance also advises that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic should be taken into account when conducting the annual review for 2020/21, both identifying changes that have resulted from the pandemic and identifying the impact on effectiveness of arrangements in practice.
- 5.3 The Council has undertaken 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. This involved annual meetings between the Head of Internal Audit and senior managers and reviewing the outputs of audit work, as well as self-assessments.
- 5.4 The review conducted has taken account of the methods employed by the Council in providing assurance on the governance framework. Information utilised 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
 - Outcomes of the Peer Review undertaken in January 2020.
- 5.5 With regard to External audit outcomes above, the 2019/20 statement of accounts audit has not been signed off as at the date of this report. The External auditor has substantially completed their work on our financial statements but has requested that a number of valuations are revised in order to provide the assurance required on property valuations. It is the expectation of the Council and the External auditors that the audit will be completed shortly as valuation data has now been returned.

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- 5.6 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 2020-21 Internal Audit plan was drawn up to address key risks facing for the Council. The work of Internal Audit, in accordance with the 2020-21 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 through benchmarking against other authorities, industry standards and best practice. This has resulted in continuous improvement to the Council's risk management framework. In 2020-21, the Principal Risk Report was further enhanced by the articulation of target risk scores and individual action plans to achieve target scores for each principal risk.
- 5.7 The 2020-21 Internal Audit plan was drafted from a number of other sources including an Internal Audit risk assessment, audit plans of other local authorities, intelligence from previous audits, and CIPFA good governance guidelines. An annual assurance map is also produced to demonstrate how internal audit resources provide assurance on the actions to mitigate the Council's principal risks.
- 5.8 Due to pandemic, the 2020-21 Internal Audit plan was approved by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in July 2020. Delivery of the 2020-21 audit plan therefore only commenced in the second quarter of 2020-21. In the first quarter of 2020-21 Internal Audit resource was also utilised to provide risk and control advice surrounding the Council's Covid-19 response. This includes areas in which new services or activity was taking place in response to the pandemic. Internal Audit also revisited Departmental Management Teams in June 2020 to ensure that the 2020-21 plan was still relevant in light of the impacts of the pandemic, and continued to focus on key risks as identified in the Council's July 2020 iteration of the Principal Risk Report.
- 5.9 The work of Internal Audit is reported within the Internal Audit 2020-21 Annual Report, and has indicated that:
- A good level of control and governance has been in operation during the Covid-19 pandemic response;
 - An awareness of principal risks and a good level of implementation of actions designed to mitigate principal risks;
 - Risk management has been further embedded i.e. target and current risk scores are identified, including action being taken to achieve target risk scores;
 - Services across the Council are continuing to proactively seek Internal Audit assurance during the pandemic, including in relation to the Covid-19 grants paid in-year
 - A trend towards better collaboration in order to improve delivery of the Camden Plan;
 - Risks surrounding third parties continues to be pertinent. Where applicable, Internal Audit reviews focussed on the effectiveness of contract management arrangements and mitigations surrounding provider failure. The Council remains mindful that third party contracts carry risk;

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

accordingly this risk has been captured within the principal risk report to ensure that it continues to be tracked and mitigated;

- The continued delivery of Camden Plan initiatives continue to bring associated risk that controls may be compromised during periods of change, innovation and transition. Internal Audit has provided assurance on the controls surrounding key programmes, as well as advice to ensure that key risks were considered and mitigated during change initiatives;
 - In areas where Internal Audit issued a less than 'moderate' assurance opinion i.e. where significant control weaknesses were identified, satisfactory management responses to audit recommendations have been obtained.
 - A willingness on the part of management to proactively seek Internal Audit advice in relation to risk and control design outside of delivery of the audit plan. The work of Internal Audit during 2020-21 indicated and demonstrated the need for assurance services to be flexible, responsible and adaptive to the business needs. The Covid-19 pandemic required controls to be designed at short notice and services across the Council continued to proactively seek risk and control advice.
 - Follow-up activity in-year has identified a high number of open recommendations. In a number of areas, the non-implementation of recommendations has been owing to the impacts of the pandemic, including the need to divert resources to engage in the Council's emergency response. Further follow-up work will be undertaken in 2021-22 to continue to monitor and assess the implementation of all open recommendations.
 - Work remains on-going to improve the Council's performance management arrangements, in-line with the outcomes of the Peer Review, including linking this to budget monitoring and service delivery, in order to help shape the delivery of Camden 2025.
- 5.10 Internal Audit recommendations made in previous years continued to be followed-up in 2020-21, when due. A fair rate of implementation and positive outcomes have generally been noted through follow-up activity completed to date.
- 5.11 The implementation of audit recommendations is tracked and monitored by Internal Audit using an open recommendation tracker. Audit recommendations made in 2020-21 will be scheduled for follow up in 2021-22 to ensure that management action has been implemented within agreed timescales. This will provide senior management and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee with a direction of travel in the internal control environment across the Council and will identify areas where further improvement is required.
- 5.12 The wider context of this AGS indicates that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall governance arrangements is adequate. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) also requires that the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides an annual audit opinion that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement. In drafting the HIA opinion for 2020-21, CIPFA's ['Guidance for Heads of Internal Audit Annual Opinions for 2020-21'](#) was utilised.
- 5.13 With regard to the annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit (HIA), the HIA is satisfied that the work undertaken by the audit function during 2020-21 has enabled the HIA to form a reasonable conclusion on the Council's control

framework, risk management and governance arrangements. The Internal Audit service was not redeployed through the pandemic and Internal Audit resource continued to be utilised for assurance activity. As a result, the HIA is assured that the work undertaken by the internal audit function has enabled a reasonable conclusion on the Council's control framework, risk management and governance arrangements to be formed. For the year ended 31 March 2021, the HIA has provided a 'Moderate assurance' opinion; indicating that the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall arrangements for the Council's systems of internal control, risk management and governance are adequate, with some improvement required. Weaknesses identified during individual audits and investigations are not significant, in aggregate, to the system of internal control. Although some high risk rated recommendations were made in individual audit reviews, these were broadly isolated to specific systems or processes. None of the individual audit reviews had an overall classification of critical risk. A detailed Head of Internal Audit opinion is provided in the Council's 2020-21 Internal Audit Annual Report being presented to ACGC in June 2021.

- 5.14 In accordance with section 5 of the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016 (guidance notes)', a comprehensive self-assessment, largely detailing stable governance arrangements, was completed in previous years and is updated periodically. The self-assessment provides a useful indicator of the Council's effectiveness in applying principles of good governance in practice. The self-assessment also allows authorities to assess how their processes and documentation meet the criteria suggested in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework.
- 5.15 In addition to the self-assessment referred to above, as part of the AGS production process, each directorate was asked to complete an annual self-assessment. This directorate level self-assessment presented the Directorate's view of its governance arrangements. Directorate self-assessments for 2020-21 were completed in May 2021 for the Council's directorates i.e. Supporting People, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services and indicated a good level of assurance for 2020-21. Directorate self-assessments served a dual purpose, in that they provided assurance surrounding the governance arrangements in place for 2020-21 (including arrangements during the pandemic), and also provided an opportunity for senior management to reflect on good governance requirements.

6. Significant Governance Issues

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

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

- The Audit Committee, or equivalent, has advised that it should be considered significant for this purpose, or
- The Head of Internal Audit has reported on it as significant in the annual opinion on the internal control environment.

6.2 There were no significant governance issues that met these criteria during 2020-21. However, the following general issues have been highlighted and, in line with good governance arrangements, will be monitored during the year ahead:

Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1.	<p>Delivery of Our Camden Plan and Camden 2025 Priorities</p> <p>To review and refresh the Camden 2025 objectives and priorities, and to continue to monitor the delivery of outcomes.</p>	Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design	February 2022
2.	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>To develop and implement an Outcomes and Assurance Framework, alongside a refresh of Camden 2025.</p> <p>This work is a priority for the Council in 2021 to refresh its strategic direction and priorities in light of the impact of Covid-19 on resident's lives and on public service provision.</p>	Head of Strategy	February 2022
3.	<p>Implementation of Peer Review Recommendations</p> <p>The Council used the 2020/21 autumn/winter period to seek feedback from staff and Members on the peer review recommendations, and was keen to use this feedback to inform the Council's overall response. The intention is to formalise the Council's response to the peer review by Summer 2021.</p>	Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design Head of Corporate Strategy	November 2021

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date
4.	<p>Better use of customer data</p> <p>To continue to improve the Council's focus on residents and citizens through better use of customer data.</p>	Head of Strategy	March 2022
5.	<p>New Medium-term Financial Strategy</p> <p>To develop and deliver the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design</p>	April 2023
6.	<p>Assessing the Financial Impact of Covid-19</p> <p>As part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the Council will continue to assess its medium term financial position and update its assumptions about the resources available to, and the investment needs of the Council in light of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Corporate Services)</p>	Ongoing
7.	<p>Funding</p> <p>To continue to work with London Councils, as part of the Fair Funding Review, which is reviewing the way in which local authorities are funded. The outcome of this review is vital to the future of local services across London as, when enacted it will determine how funding is allocated, and the Council, along with its partners and through representative bodies, will endeavour to influence government decision-making where</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Head of Finance (Corporate Services)</p>	Ongoing

Part A – LB Camden Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

Ref	Governance Area	Responsible Officer	Target Date
	possible. In addition the Council will seek to influence government policies that may affect the funding available to the Council including the expected reviews of social care funding and the Business Rates system.		
8.	<p>General Fund Capital Strategy</p> <p>To develop and deliver the next iteration of the General Fund Capital Strategy.</p>	Head of Finance (Corporate Services)	February 2022
9.	<p>Housing Revenue Account Financial Strategy</p> <p>To develop a refreshed HRA financial strategy, in light of the financial impact of the pandemic, and monitor the implementation of this strategy.</p>	Director of Finance Head of Finance (Supporting Communities)	February 2022
10.	<p>Community Investment Programme</p> <p>To continue to monitor the delivery of the Community Investment Programme and manage associated risks.</p>	Director of Development Head of CIP Programme Office	March 2022

ENDS

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

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>Principal A:</p> <p>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.</p>	<p>The Council expects the highest conduct and behaviour from all its Members and officers. The Council's policy and decision-making are managed and controlled within a strong, well-established framework and a major feature of this is the Council's written Constitution, which sets out in detail how the Council operates. The Members' Code of Conduct and Officers' Code of Conduct, which form Part 5 of the Council's Constitution, are underpinned by the Principles of Public Life as set out by Lord Nolan's Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL).</p> <p>Compliance with policies and legislation is managed through a range of corporate written rules and procedures which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risk. These are regularly reviewed and updated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Constitution (last updated March 2020);• Financial Standing Orders (Part 4 of the Constitution);• Contract Standing Orders (Part 4 of the Constitution);• Members' Code of Conduct (which sets out a member/officer gifts and hospitality protocol, conflicts of interest, provisions around the use of information technology and how misconduct complaints against members will be dealt with) (Part 5 of the Constitution);• Officers' Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct (Part 5 of the Constitution);• Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (including Whistleblowing policy) (Last updated September 2017); and• Complaints Policy (Last updated May 2019).• Managers' Handbook and Members' Handbook. <p>A number of other policies are also in place and they are made available to officers via the Council's Intranet pages, including HR policies (including discipline and grievance); Information Management policies; and service-specific policies. All key policies and guidance for officers are highlighted to new starters as part of the on-boarding and induction process and are publicised on the intranet.</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>Management control is exercised through the Camden Management Team (CMT), which defines and establishes processes, communicates and embeds codes of conduct, and defines the standards of behaviour for officers within the Council.</p> <p>The Council has also established a whistleblowing policy (which forms part of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy) in accordance with the requirements of the 1998 Public Interest Disclosure Act. The policy was last updated in September 2017, and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for approving the policy and receives a whistleblowing update bi-annually. The policy is publicised to officers on the Council's intranet and internet sites, and encourages officers, Members and the public to report inappropriate action by fellow employees, Members and external contractors, without fear of victimisation or retribution.</p>
<p>Principal B:</p> <p>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Ensuring Openness</p> <p>The Council believes in transparency and residents have a right to see what is going on and to hold the Council to account. The Open Data Portal and the Open Data Charter are published on the Council's website, and are key mechanisms for meeting the requirements of the government's Transparency Code. Camden is working with residents and partners to develop a Data Charter to give ethical guidance and principles on the use of data in Camden.</p> <p>Council meetings are also open to the public; however exceptions are made for matters that require confidentiality. The time, date and location of public meetings are displayed on the Council's website. The Camden Plan commits the Council to further opening up the Council and bringing residents closer to democratic and strategic leaders, for example through the introduction of themed Council debates.</p> <p>Part III of the Local Government Act 1974 sets out the role of the Ombudsman in terms of investigating and reporting maladministration. Section 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 also sets out requirements for the Monitoring Officer of a local authority – who in Camden is the Borough Solicitor. The Council presents an annual report covering cases where there have been routine mistakes or failings and the Council has agreed to make remedies and changes in line with the Ombudsman's recommendation. The report relating to complaints managed within the period 1 April 2019 to 31st March 2020 was presented to Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee on 23rd March 2021 and to Cabinet on 24th March 2021.</p> <p>The Council sets also out its commitment to Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Subject Rights (DSR) in a dedicated section on its website. The number of FOI requests responded to within the statutory deadline is reported as part of the Council's suite of core performance indicators. In 2020-2021, performance for quarters one, two and three was reported as 98% of requests responded to within the statutory timeframe. Camden continues to be in the top 3 councils nationally.</p> <p>The Council also records its commitment to the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 on its website and it continues to give significant focus on complying with its obligations, with the Borough Solicitor being the Council's Statutory Data</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>Protection Officer. In January 2021 as a result of UK leaving the European Union, there were changes to GDPR and the council is now focusing on complying with the GDPR-UK which need to be in place by end of June 2021.</p> <p>The Borough Solicitor is also the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) who is responsible for the overall information risk policy, and the Council's Data Protection Officer under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation. The SIRO leads the Corporate Information Governance Group, which is responsible for information governance including management of data breaches and associated risks including those surrounding cyber security.</p> <p>Engaging with Stakeholders and Residents</p> <p>Three years ago, the Council invited citizens from across the borough to tell us what they thought Camden should be like in 2025, to develop shared priorities that should be at the heart of our vision for the future of the borough. Over 80 residents joined our Citizens' Assembly, and thousands shared their views online, at public events in libraries and via resident surveys. A central theme was how citizens, community organisations and partners can work together to tackle challenges in new ways, which is why the Council focused on participation</p> <p>Our Camden Plan is the Council's response to the Camden 2025 vision and explains how the Council as an organisation will deliver on its ambitions. Both Camden 2025 and Our Camden Plan have been communicated to Camden citizens and its workforce using a variety of channels. The Council continues to keep citizens and its workforce updated on progress and invites everyone to get involved in developing and delivering the plans.</p> <p>The Council also uses a variety of other mechanisms to gather resident insights to assess how the Council is viewed by residents and service users, and to benchmark services. These include Citizen's Assemblies, the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and through carrying out regular surveys and interviews with residents across the borough to ensure resident insight is readily available.</p> <p>The Council also consults with its residents on local issues and reports on housing issues at District Management Committees (DMC), which are advisory forums made up of tenant representatives and councillors which consider housing and environmental issues relating to Council tenancies and leases. There are five DMCs that meet four times a year, and an additional joint meeting of all DMCs takes place once a year to discuss the setting of rents and service charges.</p>
<p>Principal C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social</p>	<p>Defining Outcomes</p> <p>In 2018, the Council invited citizens from across the borough to tell us what they thought Camden should be like in 2025, to develop shared priorities that should be at the heart of our vision for the future of the borough. Five themes stood out from these conversations that form our shared key ambitions for Camden in 2025 (Camden 2025 vision): Homes and housing; Strong growth and access to jobs; Safe, strong and open communities; Clean, vibrant and sustainable places; and Healthy, independent lives.</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
and environmental benefits.	<p>Our Camden Plan is the Council's response to the Camden 2025 vision and explains how the Council as an organisation will deliver on its ambitions.</p> <p>Tackling Inequalities</p> <p>In respect of its commitment to tackling inequalities, in January 2020 the Council's Cabinet agreed a paper outlining our approach to cohesion and equality. This included developing a council-wide strategic approach, joining the European Intercultural Cities programme, and exploring the range of inequalities across Camden, including socio-economic inequality. An Equalities, Disproportionality and Cohesion Refresh paper was presented to Cabinet on 13th January 2021, which identified six core priority areas of focus and refreshed the Council's approach to delivering equalities, disproportionality and cohesion through the identification of 140 actions. To ensure that delivery remains a priority, the Council mobilised a Race and Equality Members Working Group, and also appointed its first Director of Equalities and Disproportionality to provide strategic leadership to the Council's efforts to tackle inequalities.</p> <p>Climate Emergency</p> <p>In October 2019, the Council held a themed full Council debate to consider the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on the Climate crisis held over the summer of 2019. The full council debate allowed Assembly members to present their seventeen proposals for how Camden should address the climate crisis. The seventeen proposals were supported by full Council and subsequently formed the basis for Camden's new Climate Action Plan which was adopted by Cabinet in June 2020 and publically launched in July 2020. The Climate Action Plan is the produce of unprecedented levels of community engagement with over 2,500 residents and community groups involved in its development.</p> <p>To help oversee the new Climate Action Plan, a Citizens' panel was recruited to over the summer of 2020. The establishment of a Citizens' panel to monitor and support the delivery of Camden's Climate Action Plan was a direct recommendation from the Citizens' Assembly. The panel adds a new transparency dimension to Camden's climate governance, providing external community oversight on Climate Action Plan progress, as well as acting as a community level sounding board for environmental projects. The Citizens' panel has met virtually on four occasions since October 2020. The work of the panel is open and transparent, with agendas, minutes and presentations from the meetings publically available at www.camden.gov.uk/citizen-panel</p>
<p>Principal D: Determining the necessary interventions to optimise the</p>	<p>Determining Interventions</p> <p>The Council has continued to build on its approach to active stakeholder participation that played such a significant role in the development of Camden 2025 as the vision for the borough. This involved working with residents, partners and officers to develop the long-term vision, inviting everyone who lives and works in Camden to tell us what the borough should be like in 2025, to anticipate future challenges and to consider new and innovative ways to collectively tackling some of our most difficult problems.</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
<p>achievement of the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>To achieve the vision set out in Camden 2025, the Council recognises that it needs to inspire a new way of working with Camden's people and organisations. The Council established a new dedicated Participation Team to generate a participatory culture throughout the Council, and to test out innovative models of participation and engagement. New approaches have been piloted and aim to bring residents closer to decision making, to ensure residents voices are at the centre of shaping neighbourhoods and enable social action, dialogue and connection. The Council has adopted a test and learn approach, with evaluation and learning embedded at every stage.</p> <p>The Council also acknowledges that an evidence-based approach is essential to keeping residents' experiences at the centre of what we do. We have looked at the challenges and opportunities faced by people in the borough, as well as considering which sections of the Council's current services work best. This approach is known as outcomes-based budgeting and has led us to develop a detailed, evidenced-based analysis of how the Council can achieve its key outcomes with fewer resources.</p> <p>Planning Interventions</p> <p>The Council works in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the statutory sector, third sector and business to deliver services for local people and drive forward improvements in Camden. Partnership working includes different types of relationships – from contractual arrangements between the Council and other organisations to deliver services or projects through to strategic forums (some of which are required by statute, others voluntary) which bring partners together to agree how best to tackle key challenges and shared priorities. Some have funding to allocate and targets to meet, others provide a steer to inform individual partners' priorities and commissioning. The governance arrangements vary depending on the nature of partnership working but are designed to ensure that the partnership remains appropriate, effective and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs) are key partners to the Council and relationships have been developed with strategic partners based on shared values and a commitment to improving the lives of people in Camden. In 2016/17, the Council agreed a new annual VSO investment programme of £5.1 million, with funding awarded across a number of Strategic Partners. Funding was awarded based on the aims of two thematic projects; Neighbourhoods (maximising existing strengths, assets and resources, improving residents life chances and opportunities and increasing opportunities for residents from different backgrounds to be involved in local social actions) and equalities (mainstream services that deliver for all, tackling barriers, increasing access to services, and increasing participations of communities currently underrepresented). During 2020-21, extensive work with the Voluntary and Community Sector has led to increased openness, transparency and mutual understanding.</p> <p>The Council also works closely and in partnership with relevant agencies to help prevent the abuse of vulnerable children and adults within Camden. There is strong partnership oversight of the multi-agency aspects of the child-protection system through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant agencies co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children locally.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board also has a statutory role in developing policies and procedures, and co-ordinating local work on safeguarding and promotion of the protection of adults at risk of abuse within Camden. Safeguarding is highly integrated within the</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>Council and across partner agencies, and well-established and effective governance arrangements are in place to define roles and responsibilities. In May 2018, Ofsted conducted a focussed visit to Camden's children's services, and reported that child protection concerns are quickly identified and lead to timely interventions to safeguard children.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council and the Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have continued to work closely during the year to develop new integrated health and social care arrangements, in collaboration with provider organisations. This is happening at a time when both the health and care systems are under significant financial pressures, and both organisations have committed to maintaining effective partnership working as they face these challenges and continue to seek improved outcomes for residents. The Health and Wellbeing Board is also key to promoting integration and partnership working between the NHS, social care and public health through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Members of the Board work together to understand the health and wellbeing needs of the Camden population, agree priorities and encourage the people who buy health and care services to work in a more joined-up way. As a result, patients and the public should experience more joined-up services from the NHS and local councils.</p> <p>Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes</p> <p>Business intelligence is important to the Council in ensuring decision-makers receive objective and rigorous data and information in order to help with the appraisal and analysis of key options and decisions. The Council's use of business intelligence is evolving constantly to ensure that the organisation has a better informed view of what is happening and can use more robust evidence to take better decisions. The Council has developed an organisational wide framework and approach for data to ensure that it holds the appropriate skills, resources, processes and technology investments, which enables the Council to continuously improve the quality of its data, to utilise the data held to measure and improve the performance of services delivered to residents, and to provide evidence to improve decision-making. However, the Council acknowledges that further work is required to ensure that business information/intelligence is produced in a way that enables relevant and timely monitoring. The Council is also in the process of carrying out resident engagement surrounding the development of a Citizens' Data Charter, which will resume in 2021 having been paused in 2020 due to the pandemic.</p> <p>Performance management is considered through a range of review mechanisms; including external inspection bodies, annual reports for some service areas, and the detailed reporting of performance indicators to DMTs, CMT, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The work developed in 2019/20 to introduce a new approach to performance reporting was paused in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic as the Council moved into emergency management mode and needed to step down non-urgent work to redeploy staff into the emergency response. This was replaced by the development of a weekly Covid dashboard reporting data and insight to the Gold emergency planning strategic board. This dashboard has sat at the heart of our performance management arrangements with other data relating to core service delivery sitting at DMT and SMT level. Cabinet members are provided with regular insight and data updates</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>as part of weekly CMT/Cabinet meetings. A Covid Oversight Scrutiny Panel has been put in place throughout the period of the pandemic and receives regular data and insight on the council's pandemic response.</p> <p>At the end of 2020 a new C2025 Outcomes Board, made up of CMT and Cabinet, was put in place. The Board endorsed proposals to develop an Outcomes and Assurance Framework alongside a refresh of C2025. This work is a priority for the Council in 2021 to refresh its strategic direction and priorities in light of the impact of Covid-19 on residents lives and on public service provision.</p> <p>The Qlikview system brings together disparate datasets into more agile and responsive dashboards, giving services access to timelier and better information across the authority. These arrangements ensure that policy and decision making are evidence-based, and develop accountability for service delivery at all levels within the organisation and cross-directorate working on shared objectives and outcomes.</p>
<p>Principal E:</p> <p>Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p>	<p>The Constitution sets out in detail how the Council operates, and defines and documents the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and chief officer functions, as well as setting out procedures for joint arrangements and responsibilities for partnership arrangements. It sets out how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Management control is exercised through the Camden Management Team (CMT), which defines and establishes processes, communicates and embeds codes of conduct, and defines the standards of behaviour for officers within the Council.</p> <p>A Managers' Handbook and Members' Handbook are also in place, which outline roles and responsibilities and are updated regularly. To support our people managers, the Council launched a new guide to being a manager in Camden in June 2019. The guide is accessible to all officers via the Intranet, and brings together, in one place, an overview of the core people management responsibilities in Camden. The Council has clear expectations of managers in terms of their service management responsibilities (including in areas such as financial management and managing people). This includes their role in communicating with officers to ensure officers understand their roles and are appropriately supported when working with partners and delivering Council services. This is reflected in policies, procedures and guidance available to support managers in various facets of their management role. This information is publicised on the intranet and managers are able to access guidance and support from specialists, (e.g. finance, HR and legal services) when required. Learning and development opportunities are also available to support managers in developing relevant skills e.g. political awareness or working in partnership.</p> <p>The Council is committed to the ongoing professional development of Members and officers. A comprehensive learning offer is available, including on-going investment in e-learning technology to improve development opportunities and support our approach to mandatory learning. The Council also operates a corporate mandatory learning package, which was last refreshed in 2019-20, and all officers were required to complete a suite of e-learning training modules, and successful completion of these was linked to officers' performance reviews.</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>Members have access to the Council's learning and development hub to complete a suite six of mandatory training modules: Conscious Inclusion; Fire Safety; Fraud Awareness; Health and Safety; Information Handling; and Introduction to Safeguarding. Role-specific training is also provided to reflect the individual responsibilities and positions held by Members, including Planning Committee training, Licensing Committee training, and risk management and fraud awareness training. Additionally, a number of 'open-to-all' training sessions are provided, including 'effective chairing', 'effectively managing casework' and 'speaking with impact' training. Group Whips have also approved a number of requests from Members to undertake external training or attend relevant conferences to assist in the development of Members both as councillors generally and to support them in fulfilling their other roles.</p>
<p>Principal F:</p> <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p>Managing Risks</p> <p>The Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management functions plays an important role in helping the organisation deliver its strategic objectives by objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and the management of risks; and providing an objective and evidence-based opinion on governance, risk management and internal control.</p> <p>Strategically, the Council's Principal Risk Report continues to be reported to DMTs, CMT and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee bi-annually. The Principal Risk Report is written in conjunction with risk leads across the Council. Operationally, risk management continues to be embedded through service-level risk management workshops, targeted training sessions and ongoing support to individual projects and initiatives.</p> <p>The Council's Principal Risk Report is reviewed and updated bi-annually and updates are presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. The process is led by the Council's Risk Manager and Head of Internal Audit, in consultation with risk owners, DMTs and CMT. The Principal Risk Report articulates the causes and consequences of principal risks, alongside a summary of controls. Controls are articulated in order to assess whether risks are being effectively managed.</p> <p>The work of Internal Audit, in accordance with their Annual Audit Plans, continues to be directed towards the key risk areas as identified within the Principal Risk Report. The work of Internal Audit seeks to provide assurance to the Executive Director Corporate Services, who is the statutory Chief Financial Officer (known as the Section 151 Officer); management; and Members that the Council complies with relevant laws, regulations, internal policies and procedures. Internal Audit provides bi-annual updates on delivery of the audit plan to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p> <p>Financial Management</p> <p>The financial management of the Council is organised through a wide range of well-established processes and procedures, which deliver strong financial control arrangements. The Council has in place robust budget planning and monitoring processes, supported by the Council's comprehensive Financial Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which are reviewed and updated, as necessary. Information is reported to senior officers quarterly, and to Cabinet at least twice a year in line with the Council's financial standing orders.</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>The Council operates a monthly revenue budget monitoring system, forecasts are formally reported to DMTs and CMT on a quarterly basis with a process to capture significant variances and movements between quarters. Forecast information is also reported to Members alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) updates (see December 2020 update here). When an overspend is reported, directorates take active steps to bring down the forecast overspend. As part of its regular monitoring processes, the Council continues to monitor this financial position and undertake the necessary remedial work to address any forecast under or overspends.</p> <p>Other features of the financial control environment include a consolidated corporate scheme of delegation, which was last reviewed and reissued in September 2016, and guidelines for budget setting and final accounts, which are reviewed annually.</p> <p>In 2020-21, the Council has continued to embed the new integrated HR, Finance and Procurement system, Oracle. The payroll module, the final element of implementation, went live in January 2021. Oracle represents a key part of the Council's digital transformation under the Smarter Working Programme, and provides tighter integration of both processes and data across our HR and Finance systems.</p> <p>Managing Performance</p> <p>Performance management is considered through a range of review mechanisms; including external inspection bodies, annual reports for some service areas, and the detailed reporting of performance indicators to DMTs, CMT, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The work developed in 2019/20 to introduce a new approach to performance reporting was paused in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic as the Council moved into emergency management mode and needed to step down non-urgent work to redeploy staff into the emergency response.</p> <p>This was replaced by the development of a weekly Covid dashboard reporting data and insight to the Gold emergency planning strategic board. This dashboard has sat at the heart of our performance management arrangements with other data relating to core service delivery sitting at Departmental and Service management levels. Cabinet Members are provided with regular insight and data updates as part of weekly CMT/Cabinet meetings. A Covid Oversight Scrutiny Panel has been put in place throughout the period of the pandemic and receives regular data and insight on the council's pandemic response.</p> <p>At the end of 2020 a new C2025 Outcomes Board, made up of CMT and Cabinet, was put in place. The Board endorsed proposals to develop an Outcomes and Assurance Framework alongside a refresh of C2025. This work is a priority for the Council in 2021 to refresh its strategic direction and priorities in light of the impact of Covid-19 on residents lives and on public service provision.</p> <p>Scrutiny</p> <p>The Council has five scrutiny committees to scrutinise the various functions of the Council and decisions made by the Cabinet, Cabinet Members, and Chief Officers. Ordinarily, Scrutiny Committees each meet up to seven times a year and in addition, the chairs of the five scrutiny committees meet collectively, as the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee, to co-ordinate scrutiny work collectively. The scrutiny</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>committees can, and often do, operate scrutiny panels to look at specific matters in a task-and-finish style approach. Camden is also one of the five boroughs participating in the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Ordinarily each scrutiny committee regularly meets with relevant members of the Cabinet to discuss areas in their portfolios, and the Leader of the Council attends the Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. Scrutiny committee meetings are scheduled in such a way as to be able to comment on Cabinet reports prior to decision, allowing for relevant input through an early consideration of the draft proposals or when they have been finalised. In addition, there is a procedure for executive decisions to be called-in for discussion at scrutiny committee meetings.</p> <p>A statutory scrutiny officer has been appointed at an appropriately senior level – the Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy Design– and all scrutiny committees receive appropriate officer support from corporate strategy, committee services and relevant service departments.</p> <p>Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Scrutiny model has been temporarily modified to reflect the fact that the Council's primary focus during this period had been on the pandemic response. The 5 scrutiny committees continue to meet to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on non-Covid items going to Cabinet, and the ability for members to call in decisions remains. However, the wider work programmes of the Scrutiny committees have largely been on hold and a separate Covid-19 Oversight Cross Party Panel has been established. This meets approximately monthly to consider Covid-related Cabinet reports and to take a wider overarching report on how the Council is responding to the pandemic.</p> <p>The Council, as part of its wider ongoing review of its democratic mechanisms, looked at scrutiny and possible improvements in its functioning. As part of this, initial consultation with Chairs of Scrutiny Committees was undertaken in January 2019, where it was determined that further work was required regarding the proposals.</p> <p>Anti-Fraud and Corruption</p> <p>The Council employs a robust anti-fraud approach, which is consistent with best practice defined by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud; National Fraud Strategy – 'Fighting Fraud Locally'; and the Institute of Counter Fraud Specialists (ICFS) Code of Practice. The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy incorporates the Council's whistleblowing guidance and fraud response plan, and promotes a zero tolerance approach to fraud. Officers and Members are able to access this document on the intranet and it is also publicly available on the Council's website. The Council's whistleblowing policy, which forms part of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, provides a mechanism for suspected fraud, including breaches of law, procedure or policy, to be confidentially reported.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management has overall responsibility for anti-fraud related activity and reports outcomes from the Council's Anti-fraud and Investigations Team and Housing Investigations teams bi-annually to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. Completed anti-fraud work in 2020-21 produced reports in a number of areas with recommendations</p>

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

Core Principles of the Framework:	Examples of the governance arrangements the Council has in place.
	<p>to strengthen controls and further mitigate fraud risk. An interim and annual counter-fraud report is presented to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee each year.</p> <p>All officers are also required to complete online learning on fraud awareness, which forms part of the Council's suite of mandatory learning modules.</p>
<p>Principal G:</p> <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p>	<p>The Council believes in transparency and residents have a right to see what is going on and to hold the Council to account. The Open Data Portal and the Open Data Charter are published on the Council's website, and are key mechanisms for meeting the requirements of the government's Transparency Code. Camden is working with residents and partners to develop a Data Charter to give ethical guidance and principles on the use of data in Camden.</p> <p>Council meetings are also open to the public; however exceptions are made for matters that require confidentiality. The time, date and location of public meetings are displayed on the Council's website. The Camden Plan commits the Council to further opening up the Council and bringing residents closer to democratic and strategic leaders, for example through the introduction of themed Council debates.</p> <p>There are five scrutiny committees within the Council, which support and hold the work of the Cabinet and the Council to account. Scrutiny committees play an important role in accountability, openness and transparency.</p> <p>The following information is reported annually to Members and is available on the Council's website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance in delivering the Council's priorities; ▪ Statement of Accounts; ▪ Annual Internal Audit Report; ▪ Annual External Audit Letter; and ▪ Annual Governance Statement. <p>Internal Audit provides bi-annual updates on delivery of the audit plan to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p> <p>In April 2019 the Council launched a revised, single corporate complaints policy. The Council's aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and simply as possible and initially this is done informally. If a complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily then a formal procedure is followed. Complainants who are dissatisfied with how the Council has dealt with a complaint can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman (HO).</p>

APPENDIX ENDS