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Cambridge City Council

Civic Affairs and Audit Committee

Date: Monday, 9 March 2026

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance]

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Agenda

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REPORT TITLE: Review of new Constitutional Arrangements

To: Civic Affairs & Audit Committee (9 March 2026)

Report by:

Tom Lewis, Head of Legal Practice and Monitoring Officer
Email: tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org

Wards affected:
None

Director Approval: Director Robert Pollock confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee for consideration.

1.   Recommendations

1.1   That the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee recommend to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) the following changes to the Constitution:

1.   The updated member/officer protocol

2.   Revised terms of reference for the Equalities Panel (Inclusion and Equity Panel)

3.   The limited power for Cabinet to make supplementary estimates - additional revenue and capital expenditure up to a threshold.

That Civic Affairs and Audit Committee:

4. Notes that the Constitution should continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, and that any further updates will be presented to the committee.

5. Notes the draft meeting calendar and provides any feedback before final agreement at the AGM.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 As part of the recommendations agreed in May 2025, the constitution was to be reviewed after nine of months of the revised Leader/Cabinet arrangements. Officers have been monitoring the effectiveness of the constitution since it was introduced. This report contains several areas where improvements can be made to reflect best practice or to address omissions, which would be included in a report to the AGM in May.

3. Background and key issues

3.1 Move to new governance model

The new arrangements represent the first significant change to the Council's governance in more than twenty-five years. Upon adoption, the Council agreed that a review of the new constitutional arrangements would report after nine months; and that the constitution would continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, which had not previously been the case.

Cabinet Members and the Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees received support from the Leadership Centre[1] in preparation for and following the adoption of the new governance arrangements. This included facilitated sessions led by Mark Rogers (former CEO of Birmingham City Council and Solihull MBC), and tailored training and briefing for members and officers, including to promote effective scrutiny practice.

Overall, the transition to the new governance arrangements has proceeded relatively smoothly. Feedback has been broadly positive. As expected with any significant organisational change, some early uncertainty was experienced regarding remits, procedures and working relationships. The role of Overview & Scrutiny has developed positively as Members and officers have gained confidence operating in the new framework.

The establishment of two thematic Overview & Scrutiny Committees, each meeting on a quarterly cycle, introduced complexity into the coordination and forward planning of their

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[1] Leadership Centre a charity founded in 2004 with central government funding to support leadership in local government, other public sector bodies and VCSE organisations.

respective work programmes. In particular, the timing of meetings has made it more challenging to schedule pre-scrutiny of Cabinet decisions in a timely manner. This theme was raised during the initial months of implementation. In the new Municipal Year, the two meetings are proposed to meet in closer proximity (both meetings held in alternate weeks) to help feed into a Cabinet meeting a few weeks later.

During the Governance Design Review process, senior officers advised that a single Overview & Scrutiny Committee ('O&S') comprising 12–14 Members, meeting approximately eight times per year, would be the most effective scrutiny model. A single O&S provides greater flexibility to pre-scrutiny and forward planning and would be simpler for officers and members to engage with.

Oxford, Norwich, South Cambridgeshire and many other councils have a single O&S for these reasons. A single O&S is very likely to the starting point for discussions about governance in a new unitary authority.

The Committee is therefore invited to provide comments on whether the option of moving to a single O&S should be considered in future. Member views will help inform improvement to constitutional arrangements as they are kept under reviewed.

3.2   **Constitution in operation – Monitoring Officer views**

The Constitution has now been in operation for nine months. During that period, the revised governance arrangements have embedded well across the organisation. Members have engaged constructively with the updated processes and procedures, and there is clear evidence that the framework is operating as intended. Notably, during this period:

- the call-in procedure has been utilised by Members; and

- Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs) have been requisitioned and convened in accordance with the constitutional provisions.

Both instances demonstrate that the mechanisms set out in the Constitution are accessible, clearly understood and capable of being operated effectively in practice. The ability of Members to invoke these procedures without procedural uncertainty illustrates the clarity and simplicity of the revised governance arrangements. As such the

constitution has functioned as designed.

The proposed amendments would introduce improvements informed by practical experience and modernise sections imported from the old constitution (Protocol) to reflect best practice (Supplementary Estimates) and to facilitate new ways of working (Equalities Panel).

3.3 **Protocol on Member / Officer Relations**

The core purpose of the Protocol is to set the ground rules for a professional, lawful, and effective working relationship between elected Members and paid officers. It is a 'code of standards' for members and officers to work together for residents and to support good governance.

When the constitution was revised in May 2025 there were two sections that were carried forward from the old constitution:

- Officer code of conduct
- Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

These are somewhat outdated and in need of modernisation. A review of The Officers' Code of Conduct will be taken forward by Hannah Ralph, AD People and Change, who has just joined the Council, in conjunction with the MO.

The updated Protocol on Member / Officer Relations and existing Protocol are attached at Annex A. The updated Protocol builds on the City Council's current Protocol and includes the latest guidance from the LGA as well as best practice from other councils.

The updated Protocol provides a clearer, operational framework for constructive and professional working relationships. It retains the core principles of political neutrality, mutual respect and clear separation of roles, and strengthens or provides greater clarity in several key areas:

- explicit reciprocal expectations for Members and officers based on LGA recommended principles, including Nolan principles.

- greater clarity on roles and boundaries: Members lead on policy, priorities, scrutiny, representation; officers provide impartial advice, deliver decisions and

manage day-to-day operations.

- protecting officer integrity and impartiality helps prevent undue influence, political partiality, or officers being placed under inappropriate pressure.

- earlier engagement of ward Members in matters affecting their wards

- clearer arrangements in relation to political group briefings

- modernised guidance on correspondence, electronic communications and media/publicity, and

- a more structured route for addressing concerns or resolving relationship breakdowns.

Adoption of the revised Protocol will support more consistent behaviour standards and clearer day-to-day working practices and should reduce avoidable friction by setting out predictable processes.

To embed the revised arrangements, it is proposed that the Council undertakes a short programme of implementation activity: briefings for Members and relevant officers; and update of the induction pack for new members, and 'Who Does What' to describe updated processes for handling Members' enquiries, which should now be dealt with within 5 working days rather than 7.

3.4 **Supplementary Estimates Process**

It is commonplace for councils operating a Leader and Cabinet model to include a supplementary estimates process within their constitution. Such a process allows the Cabinet to approve relatively small additional amounts of revenue and capital spend outside of the annual budget setting process.

The benefits of such a process are:
- It allows the council to operate in an agile and proportionate manner when new issues emerge which may require additional spending in-year.

- It allows the council to respond in the right way when new pressures emerge, being honest and transparent about additional resource requirement, rather than having to rely upon virements or the use of earmarked reserves which may impact

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negatively upon other services.

- It protects valuable meeting time at Full Council, now limited by the 'guillotine', ensuring the Full Council meetings can focus on areas of greatest significance rather than non-material financial matters.

The use of Supplementary Estimates would provide additional and timely flexibility for the Council over the next two years as there will be new and unforeseen issues that will emerge during the process of Local Government Reorganisation.

Chelmsford City Council has supplementary estimate revenue limit per item of up to £1m; NW Leicestershire District Council, £250k; Wokingham BC up to £500k; South Oxfordshire DC up to £250k; Winchester City Council up to £500k; Newcastle under Lyme up to £1m revenue and £2m capital; Cheshire East Council up to £1m; Sefton MBC up to £1m.

It is therefore proposed by the S151, that a new supplementary estimates process be added to the constitution to allow Cabinet to approve additional revenue expenditure of up to **£250,000** per item, and additional capital expenditure of up to **£1 million** per item.

There would be guardrails in place to ensure that this power is used appropriately and transparently:

- The supplementary estimates process should be used only when there has been a change of circumstances since the budget was approved by Full Council.

- The supplementary estimates process cannot be used to approve spend which would be contrary to the council's Budget and Policy Framework (except to increase spend subject to the limits above).

- The supplementary estimates process cannot be used to override the Contract Procedure Rules, key decision requirements, or the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

- Related proposals will be aggregated for the purposes of the limit above – there shall be no artificial disaggregation of proposals to avoid Full Council approval.

- A decision to approve a supplementary estimate must be taken at a meeting of the

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Cabinet in the interests of transparency and accountability.

- All supplementary estimate approvals are subject to written confirmation from the Section 151 Officer that the proposal is affordable, all financial implications have been considered, and the correct process has been followed.

- All supplementary estimates approved in year will be reported to Full Council as part of the annual Outturn Report.

Note that this will not change existing governance processes around capital expenditure, which is externally funded, e.g. through capital grants or s106 contributions. As with any Cabinet decision, members have the right to invoke 'call-in' to challenge a supplementary estimate where the appropriate procedural tests can be met.

3.5 **Equalities Panel**

The Equalities Panel is a Cabinet Group, which under the constitution is an advisory body to Cabinet. The Panel has conducted a review of its role and impact over the last six month. As a result, a number of changes are proposed to its Terms of Reference to clarify and enhance its role.

The proposals include a change of name to the 'Inclusion and Equity Panel' and a number of changes in working practice to enhance its impact:

- expanding collaboration, with voluntary sector and public representatives as members, so that the Panel's recommendations to Cabinet are informed by those with lived experience of inequalities.

- better support Cabinet, OSC, and wider Committees such as the Employment Committee through a forward plan

- including within a forward plan key issues affecting the City, wider than just those impacted by Council services

The updated Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix B. More detailed working arrangements have been developed and consulted on with the Cabinet Lead for Equalities and the current Equalities Panel.

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The current Terms of Reference can be found at Appendix C.

3.6 **Meetings Calendar 2026-27**

A draft copy of the meetings calendar for the Municipal Year 2026-27 can be found at Appendix D. This is an opportunity for the committee to review the calendar ahead of it being presented to the annual meeting for approval.

4. Corporate plan

4.1 The Constitution underpins the decision making of the Council in order for the Council to carry out its priorities as part of the Corporate Plan

Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council

5. Consultation, engagement and communication

5.1 Changes to the Constitution are being presented to the committee as part of the consultation and engagement process. Any recommendations from the committee will be presented to Full Council for ratification.

6. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

6.1 If approved at Full Council the changes will be included in the Constitution and will take effect from that date.

7. Implications

Relevant risks

7.1 There are none.

Financial Implications

7.2 There are none.

Legal Implications

7.3   The Constitution contains the rules by which the Council governs itself. It contains a number of legal provisions that are set out in statute. Part of good governance is to review the Constitution and ensure any legal updates are reflected.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

7.4   There are none.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

7.5   There are none.

Procurement Implications

7.6   There are none.

Community Safety Implications

7.7   There are none.

8.   Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

8.1   Report to Council May 2025

9.   Appendices

9.1   Appendix A – Updated Member Officer Protocol (inc. current protocol)
    Appendix B – Updated Terms of Reference Inclusion and Equity Panel
    Appendix C – Current Equalities Panel Terms of Reference
    Appendix D – Draft meeting calendar

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Tom Lewis, Head of Legal Practice and Monitoring Officer, email: tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org

Appendix A

[UPDATED] **Protocol on Member / Officer Relations**

This Protocol forms part of the Constitution of Cambridge City Council and sets out the framework governing relationships between Members and Officers. It reflects the Council's commitment to high standards of governance, mutual respect, professional integrity and lawful decision-making.

1. Introduction

1.1 Effective member-officer relations are built on a series of interconnecting basic principles:

- **Ethical conduct**: Members and officers individually act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

- **Mutual respect and trust**: Members and officers respect each other, their respective roles and responsibilities.

- **Clear and well understood roles and responsibilities**: The roles and responsibilities of both members and officers, including the boundaries between them, are clearly defined, consistently communicated and understood by all members and officers working with members.

- **Visible leadership**: Senior members and officers actively and visibly model, promote and uphold the authority's standards, setting clear expectations. They are committed to preventing, identifying and resolving conflicts constructively and transparently.

1.2 This Protocol operates alongside other elements of the Council's constitution and statutory legislation:

- The Members' Code of Conduct

- The Officers' Code of Conduct

- The Council's Constitution

- The Scheme of Delegation

- The Access to Information Procedure Rules

- Relevant legislation including the Local Government Act 1972 and Localism Act 2011.

1.3 Members should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer where necessary. Officers should seek guidance from their Line Manager, Service Lead, Assistant Director, Director, or Chief Executive as appropriate.

1.4 This protocol will be reviewed on a regular basis alongside any review of the Constitution.

2. Roles of Members and Officers

2.1 Both members and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another. Their individual responsibilities are, however, distinct. Members are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Officers are employees of the Council and their job is to give advice to members and the authority, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council, the Cabinet and relevant committees, panels etc. Officers shall act in the best interests of the Council as a whole and shall not give partisan political advice. Mutual respect between members and officers is essential to good local government.

2.2 Members have three main areas of responsibility:

(1) determining the policy of the Council and providing political leadership,

(2) representing the Authority externally, and

(3) acting as advocates on behalf of their constituents.

It is not the role of members to involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the Council's services. Members should be careful to avoid involvement in internal office management, discipline and other employment related issues, as the actions of a member may be held to be the actions of the Council as an "employer".

2.3 Members of the Cabinet and chairs and vice-chairs of committees and panels have additional responsibilities. Their relationships with officers may be different from, and more complex than, those of members without those responsibilities and this is recognised in the expectations they are entitled to have.

2.4 As individual members of the Council, all members have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with officers and should be treated equally. This principle is particularly important in the context of overview and scrutiny. Where a political group forms an administration, either alone or in partnership with another group or groups, it is recognised that the relationship between officers (particularly those at a senior level in the Council) and the administration will differ from that with

opposition groups. However, members in opposition still have the same rights and obligations in their relationships with officers and should be treated equally.

2.5 The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) hold statutory responsibilities which must be respected at all times. The role of officers is to give advice and information to members and to implement the policies determined by the Council.

3. Expectations

3.1 Members can expect from officers:

(a) a commitment to the Authority as a whole, and not to any political group;

(b) a working partnership;

(c) an understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;

(d) a timely response to enquiries and complaints;

(e) professional advice, not influenced by political views or preference, which does not compromise the political neutrality of employees;

(f) regular up-to-date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities that they have and positions that they hold;

(g) awareness of, and sensitivity to, the political environment;

(h) respect, dignity and courtesy;

(i) training and development in order to carry out their role effectively;

(j) integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality;

(k) not to have personal issues raised with them by employees outside the agreed procedures;

(l) that employees shall not use their relationship with members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly;

(m) that employees shall at all times comply with the Officers' Code of Conduct.

3.2 Officers can expect from members:

    (a) a working partnership;

    (b) an understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;

    (c) political leadership and direction;

    (d) respect, dignity and courtesy;

    (e) integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality;

    (f) not to be subject to bullying or to be put under undue pressure. Members should have regard to the seniority of officers in determining what are reasonable requests, having regard to the power relationship between members and officers, and the potential vulnerability of officers, particularly at junior levels;

    (g) that members shall not use their relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;

    (h) that members shall at all times comply with the local Code of Conduct.

4. Working Relationships and Conduct

4.1 It is clearly important that there should be close working relationships between all officers and members. However, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close or appear so close as to bring into question the individual's ability to deal impartially with others. Close personal familiarity between individual members and officers can damage professional relationships and can prove embarrassing to other members and officers. Situations should be avoided, therefore, that could give rise to suspicion and / or appearance of improper conduct or behaviour. Provided these guidelines are observed, there is no reason why there should not be an informal atmosphere between members and officers outside formal meetings and events.

4.2 Any dealings between members and officers should be conducted with mutual trust, respect and courtesy and neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position. An employee who is one of their constituents may ask a member for advice and support. Employees are entitled to seek such assistance in the same way as any other member of the public. However, members should be careful not to prejudice the Council's position in relation to disciplinary procedures or employment matters in respect of any employee. A member approached for help in such circumstances should first seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

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4.3 Members shall not pressurise any officer to change their professional opinion on any Council business matter or do anything that compromises, or which is likely to compromise, the impartiality of officers or those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

Constructive Criticism

4.4 It is an absolute requirement that councillors do not criticise officers personally or use, as councillors, inappropriate language or conduct in public about reports or actions taken by officers. Officers are similarly constrained by their own code, by their employment provisions and by their requirement to maintain professional integrity. It is important that there should be mutual respect and courtesy between councillors and officers and that no councillor or officer should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.

4.5 Councillors have the right to criticise reports or the actions taken by officers but they should always avoid personal attacks on officers and ensure that criticism is constructive, well-founded and likely to lead to improved performance in future, and does not seek to apportion blame.

5. Accountability of Members / Officers under Scrutiny Arrangements

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may scrutinise and review decisions made by the Cabinet or actions taken by or on behalf of the Cabinet. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny role, these committee's may require the Leader, lead cabinet member or Chief Officer or service lead to attend before it as provided in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

6. Local Members (Ward Councillors)

6.1 Local members have an important role to play in representing the Council in electoral Wards, responding to the concerns of their constituents, in meetings with partners and serving on external bodies and organisations.

6.2 It is essential for the proper running of the Council that there should be full and appropriate engagement with local Ward members before new decisions are taken which affect their electoral Wards. It is the duty of each Chief Officer or service manager to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirements engage and to keep local members informed and that the timing of such information allows members to contribute to those discussions.

6.3. Issues may affect a single electoral Ward but others may have a wider impact in which case numerous members will need to be involved and kept informed. In such instances and engagement should be proportionate and coordinated.

6.4 Officers must ensure Ward Councillors are consulted or advised of the exercise of delegated powers relevant to their area where appropriate.

6.4 Wherever a public meeting (i.e. a meeting open to the public to attend) is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all members representing the electoral Ward(s) affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes a formal consultative exercise, the local member(s) shall be notified at the outset of the exercise.

6.5 If a local member is not sure how to handle a problem that has arisen in their Ward they may, if appropriate, seek guidance from their Group Leader or member colleagues before seeking advice from Chief Officers or service managers.

7. Members' Enquiries

7.1 The relationship between members and officers should be characterised by partnership, empowerment and trust. In order to ensure delivery of the Council's priorities and provision of high-quality public services it is essential that members and officers work in a collaborative and mutually supportive manner. Officers should recognise the need for members to receive information in a timely manner in order to carry out their constituency roles. Members should likewise be appreciative of the competing demands on officer time.

7.2 Members should ensure, whenever possible, they first check the City Council website to resolve queries or report issues[1]. Members should advise residents to do the same, and only themselves get involved in a resident matter if there is a potential unresolved failure of service or specific advocacy is appropriate. Members' enquiries which fall within the remit of constituents' complaints, which should not generally include a request for service, shall be handled under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

7.4 If it is necessary to contact an officer Members should speak to the contact centre in the first instance in order to be referred to the officer / service they require or refer to 'Who Does What'.

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[1] On-line options are the quickest, easiest, and most efficient way to report issues or receive a service. Report it - Cambridge City Council.

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7.3 If members need to contact an officer to resolve a query they should approach the service manager or the most appropriate officer in the first instance. Try to avoid speaking to Chief Officers about issues that should be dealt with by a service manager.

7.2 Chief Officers and service managers are responsible for ensuring that members' enquiries are dealt with promptly and satisfactorily within their service areas. There should however be no expectation among members that member queries will always be given priority over an officer's other work commitments.

7.3 Officers shall aim to provide a substantive response to members' enquiries within 7 working days of receipt. If a substantive response cannot be provided within that timescale, officers shall contact the member to explain the reason why and liaise with them regarding the timescale within which the full response shall be sent.

7.4 An officer shall raise with their service manager or Chief Officer any enquiry which would impose a disproportionate burden on their work and, if necessary, further discussion shall then take place with the member concerned with a view to agreement of the approach to managing the response to the enquiry.

7.6 The process outlined in this paragraph supplements members' statutory and common law rights to information as detailed in paragraph 10.

8. Political Groups

8.1 Political group meetings, whilst they form an important part in the preliminaries to Council decision-making, are not formal decision-making bodies of the Council and, as such, are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings do not, therefore, rank as Council decisions and it is essential that members and officers understand and interpret them accordingly.

8.2 Officer support to political groups shall not extend beyond providing information and advice in relation to Council business (not party-political business). It may be appropriate for officers to participate in discussions within political group meetings in relation to the professional advice they give. However, it is good practice for party political discussions and debates to take place and conclusions to be reached in the absence of officers, in order to avoid suspicion of impropriety or misunderstanding.

8.3 Officers shall respect the confidentiality of any political group discussions. Any breach of this part of the protocol shall be brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer for consideration. For the avoidance of doubt, it shall be recognised by all that, in discharging their duties, officers serve the Council as a whole and not exclusively any

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political group, combination of groups or any individual members. Members shall, at all times, respect the political impartiality of officers and shall not expect or encourage officers to give a political view on any matter.

8.4 When an officer is requested to attend a political group meeting:

(a) the request to attend shall be made through, and approved by, the appropriate Chief Officer or Chief Executive;

(b) such a request shall only be made in relation to Council business; and officers shall:

(i) provide relevant factual advice and assistance;

(ii) leave during the deliberations of the political group on the issues;

(iii) respect the confidentiality of any party group decisions at which they are present;

(iv) not champion, defend, action a request or spend any resources of the Council, or be held responsible for actioning in any way whatsoever the decisions of the political group(s), unless and until such decisions have become the formal decisions of the Council; and

(v) inform the other political groups, offering them the right of the same information.

9. Access to Information and Documentation

9.1 Access to Information Procedure Rules set out the rights of access for members.

9.2 Any member may request a private and confidential briefing from a senior officer on matters of policy, which have already been or may be discussed by the Council within its decision-making or advisory process. All such requests shall be made to the appropriate Chief Officer or service lead and shall be subject to the constraints and demands of the service. Briefings shall remain strictly confidential and are not to be shared with other members of the Council unless so permitted by the relevant member and officer.

9.3 Individual members may request any Chief Officer (or another senior officer) to provide them with factual information, which is necessary in pursuance of the proper performance of their duties. Such requests shall be reasonable and shall also recognise the need for officers to maintain the distinction between the cabinet and scrutiny processes.

9.4 As regards the legal rights of members to inspect Council documents, these are partly covered by statute and partly by common law. This is commonly known as the "need to know principle".

9.5 Sometimes a member's "need to know" will be presumed. For example, a member is unlikely to be refused an opportunity to inspect documents relating to the functions or activities of a member body on which they serve. At other times, for example when documents contain confidential information or personal information about a third party, the member shall be required to satisfy the relevant Chief Officer or service lead about their "need to know".

9.6 If a Chief Officer or service manager considers the cost of providing the information requested, or the nature of the request to be unreasonable they should seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer as to whether the information should be provided. Where necessary, the Monitoring Officer shall determine whether the information should be provided.

9.7 Confidential information relating to casework shall not normally be sought. If in exceptional circumstances members wish to discuss confidential aspects of an individual case then they shall first seek advice from the appropriate Chief Officer or service lead and may also need to seek permission from the constituent.

9.8 Council information provided to a member shall only be used by the member for the purpose for which it was provided (i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the member's duties as a member of the Council). Where confidential, personal or otherwise sensitive information is obtained by a member, they shall deal with that information in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

10. Correspondence

10.1 E-mail relating to the Council shall be treated in the same way as formal business correspondence and its distribution considered accordingly. Members should restrict the distribution of e-mail correspondence to the intended recipients and refrain from using multi address distribution lists (for example e-mail replies copied to all members) unless there is good reason so to do. It should be noted that e-mail can be used for documentary evidence in matters such as disciplinary proceedings and libel cases even after it has been deleted.

10.2 Official correspondence on behalf of the Council shall normally be sent in the name of the appropriate officer, rather than in the name of a member. However, there are circumstances in which it is appropriate for correspondence to appear in the name of a member. For example, a local member may deal with correspondence with a

local constituent in relation to a local matter in their name. Similarly, the Leader of the Council or a lead cabinet member may deal with correspondence concerning their area of responsibility in their name.

10.3 Any member who receives correspondence should consider whether it is appropriate in the circumstances for it to be passed to an officer for a reply, or for them to reply in their name. Any such correspondence should always have regard to the Council's policies, practices and procedures and any mechanisms, if appropriate, for changing them. A member is advised to seek advice, as necessary, from officers before sending any correspondence in their own name.

10.4 Correspondence which creates legal obligations or gives instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a member. Correspondence includes any communication by letter, e-mail, texts, social media posts or other electronic means.

11. Publicity and Media

Publicity

11.1 The Council wishes to encourage regular, open and two-way dialogue with its communities to ensure that the public are aware of the Council's activities, are informed about how to access services and are aware of opportunities for public participation in the democratic process.

11.2 The way information is publicised has changed significantly over time with online and social media being more prominent and instant. Messaging in publicity should be well considered as it is essential to ensure that local authority decisions on publicity are made in accordance with clear principles of good practice.

11.3 Officers and members of the Council shall, therefore, in making decisions on publicity, take account of the provisions of the national Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011. The Council's communications team can help to ensure publicity is timely, correct and targeted appropriately.

11.4 Particular care should be taken with Council publicity in the run-up to an election. Additional guidance is issued at these times to help members and officers. The MO or Chief Executive can provide advice where necessary about the guidance during periods of heightened sensitivity.

Media

11.5 Members wishing to publicise themselves or their political parties shall do so in an independent capacity without using Council resources. This applies to other support service Members receive to carry out their official duties, which may only be used on Council business, and may not be used for party political work.

11.6 When using Council email, or writing on behalf of the authority, correspondence should not include political comments or criticise Council policy adopted by Full Council. If members wish to make political statements in correspondence, they shall not use Council communications channels or, give the impression their views are those of the Council on any communications channels, including social media.

11.7 The Council's Communications Team provides a press office function on behalf of the Council. Media enquiries requesting information or a response on behalf of the Council should be referred to the Communications Team and all proactive communications of the Council's work should be coordinated through the Communications Team

12. When Things Go Wrong

12.1 This protocol is designed to provide the framework within which members and officers work effectively together. However, the following process should be followed in the event of any difficulties arising.

Procedure for officers to follow when experiencing difficulties with members

12.2 From time to time the relationship between members and officers may break down or become strained. It will always be preferable to resolve matters informally, through conciliation by an appropriate senior manager or member, for example an informal meeting arranged between the relevant member and officer, the member's group leader and the Chief Executive. Officers also have recourse to a procedure whereby the complaint or grievance can be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Procedure for members to follow when experiencing difficulties with officers

12.3 A member should not raise matters relating to the conduct, behaviour or capability of an officer in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this protocol. An officer has no means of responding to such criticism in public. If any member feels that they have not been treated with proper mutual trust, respect or courtesy or have any concern about the conduct or capability of an officer, they should raise the matter, in private, with the relevant Service Manager, Assistant Director or Director.

12.4 Any concerns with regard to a senior offcier or Chief Officer should be discussed in private with the Chief Executive. Where the officer concerned is the Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the Leader of the Council or Monitoring Officer, as appropriate to the circumstances. If the matter cannot be resolved informally it may be necessary to invoke the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

13. Whistleblowing

Where an officer or councillor is concerned about potential unlawful conduct of an officer or councillor, the Council's whistle-blowing policy may also be relevant.

14. Interpretation

Questions of interpretation of this protocol shall be determined by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive

15. Unresolved issues and amendments to this Protocol

15.1 If there are any issues of concern which are not dealt with by this Protocol, then the relevant Member or officer may discuss the matter with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer with a view to advice being provided.

15.2 Should any Member or officer wish to suggest an amendment to this protocol, they are encouraged to contact either the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Adopted by Cambridge City Council: _____

Introduction

1.1   The purpose of this Protocol is to guide councillors, officers and other individuals who are members of Council bodies in their relations with one another. The Codes of Conduct for both members and officers have been referred to in the development of this Protocol and should be considered in addition to it when appropriate.

1.2   Given the variety and complexity of such relations, this Protocol does not seek to be either prescriptive or comprehensive. It seeks simply to offer guidance on some of the issues that most commonly arise. It is hoped, however, that the approach that it adopts to these issues will serve as a guide to dealing with other issues.

1.3   This Protocol is to a large extent no more than a written statement of current practice and convention. In some respects, however, it seeks to promote greater clarity and certainty.

1.4   This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective rules of conduct which apply to members and officers. The purpose of the rules and this Protocol is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government by demanding very high standards of personal conduct.

Roles of Members and officers

2.1   The elected members are responsible for:

- the initiation and direction of policy;
- democratic accountability to the electorate for policies and for service delivery;
- the scrutiny of Council services;
- community leadership;
- the promotion of partnership working; and
- the presentation of Council policy.

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2.2   The officers are responsible for:

- providing the professional advice that members must have before them when formulating policy and when taking decisions. The functions and areas of responsibility of the Council's Chief Officers are described in Article 11 of the Constitution (pages 23-26);
- implementing members' decisions;
- running the Council's services and day-to-day administration;
- taking managerial and operational decisions in accordance with the Council's schemes of delegation; and
- the provision of information regarding Council services and approved Council policies including via the media.

Working relationships

3.1   The Council has determined that there should be no formal separation of officer support between the executive and scrutiny functions. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that staffing support is sufficient. To assist this, the Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring that proper officer support is provided for overview and scrutiny.

3.2   The working relationship between senior officers and the Executive will be particularly close. This relationship, however, must not:

- compromise officers' duties to all Members of the Council;
- be so close as to give the appearance of partiality on the part of the officer;
- undermine the confidentiality of any discussions within the Corporate Management Team or between senior officers and other Members;
- compromise officers' professional responsibility to advise Members that a particular course of action should not be pursued;
- abrogate officer responsibility for action taken under Delegated Powers.

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3.3   Officers will also provide advice and assistance to individual Members in respect of Council business, including issues raised by constituents. They must not be requested to advise upon private matters.

3.4   Paragraph 2 of the Officer Code of Conduct (Pages 295-299) emphasises that officers are employed by, and serve, the whole Council. They are politically neutral and must avoid being identified with any political party. Members must respect this.

3.5   Directors/Assistant Directors (but not normally any other officer below second tier) may, in exceptional circumstances, be invited to attend political group meetings to explain or advise on policies and/or issues provided that this facility is available to all political groups represented on the Council. The Chief Executive should be informed by an employee that he/she is to attend such a meeting.

3.6   Paragraph 3.5 does not apply to invitations to officers to attend group meetings in their capacity as trade union representatives, which shall be permitted.

3.7   Political group meetings fall outside the Council's decision-making process. Conclusions reached at such meetings are not Council decisions and so should not be relied upon as such.

3.8   The Chief Executive and Directors may attend collectively to brief meetings of those members making up the Executive and the Chairs of Scrutiny & Regulatory Committees, on forthcoming issues.

3.9   Scrutiny committees have the power to require Executive Councillors and officers to appear before them and answer questions. So far as Executive Councillors are concerned, scrutiny committees should, wherever possible, require attendance only at meetings that appear in the Council diary. So far as officers are concerned, the statutory guidance states that "local authorities may wish to adopt conventions that overview and scrutiny committees would normally only require officers above a certain grade to attend to ensure that more junior officers are not put under undue pressure". Accordingly, the Council's scrutiny committees will only be able to require the attendance of Chief Officers and Directors/Assistant Directors. However, to

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facilitate proper conduct of business, they may arrange, as necessary, for other officers to attend meetings to assist.

Familiarity

4.1   Close personal familiarity between individual members and officers can damage the principle of mutual respect. It could also, intentionally or accidentally, lead to the passing of confidential information or information which should not properly be passed between them, such as personal details.

4.2   Such familiarity could also cause embarrassment to other members and/or other officers and even give rise to suspicions of favouritism.

4.3   As a result care should be taken by individual members and officers in their relationship with each other.

Undue Pressure

5.1   It is important that in any dealings between members and officers neither should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.

5.2   In their dealings with both Directors and officers (especially junior employees), members need to be aware that it is easy for officers to be overawed and feel at a disadvantage. Such feelings can be intensified where members hold official and/or political office.

5.3   A member should not apply any pressure on an officer to do work outside of normal duties. A member should also not normally require an officer to do work outside of reasonable working hours but if deemed essential then this should be negotiated. Neither should pressure be put on an officer to do anything that he or she is not empowered to do.

5.4   Similarly, an officer must not lobby or use influence on an individual member to make a decision in his or her personal favour. They should not raise personal

matters to do with their job, nor make claims or allegations about other officers, nor make negative comments on the competency of another officer as the Council has formal procedures for this.

5.5   Members should recognise that officers' workloads frequently require extended periods of concentration or involve tight deadlines. Members should respect officers' working time and should, where possible, arrange appointments and avoid frequent unscheduled interruptions.

Constructive criticism & redress

6.1   It is important that there should be mutual courtesy between Members and officers. It is important that there are reasonable standards of courtesy and no member or officer should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.

6.2   Members have the right to criticise reports or the actions taken by officers but they should:

- always avoid personal attacks on officers;
- ensure that criticism is constructive and well-founded.

6.3   If a member considers that he or she has not been treated with proper respect or courtesy, he or she may raise it with the officer's line manager or Director without delay if it is not possible to resolve it through direct discussion. If the issue still remains unresolved appropriate action may be taken by the Director in accordance with the Council's normal procedures. Feedback should be given to the member on the outcome.

6.4   If an officer considers that he or she has not been treated with proper respect or courtesy, and a direct discussion is impractical or fails to resolve the matter, he or she should raise the matter with the line manager or Director without delay. In such circumstances, the Director will take such action as is appropriate either by approaching the individual and/or Party Group Leader. The Director will inform the

Chief Executive if the Party Group Leader becomes involved, or in any other case where it is appropriate. Feedback should be given to the officer on the outcome.

6.5   The Council operates a confidential whistle-blowing policy overseen by the Standards Committee. The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of operation, integrity, openness and accountability. It is expected that where an officer or member is concerned about potential unlawful conduct of an officer or member, they voice those concerns so that they can be dealt with effectively. Nb. The Code of Conduct for Members (Part 5a of the Constitution pages 287-294) refers to those matters where a member is aware that another member has failed to comply with the Code.

Officers' advice on declarations of interest

7.1   The Council's Head of Legal Practice will provide advice and information to Members on declarations of interest of a personal nature and whether or not such an interest might amount to a prejudicial interest. However, Members will know the nature and extent of any interest they may have. It is the Member's responsibility, therefore, to decide whether any interest should be declared.

Officers' reports and advice

8.1   The Director/Assistant Director in whose name a report to the Council (or any part of its formal decision-making structure) will always be fully responsible for the contents of it.

8.2   A report will only be amended where the suggested amendment also reflects the professional judgement of the author of the report. Any remaining disagreement between the Executive Councillor/Chair and the author of the report should be referred to the Chief Officer, or, if the author of the report is a Chief Officer, to the Chief Executive for resolution after consultation with the Leader.

8.3   On occasions, officers will need to express a professional view on a matter which may not support the view of the Executive and/or the relevant Chief Officers of the

Council. They must be allowed to do so without interference from, or victimisation by, members or officers.

Officer decisions taken under delegated powers

9.1   When making a decision under powers delegated to them, it must be recognised that it is the officer, and not any member, who takes the action and it is the officer who is accountable for it.

Dealing with the Media

10.1   Officers *and* members should be aware of the Convention on dealing with the Media in Appendix F of the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4a of the Constitution (pages 138-140). This is also listed on the Council's Intranet under 'Publicity and Media'.

Involvement of ward councillors

11.1   Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the councillors representing the Ward or Wards affected should, as a matter or course, be invited to attend the meeting with the maximum possible notice being given. Similarly whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the Ward Councillors should be consulted at the outset of the exercise.

11.2   Ward Councillors should be notified in advance about any issues likely to affect them. This would include press releases relating to a particular Ward or significant matters likely to affect a Ward.

11.3   Officers are reminded of the protocol for consulting Ward Councillors before exercising delegated powers (Part 3 – Discharge of Council Functions pages 83-84).

Correspondence

12.1   Unless a member or officer requests confidentiality, it is to be assumed that correspondence between a Member and an officer is not confidential and may be shown to others (an obvious exception is where an issue relates to an individual constituent and would normally be treated in confidence). If, in an officer's view, correspondence between an individual member and an officer is of interest to other members, to keep them fully informed, it should be made clear to the original member that copies have been sent to other members.

12.2   Where issues are raised by, or with, individual members relating to a matter of general interest in a ward, (as it is in the best interests of the Council to ensure that all members are properly informed of general issues in their Ward), copies of correspondence will normally be sent to all members for the Ward and the appropriate Executive Councillor. However, a member may specifically request that correspondence is not copied to other members and/or there may be a political, or other reason, why it is not appropriate to do so.

12.3   Where an officer sends information on his/her own initiative to an Executive Councillor, copies will be provided to the relevant minority spokesperson(s) and Chair of Scrutiny.

12.4   Official letters sent on behalf of the Council should normally be in the name of the appropriate officer, rather than in the name of a member. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter to be signed by a member, but this should be the exception rather than the norm.

Member support services

13.1   The Council provides a range of support services, including stationery, typing and postage to enable Members to carry out their duties. These may only be used on Council business. They may not be used for party political work of any kind except for the administration of party group meetings (but not attending or minuting such meetings).

Unresolved issues and amendments to this Protocol

14.1 If there are any issues of concern which are not dealt with by this Protocol, then the relevant Member or officer may discuss the matter with the Chief Executive with a view to advice being provided.

14.2 Should any Member or officer wish to suggest an amendment to this protocol, he/she is asked to contact either the Chief Executive or Director of Customer & Democratic Services.

14.3 Any amendments require approval of Council on the recommendation of the Civic Affairs Committee. The Standards Committee and any other relevant body may be consulted on issues raised by the Protocol and on proposed amendments when appropriate.

Appendix B

6.1 Inclusion and Equity Panel

Appointed by: Leader

Terms of Reference:

To promote equity and inclusion in order that all communities in Cambridge achieve better outcomes; thrive and succeed, with access to opportunity, networks, resources, and support with an emphasis on valuing the lived experiences of individual and communities and identifying best practice locally and nationally.

It delivers this purpose by:

- Ensuring Panel recommendations are informed by those with lived experience of inequality

- Aligning the Panel's agenda to the Forward Plan, prioritising items with the greatest equalities impact

- Developing a work plan that enables Panel members to request specific items come to the Panel for its consideration

The IEP will focus on equity for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 as well as:

- People with care experience (an umbrella term used to describe individuals who are, or who have at any time been, in the care of a local authority)

- People with experience of being on a low-income or in poverty

- Travelling community members, including those without the protected characteristic of 'race' under the Equality Act 2010

- Non-binary and gender fluid people

- Veterans

Objectives

- Drive service improvements in respect of equity within Council and influence practice more widely in the City.

- Share their expertise and make recommendations that promote equity and inclusion, and celebrate diversity, based on their lived experience and/or professional knowledge.

- Influence the council's approach to equity for our communities and staff by making recommendations on strategy, policies and plans (and equality impact assessments as they relate to these), helping to inform Cabinet decisions and scrutiny.

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- Monitor and report on the Council's compliance with equity related legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

Membership

The IEP membership will consist of:

- The nominated Cabinet Member (or a nominated substitute in their absence)

Membership from each of the following:

- Councillors who will be appointed by Cabinet with an expectation that one per Political Group and Lead Cabinet Member.

Delegation to the Director of Communities to facilitate Membership of:

- Cambridge City Council staff
- Public Members and members of the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith sector working with diverse communities that experience discrimination, marginalisation and inequality.

The IEP will invite independent people from different equality groups to speak on issues that are important to them based on their lived experiences, helping to guide the Panel's discussions.

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Appendix C

Equalities Panel Terms of Reference:

• To monitor the Council's progress against the implementation of the Council's Race Equality Scheme

• To monitor relevant national and local performance indicators and the Council's progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government

• To monitor the Council's progress against the implementation of present and future equalities legislation

• To evaluate the equalities implications for the Council of the results of Council consultation

• To evaluate the work the Council is undertaking to help communities directly affected by equalities issues become more fully engaged in the work of the Council

• To review and quality assure a selection of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) of the Council's projects, policies and plans

Principles and Objectives

The Panel will support Council-led initiatives that:

• Play a leading role in the promotion of equalities and diversity.

• Celebrate the diversity of lifestyles, faiths and cultures of the local population.

• Respect and value differences.

• Challenge and aim to eradicate discrimination.

• Encourage the identification and sharing of good practice.

• Establish networks and joint/partnership working internally and externally.

• Develop and implement positive action to achieve cultural change.

• Improve workforce representation in recruitment, training and promotion.

• Promote positive relations and tolerance in the workplace and community.

• Focus on the equality target groups:

o Black and Minority Ethnic communities, including Gypsies/Travellers,

refugees and asylum seekers.

o Women and transgendered people.

o Disabled people.

o Lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

o Older people.

o Children and young people.

o Faith or belief groups.

o Marriage and civil partnership.

o Pregnancy and maternity.

o Low income groups.

Cambridge City Council Meeting Dates, May 2026 - May 2027

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MEETING	DAY	TIME	2026 MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	2027 JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY
Council	THUS	6.00PM	21		16			1	26			25			27
Cabinet	TUES	5.00PM			7		23*Wed	20	17	15	18	11*Thurs	23		
Scrutiny, Performance, Assets and Strategy	TUES	5.30PM		23			8		3		27*Wed		2		
Scrutiny, Services, Climate and Communities	THUS	5.30PM		18			10		5			4	11		
Housing Advisory Board	MON	5.00PM		15			14		9		25				
Employment (Ad-hoc 2x meeting a year)															
Civic Affairs and Audit	MON	5.30PM		22				5	30			1	15		
Full Licensing	MON	10.00AM		29			7				25		29		
Licensing Sub	MON	10.00AM		1	13, 20	10,24	1*Tues	5, 26	2,23	21	11	15	8,29		
Planning	WED	10.00AM		24	1		2	7	4	2	6	3	3, 31		
Jnt Dev Control	WED	10.00AM		17	15	19	16	21	18	16	20	24	17	21	
Equalities	THURS	4.00PM			2						14				
DCF	TUES	10.00AM		16	21		29	27	24	8	26	16	16		
JSEF	TUES	5.00PM			14			13			5				
Cambridge Joint Area Committee	WED	4.00PM		24			9			9			10		

Member briefings		TIME	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY
Mon, Wed at 18.00		00:00	various*												

*various member briefings/training sessions for new/all councillors are taking place during May (see Induction Programme)

2026 Lib Dem Party Conference		19-22
2026 Labour Party Conference		27-30
2026 Green Party Conference TBC		
Planning Committee Training	09-Jun	
Licensing Committee Training	04-Jun	
Elections	7		6

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Update to Risk Management Strategy and Framework

To:

Civic Affairs and Audit Committee

Report by:

Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer

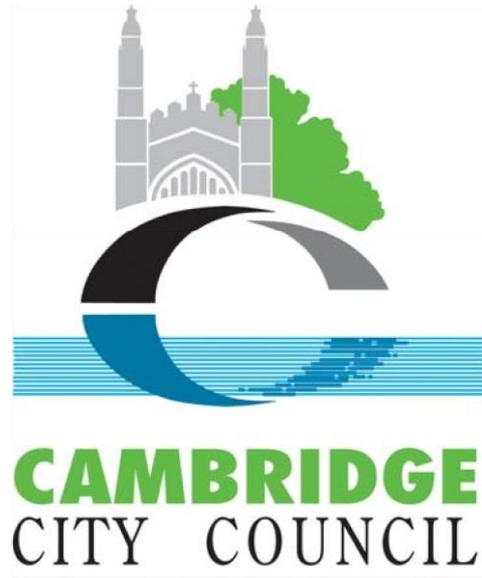Tel: Email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director Jane Wilson confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

1.	**Recommendations**
1.1	The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee is asked to recommend to Cabinet: 1. The revised Risk Management Framework and Strategy attached as appendix A. 2. Delegation of authority to approve minor changes and amendments to the Chief Operating Officer
2.	**Purpose and reason for the report**
2.1	The risk management strategy and framework was last brought to the Civic Affairs Committee for formal approval in September 2021. Following a number of changes, including of staff structures, the introduction of the Performance Management Framework, and the changes to Council governance, the strategy and framework have been through a major review. The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee has the role of overseeing the effective management of risk by Officers and any significant updates or revisions to this strategy and framework are therefore presented here for oversight and recommendation to Cabinet, in line with our new constitution.

	n.b. the Strategy and Framework was brought to the Civic Affairs Committee in February 2024 for visibility of minor changes and amendments.	
3.	**Background and key issues**	
3.1	The focus of this update has been to ensure that sets out in clearly understood terms the purpose of risk management and the way that we achieve that purpose in practice. The strategy sets out the purpose of having a risk management process and highlights the new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, legislation, which came into force 1 September 2025 and brought in the offence of 'failure to prevent'. The framework provides more detail on how we carry out that risk management process, which has the risk management cycle at its core. It also highlights how staff are supported and trained to use the process, and the recording systems in use across the Council	
4.	**Corporate plan**	
4.1	The Risk Management Strategy and Framework links to all parts of the Corporate Plan, as it supports effective delivery of all aspects of the Council's work Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council	
5.	**Consultation, engagement and communication**	
5.1	The Council's leadership team and Executive Councillors have been consulted on the updated Risk Management Strategy and Framework	
6.	**Implications**	
6.1	**Relevant risks**	
	The risk is in not having an up-to-date risk management strategy and framework	
	Financial Implications	
6.2	There are no financial implications	
	Legal Implications	

6.3	The updated policy refers to the new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act. This legislation requires all organisations to identify whether any of their activities could be subject to fraud and set out what they are doing to manage the risk of fraud.	
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications	
6.4	There are no equalities or socio-economic implications associated with this report	
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications	
6.5	The proposals in this report have no climate change impact.	
	Procurement Implications	
6.6	There are no procurement implications	
	Community Safety Implications	
6.7	There are no community safety implications	
7.	**Background documents** Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985	
7.1	Risk Management Strategy and Framework	
8.	**Appendices**	
8.1	Appendix A – Draft updated Risk Management Strategy and Framework	
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, Tel: 07795 542512, email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk	

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CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT

Contents

Contents

Version Control

Version	Date	Updated by	Summary of change
1.0	22/09/2021	Stephanie Fisher	Approved by Civic Affairs Committee
1.1	06/12/2022	Jonathan Tully	Added guidance on scoring risks at residual stage.
1.2	04/01/2024	Stephanie Fisher	Update to reflect structural and operational changes
1.3	01/09/2025	Stephanie Fisher	Finance Scores Revised
1.4	08/12/2025	Claire Tunesi	Updated hyperlinks
1.5	10/02/2026	Stephanie Fisher	Full Review of Document

Risk Management Strategy

Introduction

Effective risk management is critical to ensure any organisation maintains its services, progresses towards achieving its strategic aims, and provides assurance it is operating on sound corporate governance principles.

Governance

Good governance enables the Council to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk. Our governance framework is designed to ensure that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

Risk Management is a key element of Cambridge City Council's Governance Framework, and our Risk Management Strategy & Framework are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level.

Internal Audit regularly reviews systems of internal control, providing independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place to manage risks and agreeing actions with management to improve controls where needed.

The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee of the Council has the role of overseeing the effective management of risk by officers, and updates or revisions to this framework and strategy are presented to that committee for oversight and agreement.

Aims and Objectives

The objective of the risk management process is to identify, evaluate and control risks and opportunities.

Risks are the possibility that an unwanted or uncertain action or event will cause injury, loss, damage or adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives.

Opportunities also need to be considered, providing the benefits and rewards outweigh the potential risks.

Our strategic aim is to:

- integrate risk management into the Council's culture.
- raise awareness of the need for risk management by all those responsible for managing risk.
- maintain an ability to anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative changes.

Risk Appetite

Defining our risk appetite provides a consistent structure for the management of risks, including decision-making and allocation of resources to manage risks.

Our current risk appetite is determined by reference to risk scores, with the aim to ensure that all operational risks have a score of 10 or below (green or yellow risks). Risks will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the residual risk score remains within the agreed risk appetite level.

We recognise there may be circumstances where it may be appropriate to accept or tolerate amber risks, outside of the established risk appetite level. In such circumstances the rationale for proceeding should be discussed and agreed with the relevant Director(s) and fully recorded within the 4Risk system.

There is no tolerance for red risks, if a red risk is identified there will be immediate actions put in place to reduce the level of risk.

Any amber or red risks are automatically reported to Cabinet in the Quarterly Performance Report. A red risk will be reported to the relevant Executive Councillor at the earliest possible opportunity.

Fraud Risks

The new Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, which came into force 1 Sept 2025, requires all organisations to identify whether any of their activities could be subject to fraud and set out what they are doing to manage the risk of fraud. The Council is therefore required to demonstrate reasonable procedures are in place to prevent officer/agent fraud which either intentionally or unintentionally benefits the Council.

We have introduced additional fields in our risk register to capture fraud risk information to demonstrate compliance with the legislation.

Our Processes

The Risk Management process involves identifying:

- potential risks and opportunities,
- what might cause the identified risks/opportunities to occur, and
- the consequences of a risk materialising or failing to pursue opportunities.

Our agreed approach is to identify controls that are currently in place to mitigate each risk and establish any additional actions required to further reduce the likelihood of the risk arising and/or the impact should it occur.

The greater the understanding of risks that the Council is exposed to, together with the causes and consequences of these risks, the more informed future decision making can be. Learning from other existing or previous risks is an important part of building our understanding.

Our processes, roles and responsibilities, performance and training information are detailed within the Risk Management Framework below.

Risk Management Framework

Why do we need a risk management framework?

Risk management is about being risk aware and finding ways to do something that best minimises risks and maximises opportunities. The key is to identify what those risks might be and how to accommodate them in our activities.

A public service organisation must identify, analyse and prioritise risks, as well as manage and control risks in a cost-effective manner to maximise the quality and efficiency of its service provision and protect its reputation.

Effective risk management is critical to ensure the Council maintains services, progresses towards achieving its objectives, and provides assurance that the Council is operating in line with the agreed governance framework.

The Account and Audit (Amended) Regulations 2015 recognises that a system for managing risk is a key part of an internal control framework.

Framework aims

The aims of the Council's Risk Management Framework are to:

- Build a practical, risk-aware culture.
- Use one clear, consistent approach.
- Support better decision making by identifying key risks early.
- Protect service delivery and corporate objectives.
- Reduce disruption, harm and cost.

Risk Management Cycle

At the heart of good risk management is the risk management cycle. The four steps of this process drive our practical approach to risk management.

1. **Identify risks and controls**
2. **Analyse and score risks**
3. **Identify actions**
4. **Monitoring reporting and review**

1. **Identifying risks and controls**

Identifying risks, and any controls we already have in place, is the responsibility of everyone associated with the Council. All Officers are expected to identity and flag potential risks within their area of work. Members can also flag risks.

Operational staff should report actual and potential risks to their managers, and where appropriate log them on one of our risk management systems, alongside the controls they have in place.

2. **Analyse and Score Risks**

Council managers are responsible for managing risks within their area. This includes carrying out the analysis and scoring of risks and recording them in the appropriate risk management system. Guidance to help with scoring is available in Appendix C: Risk Categories.

It is crucial to recognise that analysis and scoring is only one step in the risk management cycle and that being aware of and recording a risk does not complete the risk management process.

3. **Identify Actions**

Council managers should work with relevant colleagues (including where appropriate their line manager) to identify and develop actions to reduce the level of a risk when the risk score indicates that an action is necessary. Actions can be one off or can be the establishment of ongoing controls.

Our risk appetite currently indicates that any risk that is amber or red requires action to reduce the level of risk, or at minimum to identify and agree with their director that an amber risk is unavoidable.

- Yellow risks could require actions, particularly if the risk level could grow.
- Risks that are green with current controls do not require additional actions.

Actions should be primarily identified by risk managers; however, actions can also be identified as the result of Internal Audit activity.

Our risk scoring heat map in Appendix B shows the relationship between a risk score and whether that score indicates a green, yellow, amber or red risk.

4. **Monitoring, Reporting and Review**

Risk managers should monitor and review their risks on a regular basis, particularly where they are aware of any changes.

To ensure all risks are regularly reviewed, the Council also runs a formal process every quarter, where all risks, controls and actions are reviewed. This provides assurance that the framework is being followed.

All our risks are considered operational, and they are each linked up to at least one of seven strategic risk areas that have been identified for the Council. The aggregated scores for our operational risks provide a clear overview of the strategic risk level for the Council.

The quarterly review is used as the basis for quarterly reports to Directors and Chief Officers, and on to Cabinet, where the strategic risk levels and any amber or red operational risks are reported publicly.

Directors and Chief Officers should ensure that risks in their areas are well managed, and that any areas requiring whole Council action are recognised and the relevant action put in place. Cabinet members are similarly responsible for ensuring that risks in their areas are properly reviewed and challenged, at minimum on a quarterly basis, and that any new or emerging risks are properly recorded.

Partner and Contractor Risks

Some of our activity is delivered by partners or contractors. In such circumstances the risks relating to service delivery may not sit with CCC, however there may be residual risks which we cannot transfer which need to be considered using the process outlined above and recorded within our own risk management systems.

For shared services, the Shared Service Boards for these services are responsible for ensuring that risks are recorded in the relevant risk registers (e.g., CCC/SCDC/HDC), and that suitable processes are in place for the escalation of risks and provision of assurance.

Communication and Training

The Risk Management webpages on our intranet are regularly updated and enhanced. They include:

- Supplementary guidance
- Training and reference materials
- Intelligence on emerging risks

We are developing a suite of Risk Management training tools to support officers and members. This includes self-serve videos on how to use the 4Risk system as well as regular Risk Management drop-in sessions, focussing on various elements of the Risk Management process. Details of all available resources are published on the Risk Management Intranet pages.

Appendices

Appendix A: Risk Management Systems

The following systems are the agreed risk management systems for the Council. The default system is 4Risk, and there are high level risks in place within 4Risk to ensure that risks in the other systems are included in our strategic risk position.

Environment	System	Purpose
Corporate Risk Register	4Risk	Holds the corporate Risk Register, and it the primary data source for risk reports. It includes risks from across the Council, organised by Group. It also includes actions agreed as the result of Internal Audit reports
Project management	Smartsheet	Risks specifically related to the delivery of projects.
Business continuity	Excel or Word	To support agile and quick development of risks and controls in an emergency.
Health and safety	MyCompliance	Health & Safety risks with limited impacts and where the wider, umbrella risks are already reflected in the corporate risk register.
Thematic development	Excel or Word	Working papers for the development of thematic risk registers – e.g., Financial Resilience or Information Governance. These are typically strategic and cross cutting documents and can be used as reference tools for identifying operational risks.
Building Compliance	SafetyCulture/ Teams Software	Systems specifically designed to monitor fire safety and asbestos compliance respectively.

Appendix B – Risk Scoring

The process of scoring a risk starts with the consideration of both its impact, and its likelihood:

The tables below give an overview of scoring for impact and for likelihood.

Score	Impact	Description (more details in the matrix below)
5	Critical	The consequences of this event occurring could cause the failure of a number of services or result in the Council having its powers removed through government intervention.
4	Significant disruption &/or damaging	Significant – the consequence of such an event occurring could cause the failure of the service or bring the Council into serious disrepute.
3	Noticeable effect	This type of risk event would have a significant impact on a service's ability to provide its full range of activities. The result of this is that the integrity of the service/Council would be called into question by, for example an inspection service.
2	Limited disruption	These types of events can normally be dealt with through the normal day to day management of the service and internal control mechanisms.
1	Virtually no impact	These events may be recognized internally but generally have no external impact and can be resolved quickly.

Score	Likelihood	Description
5	Dead Cert	In this case the event(s) may have already happened in the recent past. Without controls it will happen again and may even occur despite controls. Projected increase in insurance premiums. 91 -100% chance of the event occuring.
4	Probable	The event is more likely to happen than not but there remains some possibility it will not. 66 -90% chance of the event occuring.
3	Strong possibility	There is an even chance that this event may occur. 36-65% chance of the event occuring.
2	Some possibility	These events are not likely to occur but there remains some possibility it will. 11-35% chance of the event occuring.
1	Little chance	These events will only occur in exceptional circumstances. 0-10% chance of the event occuring.

The overall risk score is the product of the two: impact x likelihood, so a risk with an impact or 3 and a likelihood of 2 is scored as 6 (3x2)

Risks can be assessed and scored at three stages:

- The **inherent risk** is what could happen before any mitigating controls are used - *the worst-case scenario*.
- The **residual risk** is what could happen after our controls have been implemented - *where we are today*.
- The **target risk** is what we could achieve if we implement further actions - *where we could be in the future*.

We score risks on the 4Risk system at the **residual risk** stage - *where we are today*. This helps us to understand what our greatest risks are, and how to prioritise resources best.

We also capture inherent risk scores. The provision of inherent risk scores enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of existing controls to mitigate risks.

It is vital to understand the difference between residual and inherent risk, particularly because we need to ensure our risk controls are properly monitored.

A very significant inherent risk, with the proper controls in place can become quite a low risk, so long as the controls are effectively maintained. Where that is the case, we need to make sure the residual score is accurate or we could end up using more resources to manage what is already a low risk.

However, we also need to make sure that the controls are properly maintained, otherwise a low risk can become a much higher risk very quickly. Financial risks are a good example of well-maintained controls reducing a very high inherent risk to a low residual risk.

Once a risk has been scored the following heat map shows whether it is a green, yellow, amber or red risk.

Risk score: Heat Map

Impact		Likelihood				
	5	5-10 Medium	5-10 Medium	12-15 Significant	16-25 High	16-25 High
	4	1-4 Low	5-10 Medium	12-15 Significant	16-25 High	16-25 High
	3	1-4 Low	5-10 Medium	5-10 Medium	12-15 Significant	12-15 Significant
	2	1-4 Low	1-4 Low	5-10 Medium	5-10 Medium	5-10 Medium
	1	1-4 Low	1-4 Low	1-4 Low	1-4 Low	5-10 Medium
		1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: Risk Categories

Risk categories are available in 4Risk as an additional way to categorise risk beyond their group and the risk score. The category descriptions below can also help where there is uncertainty on the level of impact.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Business Continuity	Failure to adequately plan and manage processes for unforeseen events (Civil Emergency Plan, Business Continuity Plans, IT failure)	Insignificant disruption on internal business – no loss of customer service. Less than 1 hour.	Some disruption on internal business only – no loss of customer service. Interruption of half a day.	Noticeable disruption to Council – would affect customers (loss of service no more than 48 hours).	Major disruption to the Council – serious damage to organisation's ability to service customers (loss of service for more than 48 hours but less than seven days).	Loss of service delivery for more than seven days.
Change Management	Ineffective management of change, inadequate capacity and knowledge.	Ad hoc officer resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in minor slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Minor levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in minor slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support the change at officer level. Noticeable levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in noticeable slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support corporate change amongst Senior Management. Significant levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in significant slippage on planned implementation timescales.	Lack of awareness or desire to support corporate change at strategic level (SLT/Members). High levels of resistance. Insufficient resources (time/officers) resulting in major slippage on planned implementation timescales.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental (incl Climate Change)	Failure to properly identify/manage environmental impact.	Minimal or no impact on the environment.	Minor impact on the environment.	Moderate impact on environment.	Major impact on environment.	Catastrophic impact on environment.
Equalities / Social Exclusion	Failure to manage equalities/social exclusion (including duties for specific vulnerable groups).	Minor impact – queries able to be resolved	Risk of delay to initiatives and/or diversion of resources to resolve issues	Extended delays to projects and initiatives to ensure equalities considerations properly addressed	Adverse impacts for people with protected characteristics; risk of challenge; reputational damage	Legal challenge over legal compliance; significant reputational impact
Financial	Failure to effectively manage the Council's assets and finances including budget monitoring, financial priorities, medium/long term planning, fraud prevention.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be less than £50,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £50,000 and £150,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £150,000 and £500,000.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be between £500,000 and £3 million.	The total level of financial impact is likely to be over £3 million.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Governance	Inappropriate internal governance.	Minor weaknesses in governance risk and control identified. Management can easily and quickly rectify and implement improvements.	Independent and external assurance reporting identifies moderate weaknesses in governance risk and control.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Independent and external assurance reporting identifies major weaknesses in governance risk and control.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Best Value Notice Issued External inspection conducted under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999.	Reporting in the Annual Governance statement required. Best Value Notice Issued Intervention and appointment of external parties / Commissioners to take over key functions in relation to governance and operations.
Health & Safety	Failure to manage health and safety effectively leading to a prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter Act or other health and safety legislation.	Physical No injury/claims.	Minor injury/claims (first aid treatment).	Violence or threat or serious injury/claims (medical treatment required).	Extensive multiple injuries/claims. HSE inspection.	Loss of life. HSE inspection.
IT & Technology	Failure to properly manage IT, data and the Council's website.	Out of date links on Council's website Ad-hoc access issues for individual users.	IT issues which impact individuals for an extended period or a small group of users, for a short period, but does not cause disruption to customer service.	Outages due to hardware/software failures affecting larger number of users within a service impacting on customer service/service operations.	Frequent outages due to hardware/software failures causing significant disruption to multiple service operations.	Major IT outages due to failure or Hardware causing major disruption to service delivery. Software no longer supported by suppliers.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Legislation	Failure to ensure compliance with legislation.	Minor civil litigation or regulatory criticism	Minor regulatory enforcement	Major civil litigation and/or local public enquiry	Major civil litigation setting precedent and/or national public enquiry	Section 5 notice, Section 151 or government intervention or criminal charges.
Major Projects	Failure to adequately manage and control major CCC projects.	Insignificant cost increase Schedule slippage	<5 percent over project budget	5 – 10 percent over project budget	10 - 25 per cent over project budget	25 percent over project budget
Partnerships	Failure to adequately manage and control partnerships working and joint agency activity and key contractor relationships.	Minor partnership friction	Some delay to projects	Project over-run against time and cost budgets, need for greater investment of senior officer time	Projects and initiatives not delivered; reputational damage and loss of trust impacting on future funding and partnership proposals	Irreconcilable breakdown in partnerships with loss of facility for joint working + reputational damage
Performance and Objectives	Ineffective performance monitoring arrangements.	Minimal impact on performance	Underperformance not detected or reported early, opportunity to mitigate may be missed	Underperformance not reported resulting in inefficiency, cost, delay and poor service	Major impact on performance requiring costly intervention to recover; reputational damage and impact on officer-member trust	Total absence or failure of performance management resulting in service failure, complaints, reputational and relational damage, potential need for external intervention

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Physical Property & Assets	Failure to properly manage property and other assets, to prevent damage, loss or theft.	Minor damage or loss to physical fabric that does not prevent ongoing use	Minor damage or loss to physical fabric that does not prevent ongoing use but disruption due to alternative arrangements or during repairs.	Damage or loss to physical structure that prevents ongoing use pending repair	Significant damage or loss to physical structure that prevents ongoing use for extended period pending substantial repair.	Catastrophic damage or loss to physical structure requiring full closure and alternative premises for ongoing operation
Planning & Leadership	Opportunity to maintain and continue to improve Council efficiency through clear strategic focus, planning and leadership.	Minor queries, easily resolved	Potential misunderstanding of priorities, minor delay / disruption to activities and initiatives	Some priorities delayed or not delivered due to insufficient clarity, planning or leadership	Financial and service objectives not met, with impacts for stakeholders and potential for unplanned financial consequences	Failure to deliver major service objectives; customer and stakeholder dissatisfaction; serious financial consequences.
Political	Ineffective political leadership, policy development and community leadership; member support.	Objectives still achieved with minimum extra cost or inconvenience	Partial achievement of objectives with compensating action taken or reallocation of resources.	Additional costs required and or time delays to achieve objectives – adverse impact on PIs and targets.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives or statutory obligations resulting in significant visible impact on service provision such as closure of facilities.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives and/or corporate obligations

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Procurement & Contract Management	Failure to ensure effective procurement and contract management arrangements.	Limited resource, excessive demand for support	Lack of market visibility, unaware of innovations that may impact suitability of tender. Unaware of national trends in supply chain	Lack of contract management post award	Failing to follow procurement procedures and legislation	Lack of planning by stakeholder services Legislative changes or national requirement Supplier financially or operationally fails
Recruitment & Retention	Failure to recruit and retain adequate number of suitable staff leading to key person dependency and loss of capacity building opportunities.	Insignificant impact on service operation as a result of staff turnover. Occasional use of temporary staff Occasional vacant posts for a short period	Minor disruption to internal operations due to staff leaving/training new members of staff. Frequent use of temporary staff Frequent vacant posts for a short period	Significant number of staff leaving the council resulting in minor disruption to service delivery. Inability to recruit experienced permanent employees. Reliance on temporary workers to fill vacant posts.	Significant number of staff leaving the council resulting in major disruption to service delivery. Inability to recruit experienced permanent employees. Reliance on significant levels of temporary staff in individual service areas.	Unable to maintain service delivery due to high volumes of staff leaving the council/inability to recruit in a timely manner. Unable to attract suitable staff (permanent/temporary)

Risk Category	Risk Description	Virtually no impact	Some limited disruption	Noticeable effect	Significant disruption & / or damaging	Critical
	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Reputation	Damage to Council's reputation through adverse media coverage.	No reputational damage. Coverage in media which is not typically frequented.	Limited coverage in social media and local media. Short term reduction in public confidence. Elements of public expectation not being met.	Brief coverage in the national media. Sustained coverage in the local media. Longer term reduction in public confidence.	Coverage in the national media.	Repeated and extensive coverage in the national media. Commentary from MP in Parliament. Total loss of public confidence.

Where risks cut across multiple risk categories, the highest scoring risk category should be recorded in the risk register.

Appendix D – Supporting Guidance

There are a number of useful guides available on the Risk Management intranet pages.

Key documents referenced in this Document are listed below:

Area	Overview	Link
Fraud Risks	This guide explains the legislative requirement for a Fraud Risk register and how to record details on 4Risk	Fraud Risks Guidance
Parent & Child Risks	Each operational risk should have at least one parent risk which is or is linked to at least one of the 7 strategic, thematic risks. This guide provides more information on the purpose or and how to record parent & child risks.	Parent & Child Risks
Risk References	Each risk has a unique risk reference which indicates where the risk sits within the organisation at a glance. This guide provides further explanation of how risk references are allocated and how to use them.	Risk References
Roles & Responsibilities	This guide provides more detail on the roles and responsibilities of officers and members.	Roles and Responsibilities
Quarterly Risk Reviews	The guide outlines the background and process for quarterly risk reviews.	Quarterly Risk Reviews
Actions	Further information on Management and Internal Audit actions.	Actions

Appendix E- Glossary

These are the key terms that a Risk Manager needs to understand to fulfil their daily risk management responsibilities.

Term	Description
Action	Something in addition to the existing controls which needs to be carried out to mitigate a risk. Once implemented actions may become controls.
Analysing Risk	The evaluation of risk with regard to the severity if the risk is realised, and the likelihood of the risk being realised.
Cause	What will cause the risk to occur.
Consequence	What the consequence will be should the risk occur.
Control	Existing checks / processes in place to mitigate a risk.
Operational (Service) Risk	Potential risks that managers and officers encounter during their business planning and day-to-day service delivery
Strategic Risk	Potential risks that may prevent the organisation achieving its aims and Medium-Term Objectives.
Impact (Severity)	The probable effect on the Organisation / Service if the risk occurs (scored from 1 – 5).
Likelihood	The probability or chance of the risk occurring (scored from 1 – 5).
Risk	Risk is the uncertainty of outcome, whether a positive opportunity or a negative threat, of action and events. It is the combination of likelihood and severity.
Risk Management	All the processes involved in identifying, analysing and profiling risks, assigning ownership, taking actions to mitigate or anticipate theme and monitoring and reviewing progress.
Risk Score	The exposure arising from a specific risk after controls have been put in place to manage it and assuming that the control is effective. The score is calculated by multiplying likelihood by severity with controls in place.

These are more detailed risk definitions and terms used by Risk Management Team and specialists.

Term	Description
Opportunity Risk	Most risk management standards and guidelines recognise the upside of risk. However, many people find the concept of opportunity risk management difficult to grasp, due to the negative associations of risk.
Threat Risk	Organisations should proactively manage opportunity risk. If only threat risks are managed, the best outcome expected is to meet the promised objectives but never to improve on them. The value of identifying opportunity risk and threat risk is that the Council can take a strategic approach to tackling the risk.
Risk Appetite	Level of risk we aim to operate within
Risk Tolerance	Level of risk we are willing to operate within
Risk Capacity	Maximum Level of risk we can operate with
Risk Universe	All of the risks that we document and are managed
Black swan event	An event that comes as a surprise, has a major effect, and is often inappropriately rationalized after the fact with the benefit of hindsight
Grey swan event	A potentially significant event that is considered unlikely to happen but still possible. Examples include climate change, population growth, and rising debt.
White swan event	An event with a high certainty and easily estimated impact.
Grey rhino	A highly probable event with a great deal of impact which is dismissed or overlooked because it is not taken seriously enough in the short term.

A totally predictable grey rhino might be building new homes on a flood plain with one-in-a-hundred-year mitigation measures put in place. |
| Polycrisis | Where current/future global risks interact, resulting in compounding impacts which exceed the sum of the individual risks.

Examples include the pandemic, Ukraine war, and resulting impacts such as supply chain, inflation, housing refugees. |
| Permacrisis | Permacrisis remains a new and evolving concept but can be defined as "an extended period of acute uncertainty and instability, including a portfolio of different but interrelated, potentially existential, crises (e.g., political, economic or social). These are unlikely to have definitive permanent solutions – rather they need eventually to be assimilated within mainstream public policy planning and management.

'Permacrisis', when examined through a public policy and placemaking perspective, represents an extended stretch of chaos and instability, which often require permanent modifications rather than distinct solutions. |

Appendix F - Risk Management Standards, Legislation & Guidance

These are the key documents that we reference to ensure our Framework stays up to date:

- ALARM (Association of Local Authority Risk Management) Risk Management Toolkit 2021
- HM Treasury - The Orange Book Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (last update June 2025)

REPORT TITLE: Internal Audit Update

<table>
<tr><td>To:
Civic Affairs and Audit Committee [09/03/2026]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Report by:
Jonathan Tully, Chief Audit Executive
Tel: 01223 458180 Email: jonathan.tully@cambridge.gov.uk</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wards affected:
All</td></tr>
</table>

1.	**Recommendations**
1.1	The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee is requested to note the report.
2.	**Purpose and reason for the report**
2.1	This report provides the Committee with an update on internal audit activity, assurance outcomes, and strategic developments. It reflects our evolving approach to meet new professional standards and maintain effective governance. The information supports the Committee's understanding of governance, risk, and control within the organisation (see Appendix for full details). It includes outputs from assurance and advisory work, as well as foresight on emerging and topical issues. This provides: • Reasonable assurance on the internal control environment, governance and risk management arrangements. • Updates on how we are responding to the latest Internal Audit Standards
2.2	This is not a key decision, as the report is presented in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference.
3.	**Alternative options considered**
3.1	This report is to note and does not have alternative options, although we welcome feedback from the Committee on format and presentation to inform future reports.
4.	**Background and key issues**

4.1	**Strategic and Professional Changes**
	The **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015** require that the Council "*must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes; taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.*"

In 2024, the **Institute of Internal Auditors** (IIA) issued new **Global Internal Audit Standards**. Within the UK Local Government public sector, these standards are adopted under the authority of the Relevant Internal Audit Standard Setters (RIASS).

The **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy** (CIPFA) is the RIASS responsible for determining the standards and requirements applicable to internal auditing across local government in the UK.

The new standards take effect from the 2025/2026 financial year. While full compliance is not immediately required, we conducted an internal assessment to identify areas where our processes need to evolve to meet the new requirements. Our report includes progress updates on implementing the new standards. |
| 4.2 | **Internal Audit Plan Opinion on Control Environment** |
| | The **Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector** require that the Chief Audit Executive "must establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals."

Our Plan and supporting documents are developed in line with guidance set out by CIPFA and the IIA. It is developed using a range of inputs, including the Council's Risk Registers, Corporate Plan, stakeholder consultation, committee reports, other assurance processes, and horizon scanning to identify emerging risks and opportunities.

It is considered good practice to operate an agile Audit Plan that adapts continuously to changes in the governance, risk, and control environment. Our plan is structured around a long-term framework of reviews, typically spanning a three-year cycle. Individual audits are prioritised using a range of risk-based criteria.

Maintaining relevance, speed, and flexibility in our planning approach is essential to ensure that resources are used effectively. This enables us to provide a robust audit opinion and proactively communicate topical risks and assurance to the Committee.

Members of the Committee are encouraged to propose areas where they would welcome assurance, for potential inclusion in the audit plan. This helps ensure the plan remains responsive to organisational priorities and emerging risks. |

	The current plan is considered sufficient to support the provision of an audit opinion for the Annual Governance Statement.
	Our report includes the output of our work in the recent quarter to provide insight on governance, risk, and control environment. We also include information and signpost to news articles to help provide foresight on topical matters and help develop the knowledge and skills of the Committee.
5.	**Corporate plan**
5.1	Internal Audit work contributes to all priorities of the Corporate Plan. Whilst our work is predominantly risk-based, we also map our work program to Corporate Priorities for assurance that we contribute to a breadth of Corporate Plan areas.
6.	**Consultation, engagement and communication**
6.1	The Internal Audit Plan is agile and based on continuous engagement with colleagues. Requests for work are considered alongside our own risk appraisal. Members of the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee can also contribute to the plan by identifying areas where they would welcome assurance.
7.	**Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact**
7.1	Delivery of the Internal Audit Plan will enable me to provide an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's internal control environment, governance, and the risk management framework. The attached report outlines the outcomes of recent audit work. This will form part of the Annual Governance Statement.
8.	**Implications**
8.1	**Relevant risks**
	In the writing of this report, there are no significant implications or risks to the Council. The Internal Audit Plan enables the Council to review the effectiveness of our risk management framework.
	Financial Implications

8.2	None, budget already approved.
	Legal Implications
8.3	None
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.4	None
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.5	None, the team leverages digital technology to minimise the need for travel.
	Procurement Implications
8.6	None, identified.
	Community Safety Implications
8.7	None.
9.	**Background documents** Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
9.1	• Global Internal Audit Standards • Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector • Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government • Council Corporate Plan • Civic Affairs and Audit Committee Terms of Reference • Internal Audit Charter
10.	**Appendices**
10.1	a) Governance Risk and Control update report
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jonathan Tully, Chief Audit Executive, email: jonathan.tully@cambridge.gov.uk.

Civic Affairs and Audit Committee

Committee update - March 2026

Introduction

Overview and background

The purpose of this document is to provide an update to the Committee on key audit and governance themes.

This document provides summary updates for the Committee. Statistics are included to help provide an overview of work in progress and these are taken from the last financial quarter.

Committee information

Calendar of meetings

Committee Membership and Functions

Internal Audit Information

Internal Audit Charter

Governance information

Annual Governance Statement

Governance, Risk and Control

Internal Audit updates

Internal Audit reviews provide assurance on the Governance Risk and Control environment, and this contributes to the Annual Governance Statement.

Below are a summary of reviews completed in the last quarter:

Review	Assurance and actions		Summary of report
HRA – Tenant Satisfaction Measures - Data Quality	**Assurance:** Current: Previous: **Actions:** Critical High Medium Low	Reasonable Reasonable 0 0 0 1	The Council has a portfolio of properties managed under the Housing Revenue Account. Local Authority Registered Providers (LARPs) are accountable to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). From 1 April 2023 all LARP with relevant social housing stock must calculate annual TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) in accordance with the TSM Standard. The TSMs include data on anti-social behaviour, building safety, complaints, tenant perceptions, and repairs. The first data returns were submitted in June 2024. This is our second review. We reviewed a selection of the data and checked: - information for reasonableness (does it make sense / is it comparable with peer Councils) - source information for data (can it be backed up / evidenced) One section of the TSM data includes surveys conducted by an independent external provider for the Council. Weighting is applied in line with central government guidelines. The weighting calculations were not available and we agreed a low-level action for these to be made available for our next review to improve assurance. We can provide Reasonable assurance that TSM data provided to the regulator was accurate and well sourced.

Current updates and new reviews

Testing has completed on: "Grant assurance - HUG2"; "Risk Management Strategy"; and we are finalising working papers to conclude the reviews. These areas are providing positive assurance.

We are adding "Information Governance – Transparency" to our plan. In 2025 MHCLG updated the transparency code to add guidance for reconciling the publication requirements of the procurement act 2023 and the local government transparency code 2015. We will provide an independent health-check review that we continue to be compliant with the code.

Overall assurance

The internal audit work and assurance mapping enables me to form an opinion on the internal control environment, governance and risk management arrangements.

There is currently a *Reasonable level of assurance* overall, which is similar level to the previous period.

This assurance directly informs the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which accompanies the Statement of Accounts and is published on our website.

Continuous improvement

We maintain a quality assurance and improvement programme that covers all aspects of the Internal Audit activity.

Development activities are included in this report to help the committee satisfy itself on the effectiveness of internal audit, including conformance with auditing standards. The committee can use this information for their annual report to those charged with governance.
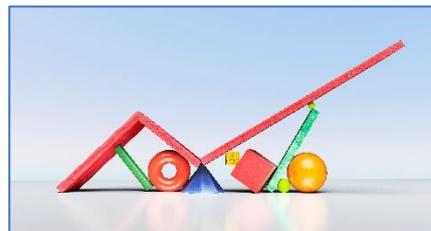
Standards update

We are implementing the new Global Internal Audit Standards and the supporting UK Public Sector Application Note (GIASUKPS), effective from 1 April 2025.

Following a readiness assessment, we are updating our documents and processes to reflect UK local government requirements.

Our revised Internal Audit Charter and Code of Ethics were presented to the June Committee.

Our team holds quarterly sessions dedicated to reviewing our professional standards and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. This process informs our annual internal quality assurance and improvement programme. We are working towards full compliance within the first year of implementation. Once we have conducted substantial reviews under the new standards and gathered sufficient supporting evidence, we will proceed with an external assessment to validate our compliance.

Our regular internal reviews, combined with assessment tools provided by our professional bodies, enable us to develop and maintain a robust action plan for continuous improvement.

We have identified 32 actions to support our compliance with the new professional standards. Of these, 15 have already been completed, and 17 are currently in progress. We have implemented 11 actions since our last report to the Committee.

GIAS UKPS Actions

	Total
Completed	15
In progress	14
Not started	3

We prioritise our actions. All "urgent" actions have been implemented, and we remain on track to implement the remaining "important" actions by the end of the financial year. We identified some new "low" level actions in the last quarter which will help continue to improve our service delivery and will implement these during 2026/2027.

CIPFA have produced further supporting tools and guidance on compliance with the new standards, and we will incorporate this into our ongoing review process.

Developments in the last quarter worth highlighting to the Committee include:

Task Name	Description	Progress	Priority
Develop Root Cause Analysis resources	We have developed tools and resources to embed Root Cause Analysis into our audit programme. We have also developed our back-office systems to hold data in a structured way for longer term insight. We still anticipate further professional guidance on this approach which we will adopt as it is published.	Completed	Important
Review our Methodologies	Our policies and procedures have been updated to reflect the new standards. We have reviewed our Internal Audit Manual and also modernised it into SharePoint pages to improve accessibility, improve version control, and support onboarding.	Completed	Important

Team resources update

Following the recent transformation review, the Internal Audit team has been restructured to include two new apprenticeship posts. The **Institute of Internal Auditors' apprenticeship scheme** was delayed due to changes in the national apprenticeship framework. As a result, we currently have vacancies which we are filling through short-term arrangements such as secondments or agency workers.

The scheme is now expected to launch from April 2026, and we have begun engaging with training providers in preparation, and recruitment will commence once the scheme is finalised. This approach supports in-house talent development and helps address ongoing recruitment challenges within the audit profession.

Governance updates

The Civic Affairs & Audit Committee has been in operation since Annual Council in May 2025. We are working with the Committee to develop a new "Annual Report of the committee to those charged with Governance", as set out in the new Terms of Reference.

Risk update

We have continued to strengthen our Risk Management system and Framework, with planned integration into the broader Performance Management Framework.

A key highlight this quarter is that 100% of all risk records were reviewed during the period. This is the second consecutive quarter with a full review and a significant achievement given the volume of records and competing priorities. Achieving a high percentage of risk reviews provides assurance that risk management is effectively embedded across the organisation. It also reflects the sustained effort invested over the past few years to improve our approach and promote the value of risk management.

As part of our continuous improvement, we have also reviewed the current Risk Management Framework and Strategy. The revised documents are included on the agenda.

Training, development and risk insight

Below are topical updates that the Committee may find useful.

Examples and options for risk mitigation by councils

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Local Government Association (LGA), and sector advisors from across local government have developed an aide-memoire to support the identification of risks that could affect the successful transition to a reorganised unitary authority. It does not address long-term operational risks that may arise after the new unitary authority becomes fully operational.

By sharing examples, they aim to:

- encourage proactive risk identification and mitigation
- promote consistency in planning and assurance across councils
- alert government to potential systemic issues that could affect the successful delivery of reorganisation.

Further details can be found here: LGR Transitional risks

Sector Risk Profile 2025

The Regulator of Social Housing publishes an annual Sector risk profile.

The Sector risk profile is intended to help develop a better understanding of the risks organisations face, in an increasingly complex and diverse sector.

Useful Links

Link	Details
Public Sector Audit Appointments	PSAA is responsible for appointing an auditor and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme.
EY	EY is our externally appointed auditor.
Cabinet Office NFI (National Fraud Initiative)	The National Fraud Initiative is a data matching exercise which helps public sector organisations to prevent and detect cases of fraud and error.

Note

This document will have links to external websites where it provides more information. We are not responsible for the content of external websites.

Glossary of terms

Assurance ratings

Internal Audit provides management and Members with a statement of assurance on each area audited. This is also used by the Chief Audit Executive to form an overall opinion on the control environment operating across the Council, including risk management, control and governance, and this informs the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Term	Description
Full Assurance	Controls are in place to ensure the achievement of service objectives and good corporate governance, and to protect the Authority against significant foreseeable risks.
Reasonable Assurance	Controls exist to enable the achievement of service objectives and good corporate governance, and mitigate against significant foreseeable risks. However, occasional instances of failure to comply with control process were identified and/or opportunities still exist to mitigate further against potential risks.
Limited Assurance	Controls are in place and to varying degrees are complied with, however, there are gaps in the process which leave the service exposed to risks. Therefore, there is a need to introduce additional controls and/or improve compliance with existing ones, to reduce the risk exposure.
No Assurance	Controls are considered to be insufficient, with the absence of at least one critical control mechanism. There is also a need to improve compliance with existing controls, and errors and omissions have been detected. Failure to improve controls leaves the Authority exposed to significant risk, which could lead to major financial loss, embarrassment, or failure to achieve key service objectives.

Action ratings

Opportunities for improvement are developed into actions with Management to improve the effectiveness of the governance, risk management arrangements, and the internal control environment.

Management are responsible for implementing their actions and providing assurance when they are completed. Timescales for implementing actions should be proportionate and achievable to the available resources. To help prioritise the actions we have produced guidance below:

Priority	Description	Timescale for action	Monitoring
Critical	Extreme control weakness that jeopardises the complete operation of the service.	To be implemented immediately.	Within 1 month
High	Fundamental control weakness which significantly increases the risk / scope for error, fraud, or loss of efficiency.	To be implemented as a matter of priority.	Within 6 months
Medium	Significant control weakness which reduces the effectiveness of procedures designed to protect assets and revenue of the Authority.	To be implemented at the first opportunity.	Within 12 months
Low	Control weakness, which, if corrected, will enhance control procedures that are already relatively robust.	To be implemented as soon as reasonably practical.	Within 24 months

The Council has an Action tracking system, which is used for monitoring progress. This will be updated upon distribution of the report and we will follow up the actions where appropriate.

Assurance – Direction of Travel

The symbols below indicate the direction of travel when we have concluded a review:

Control Status	Improvement	Consistent	Decrease	New
Symbol				
Details and factors	Actions have been implemented New controls established Risk factors have reduced	Controls continue to operate at the same level The risk environment has stayed consistent	Controls have reduced, or not been complied with Risks factors have increased, or new risks have emerged	This is a new review and we do not have a comparable benchmark.

REPORT TITLE: Annual Civic Affairs & Audit Committee Report

To:
Civic Affairs & Audit Committee (9 March 2026)

Report by:
Jonathan Tully, Chief Audit Executive & Dan Kalley, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Email: jonathan.tully@3csharedservices.org & dan.kalley@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:
None:

Director Approval: Director Jane Wilson confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

1.   Recommendations

1.1   It is recommended that the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee:

1. Review and approve the draft Annual Civic Affairs & Audit Committee Report shown in Appendix 1 for submission to Council at the Annual Meeting in May.
2. Delegate authority to the Chair, in consultation with the committee, to agree any minor changes to the report before submission to Council

2.   Purpose and reason for the report

2.1   The Civic Affairs & Audit Committee has been in operation since Annual Council in May 2025. This was preceded by the Civic Affairs Committee. The Committee has a wide-ranging remit that underpins the Council's governance processes by providing independent challenge and assurance of the adequacy of risk management, internal controls including internal audit, anti-fraud and the financial reporting framework.

The Committee also has responsibility for oversight of Civic and Constitutional functions. Reports have been provided this year on giving updates to the Civic functions, ensuring that work is undertaken to maintain the history and importance of the office of Mayor. Further work will be presented to committee as progress is made around Local Government Reorganisation.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 The committee could not provide an annual report, however best practice guidelines have stated that local authorities should produce a report for the Council to review as part of good governance arrangements.

4. Background and key issues

4.1 The attached Draft Annual Report has been produced (Appendix 1).

The report shows:
● Background to the Committee, its roles, responsibilities, and membership.
● An overview and coverage of its remit including Internal Audit, Accounts and Financial Management, External Audit, Risk Management, Control Assurance, Corporate Governance, Civic Functions and Fraud and Irregularities; and
● Focus on good governance moving forward and looking at continuous improvement.

5. Consultation, engagement and communication

5.1 The Civic Affairs & Audit Committee has the opportunity to feed into the report before being presented to Full Council

6. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

6.1 Publication of the report will enable the public to gain an insight into the role of the Committee and will ensure that the Committee can continue to progress and develop in the future. The Council continues to evolve its Civic Affairs & Audit Committee in line with

best practice to provide effective challenge.

Subject to approval by Civic Affairs & Audit Committee, it is intended to present the report to Council for noting as part of the Committee's annual update in order to demonstrate the work carried out on the governance arrangements across the Council.

7. Implications

Relevant risks

7.1   There are none.

Financial Implications

7.2   There are none.

Legal Implications

7.3   There are none.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

7.4   None required.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

7.5   There are none.

Procurement Implications

7.6   There are none.

Community Safety Implications

7.7   There are none.

8.   Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

8.1   CIPFA guidance

9.   Appendices

9.1   Appendix 1 – Annual Civic Affairs & Audit Committee Report

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact, Jonathan Tully, Chief Audit Executive, Jonathan.tully@cambridge.gov.uk

Dan Kalley, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer), dan.kalley@cambridge.gov.uk

Civic Affairs and Audit Committee

Annual Report 2025/2026

Contents

DRAFT - Foreword From The Chair

As Chair of the Civic Affairs & Audit Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the municipal year.

The Committee plays a vital role in supporting Cambridge City Council's commitment to strong governance, civic functions, financial stewardship and effective risk management. On behalf of the Committee, I am satisfied that during the year we have continued to provide robust and constructive challenge across our core responsibilities, including oversight of internal and external audit, financial reporting, treasury management, risk management, counter-fraud arrangements and the Annual Governance Statement. As well as receiving reports on the Civic functions at the Council and the Council's Constitution.

Throughout the year, the Committee has received regular reports from Internal Audit, monitored delivery of the approved audit plan, and reviewed management's progress in implementing agreed actions. We have also maintained effective engagement with External Audit to ensure independent scrutiny of the Council's financial statements and value for money arrangements.

I would like to thank fellow Committee Members for their diligence and commitment, and officers for the quality and professionalism of the reports and advice provided throughout the year. The constructive and open working relationship between Members and officers is fundamental to the Committee's effectiveness.

Looking ahead, the Committee will continue to strengthen its role, support continuous improvement in governance arrangements, and ensure that Cambridge City Council maintains the highest standards of accountability and transparency.

Councillor Russ McPherson
 Chair of the Civic Affairs & Audit Committee
 Cambridge City Council

Executive Summary

Statement of Accounts and External Audit Progress

Substantial progress has been made on the auditing of our accounts in 2025/2026.

Recognising there was a national backlog, Central Government issued a consultation on proposals to clear the backlog in February 2024. This established new statutory backstop dates for all financial years up to and including 2027/28, replacing existing deadlines in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These measures were set out in a statement in July 2024. This approach enabled external auditors to complete lighter touch reviews to accelerate the recovery, and issue modified and disclaimed opinions. The external auditors' other statutory duties – including to report on Value for Money arrangements, to make statutory recommendations and issue Public Interest Reports remained. It was therefore very important that the Committee actively participated in reviewing the accounts, and we had effective engagement with both our external auditors during this process.

We concluded our Statement of Accounts with our external auditor EY for financial year 2023/2024 in May 2025 and financial year 2024/2025 in February 2026.

Below is a timetable summarising our current position as of May 2026.

Year	Draft statements	Audit Plan	Audit Fieldwork	Audit Sign-off	Date signed off (forecast)
2023/2024	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	May 2025
2024/2025	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	February 2026
2025/2026	In progress	In progress			(January 2027)

Our Statements are available to read on our Website.

Governance and risk management

Our review of the past 12 months below highlights the positive work undertaken to maintain and develop our governance arrangements. This includes:

- ✓ regular assurance reports from internal audit;
- ✓ reviewing the Council's Risk Management Framework and Strategy;
- ✓ Information Governance assurance
- ✓ reviewing development of the Performance Management Framework

Conclusion

We would like to thank the officers who have supported the Committee, members who have substituted at meetings as needed, and our external auditors.

It is important for all of us to maintain awareness of our responsibilities and how we can help the Council. We suggest that all members and officers:

- ✓ make sure decisions are made in line with our corporate governance principles, being mindful of our Code of Governance and the Constitution;
- ✓ are alert to the possibility of fraud or mistake in handling public money: if you have any concerns, please report these to the fraud team, internal audit, external audit, or use our whistleblowing policy; and
- ✓ are familiar with how to access to help and guidance, and where policies can be found.

Committee overview

Who we are

The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee was established in May 2025 as part of the Councils new Cabinet and Leader Governance model. This was a progression of the existing Civic Affairs Committee both of which have the remit to provide those charged with Governance (Full Council) independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the Council's financial reporting and governance processes, and undertake non-executive functions including electoral, civic and democratic processes. Our membership at the end of the municipal year for 2025/2026 is:

	Councillor Russ McPherson (Chair)
	Councillor Jenny Gawthrope Wood (Vice-Chair)
	Councillor Naomi Bennett
	Councillor Tim Bick
	Councillor Jamie Dalzell
	Councillor Richard Robertson
	Councillor Patrick Sheil

Officers which regularly support the Committee:

- Chief Finance Officer
- Chief Audit Executive
- Chief Operating Officer
- Democratic Services Manager

When we meet

We typically meet at least quarterly. Four meetings were held during 2024/2025:

| 30 June 2025 | 17 November 2025 | 23 February 2026 | 09 March 2026 |

What we do

We review and consider areas which support the Council's corporate governance arrangements:

Governance Risk and Control	Internal Audit	External Audit	Financial Reporting
Local Code of Governance and the Annual Governance Statement Instruments of financial control and arrangements to secure value for money Risk management, and effectiveness of internal controls. Counter-fraud strategy, and fraud and corruption risks. Partnerships and collaborations.	Internal Audit Charter and Code of Ethics Risk-Based Internal Audit Plan Reports from the Chief Audit Executive during the year, including updates on the work of Internal Audit, key findings, issues of concern and actions. Consider the Chief Audit Executive's opinion on the control environment and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.	Comment on the scope and depth of external audit work to ensure their independence and it gives value for money. Review any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments Consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance. Advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.	Review the annual Statement of Accounts, Consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed. Notify Council with regard to conclusion and submission of the Statement of Accounts.

This helps us to report our findings to those charged with governance and we do this by publishing this annual report. See our website for more information about the Committee.

Civic & Constitutional Functions

Civic leadership in Cambridge City Council has a distinguished history dating back to 1207, when King John granted the town the right to elect a Mayor. That historic charter established a tradition of civic representation and democratic accountability that continues to shape the Council's identity today. The ceremonial and civic functions of the authority are not merely matters of tradition; they embody the Council's connection to its residents, institutions and communities, and reinforce the dignity and integrity of public office.

Councillors and officers alike share responsibility for upholding these traditions while ensuring that civic arrangements remain modern, inclusive and responsive. The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee play a central role in providing oversight of civic governance, monitoring constitutional arrangements, and ensuring that high standards of probity and transparency are maintained.

During the 2024–25 Municipal Year, significant work was undertaken to review and modernise the Council's governance framework. A revised Constitution was formally adopted at the Annual Meeting in May 2025. Building on that work, a further report was presented to the Committee on 9 March 2026 to establish a structured programme of ongoing constitutional review, including proposed refinements to key protocols such as the Member–Officer Protocol.

The Committee has continued to receive assurance reports on the implementation and effectiveness of civic arrangements, ensuring that high standards are embedded in practice and not merely set out in policy. This proactive approach will be particularly important as Local Government Reorganisation progresses through summer and autumn 2026. The Civic Affairs and Audit Committee will play a pivotal role in maintaining constitutional clarity, safeguarding civic traditions, and ensuring that the Council remains resilient and well-governed through a period of structural change.

What we did during the year

In March 2025 our Civic Affairs Committee and Governance Design Group reviewed and recommended that Full Council approve a new Constitution to support operation of an updated Leader and Cabinet Model of governance from the start of the 2025/2026 Municipal Year. We established a newly titled Civic Affairs and Audit Committee, and our Terms of Reference was developed with support of ADSO. As part that review, we reviewed the Committee functions to Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice guidance, to help ensure we continue to operate effectively.

CIPFA produced a diagram to illustrate this:

Using their guidance, we can evaluate our work and demonstrate how we contributed to development of effective governance arrangements in the year:

Areas where the committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples from the year
Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making.	We supported development of the Local Code of Governance which was updated in the year. In May 2025 the Civic Affairs Committee reviewed and approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024 in advance of approving the Statement of Accounts for 2023/2024. In February 2026 the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee reviewed and approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025 in advance of approving the Statement of Accounts for 2024/2025. As part of our review we suggested and agreed changes that were reflected in the final published versions of the documents. We kept up to date on the progress of the external audits, noting new legislation which introduced backstop dates to manage the national backlog. The Council is now up to date with the accounts as per the current backstop dates.
Contributing to the development of an effective control environment.	We reviewed regular reports from Internal Audit which provided updates on assurance work completed. This included follow-up reports on previous reviews where there was limited assurance and / or significant recommendations. The Finance team maintained their compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code.

Areas where the committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples from the year
Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks.	We discussed and noted how we are integrating our risk management data into the broader Performance Management Framework to strengthen alignment between risk and performance oversight. Our Risk Management Framework includes a scoring matrix that supports consistent risk evaluation and helps prioritise mitigation efforts. In November 2025 we noted the development of updated financial scoring factors to reflect current conditions and ensure effective and proportionate mitigation. In March 2026 we received a report on the Council's risk management arrangements and reviewed the revision of our Strategy and Framework.
Advising on the adequacy of the assurance framework and considering whether assurance is deployed efficiently and effectively.	We considered the assurance framework whilst reviewing the Annual Governance Statement. This included variety of assurance sources including internal controls, policy development, risk management, the Chief Audit Executive annual opinion, external inspections, and the reports of the external auditors.
Supporting effective external audit, with a focus on high quality and timely audit work.	We discussed with external auditors how the Government has introduced legislation for a lighter touch audit of the outstanding accounts within the national backlog, and how these risks were being managed. We noted the audit plan from our external auditors, which considered risks and how the audit of the 2024/2025 would be carried out. We considered the External Audit completion reports for both 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years from our external auditors EY.

Areas where the committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples from the year
Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity, in particular underpinning its organisational independence.	We reviewed internal audit reports which gives details on the planned audits and the audit strategy, compliance with professional codes, and received regular updates on the progress of current internal audits and outcomes of the reviews. We noted the implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector, and approved the teams new charter, code of ethics, and strategy which are based on the new professional standards. We noted the teams action plan to implement the new standards.
Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives by helping to ensure appropriate governance, risk, control and assurance arrangements.	We received and discussed the Information Governance Annual Report which provides an overview of the current arrangements in place to monitor the Information Governance arrangements at the Council including Data Protection Compliance and Information Security / Cyber Security Compliance. It also included an update on council performance related to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) / Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) Requests; Data Subject Access Requests; Personal Data Incidents As part of our ongoing training and awareness we received regular reports on Governance Risk and Control. These included topical updates to help us consider emerging risks. Examples included: • Continued approach to clearing the national backlog of accounts • Updates on Global Internal Audit Standards in the Public Sector • New legislation on measures to tackle fraud and counter fraud briefings from CIFAS and the Public Sector Fraud Authority • Updates on the National Fraud Initiative • Nolan Principles at 30 Years

Areas where the committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples from the year
Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money.	As the Civic Affairs committee we considered the External Auditors completion reports for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years. These include Value For Money assessment across areas of financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Actions for improvement and assurance are incorporated into the Annual Governance Statement.
Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance, including effective arrangements for countering fraud and corruption risks.	We were briefed and discussed topical matters which helped us to support and promote counter fraud arrangements. This included updates on the National Fraud Initiative and a briefing on how we prepared for new legislation that introduces a "failure to prevent" offence as part of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.
Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability.	The Committee have produced this annual report summarising the work completed in the year. The Committee reviewed proposed amendments to Member Allowances and made recommendations to Council. The Committee reviewed and discussed the development of a quarterly performance report for Cabinet. The Committees review of the new framework, including its Principles and Approach and report, supports the Committee in fulfilling its role in reviewing corporate governance arrangements.

Continuous improvement

Our focus for the following year

We will continue to review the effectiveness of the Committee by maintaining awareness of emerging best practice guidance on governance from CIPFA, the Local Government Association, and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

We will also start planning for Local Government Reorganisation and how we can provide the assurance during the period of change.

Good practice

As a Committee we promote good practice in governance risk and control to those charged with governance.

Seven principles of public life

Our governance framework is supported by the seven Principles of Public Life, and apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness	Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
Integrity	Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
Objectivity	Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
Honesty	Holders of public office should be truthful.
Leadership	Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.