

# Covering Note

This is the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/2022.

The AGS has been prepared as per the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and Proper Professional Practice. This includes guidance from CIPFA and SOLACE.

The current status of this document is draft. It is unaudited and may be updated and amended.

The draft AGS has been published as required by relevant legislation: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/234/regulation/15/made>. It has been prepared in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b). As a draft document the statement has not yet been approved in accordance with regulation 6(2)(b), and the final version will be approved by the Civic Affairs Committee in advance of the Statement of Accounts.

The AGS should reflect events in the relevant financial year, plus up to when the Accounts are approved by Committee. The document and action plan will continue to be developed during this period. The Covid-19 events in particular has continued to have a significant effect on Councils since March 2021. Consequently, it is appropriate to reflect this in the AGS, and further updates may need to be included if new guidance is issued from professional bodies and Central Government.



# Annual Governance Statement

## Introduction and purpose

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and that it also provides value for money. It has to effectively manage its risks and put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs.

### Definition of Corporate Governance

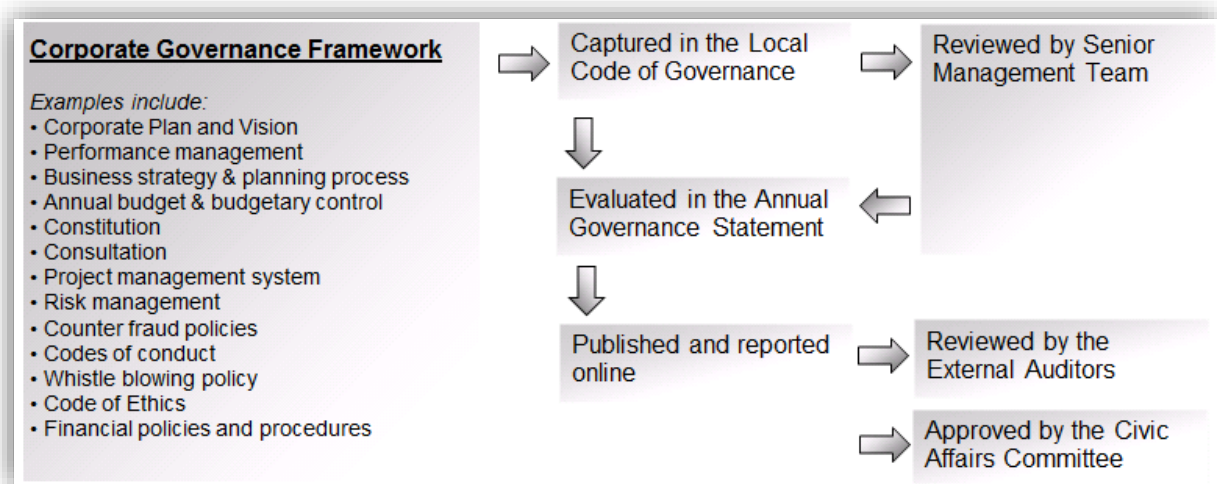
Corporate governance generally refers to the processes by which an organisation is directed, controlled, led and held to account.

Good governance in the public sector means: "*achieving the intended outcomes while acting in the public interest at all times*"

### The Governance Framework

Our governance framework comprises the culture, values, systems and processes by which the Council is directed and controlled. It brings together an underlying set of legislative and regulatory requirements, good practice principles and management processes.

The Council has a robust process for reviewing and updating the governance framework.



The Council has set out aims and objectives which are published on [our website](#)<sup>1</sup>. The Council has a clear vision to "*lead a united city, 'One Cambridge - Fair for All', in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social and environmental justice and equality*" The vision has three main aims, captured in the annual statement:

- to make Cambridge fair for all,
- to make it a great place to live, learn and work, and
- caring for the planet.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/vision-statement>



The Council produces a [Corporate Plan](#)<sup>2</sup>, which included three key priorities for 2021/2022:

- Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need
- Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change emergency and biodiversity crisis
- Delivering quality services within financial constraints whilst transforming the council

The Council prepares an Annual Report illustrating progress against the plan each year, and this is published on the [website](#).

### **Local Code of Governance**

We are responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance which incorporates the system of internal control.

The Governance Framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts. It is recorded in our [Local Code of Governance](#), which is underpinned by the 7 principles of good governance as set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016'. The principles are:

- A. behaving with integrity and in accordance with our core values
- B. being open and ensuring effective engagement takes place
- C. working together to achieve our intended outcomes
- D. setting goals for economic, social and environmental benefits and reaching them
- E. growing our capacity - including our leadership and the people who work with us
- F. managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management
- G. Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit – delivering effective accountability

### **Role and responsibilities**

All of the Council is responsible for developing and complying with its Local Code of Governance. We have a variety of governance structures, and some of the key roles include:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/corporate-plan>

Governance structures	Roles and responsibilities
Council	Council agrees the budget and policy framework, such as the Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy. Further details are published on our <a href="#">website</a> .
The Executive	<p>The <a href="#">Executive</a> is the Leader of the council and six Executive Councillors. They make decisions on major service areas.</p> <p>They can make decisions individually, usually at a meeting of a scrutiny committee relevant to their executive area. They also meet collectively to determine the council's budget and medium-term financial strategy.</p>
Scrutiny and Overview Committees	<p>To balance the Executive's powers, scrutiny committees are responsible for advising and reviewing decisions. They hold the Executive to account to make sure the best decisions are taken for the council and local residents. Further details are published on our website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Scrutiny Committee</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee</a></li> </ul>
Leadership Team	Our management structure includes a <a href="#">Leadership Team</a> with a Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive, Directors, and a Head of Finance. It is supported by a Senior Management Team. Both teams consider policy formulation and future planning.
Civic Affairs Committee	<p>The Civic Affairs Committee plays a vital role overseeing and promoting good governance, ensuring accountability and reviewing the ways things are done. It provides an assurance role to the Council and is responsible for corporate governance issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electoral issues</li> <li>• Audit and regulatory financial matters</li> <li>• Civic and democratic process management issues</li> <li>• Miscellaneous regulatory responsibilities</li> </ul> <p>It works closely with both Internal Audit and senior management to continually improve the governance, risk and control environment. Meetings details and minutes are <a href="#">published on the website</a>. The Committee has also appointed an independent person which is regarded as best practice.</p>

You can visit our website for more information about "[How the Council Works](#)".

### **Purpose of the Annual Governance Statement**

The Council conducts a review of its system of internal control, prepares and publishes an Annual Governance Statement in each financial year.

This enables us to demonstrate whether, and to what extent, the Council complied with its Local Code of Governance. This process records our good practice, and also helps us to plan further action which can improve our governance arrangements.

### **Statutory compliance**

Producing the Annual Governance Statement helps the Council meet the requirements of Regulation 6(1)b of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. It is reviewed by the Civic Affairs Committee and approved in advance of the Statement of Accounts.

The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. That duty has grown in importance with the reduction in resources being made available for Local Authorities as part of the Government's on-going austerity programme.

The Council's financial management arrangements are consistent with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.



## **Review and assurance mechanisms**

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Management activities contribute to the continuous review of the Local Code of Governance, and also inform the Annual Governance Statement. In addition, assurance can be provided from other sources:

### **Head of Internal Audit Opinion**

The Head of Internal Audit provides an independent opinion on the overall adequacy of and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk and control framework and the extent to which the Council can rely on it. This has been considered in the development of the Annual Governance Statement.

Regular updates are presented to the Civic Affairs Committee throughout the year which outline the key findings of the internal audit work undertaken during 2021/2022, including any areas of significant weakness in the internal control environment.

Resource was allocated to supporting the Council deliver Covid-19 activities, where this could help to maintain or improve the governance, risk and control environment. Consequently, resources have been diverted from typical assurance-based activities. Internal audit maintains a risk-based plan and this approach was supported by the Civic Affairs Committee. The breadth of and volume of other risk-based assurance was less than usual, however core assurance work was delivered, and we considered the governance, risk and internal control environment.

From the audit reviews undertaken, no areas were identified where it was considered that, if the risks highlighted materialised, it would have a major impact on the organisation as a whole. In each instance where it has been identified that the control environment was not strong enough or was not complied with sufficiently to prevent risks to the organisation, Internal Audit has issued recommendations to further improve the system of control and compliance. Where these recommendations are considered to have significant impact on the system of internal control, the implementation of actions is followed-up by Internal Audit and reported to Civic Affairs Committee.

It is the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit that, taking into account all available evidence, reasonable assurance may be awarded over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's overall internal control environment during the financial year 2021/2022, and this remains at a similar level to the previous year.

### **Partnership assurance**

The Council has services which are delivered in partnership with other Councils. Where other Councils are the lead authority, they will provide assurance back to Cambridge City Council that controls are effective, and where there is opportunity for improvement. This includes Waste Services, Planning and Development, plus Information and Communications Technology.

The Council set up an Investment Partnership with Hill Investment Partnerships in 2017. Updates on all the Cambridge Investment Partnerships current projects are provided quarterly to the Housing Scrutiny Committee, and information is available on their [website](#).

Cambridge City Housing Company Ltd was established in 2016 as a wholly owned company. The Council's published annual statement of accounts includes details of the Housing Company, and reports on the Council's relationship with the Housing Company,

financial performance and loan arrangements. The Council receives information on the Housing Company through its Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee. The Committee reviews the Housing Company's business plan, and the Council's published Corporate Plan sets out the objectives, activities and people involved in management and decisions.

### **External reviews**

The Trade Waste function of the Shared Waste Services received positive assurance from their Internal audit reviews and maintained their accreditation with the ISO9001 (Quality Management) and ISO14001 (Environmental Management) standards.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman resolve complaints in the public sector and provides annual statistic on performance. No public interest reports were published.

### **External Audit**

Ernst & Young (now EY) are the appointed external auditor, and their results report (ISA260) will be presented to the Civic Affairs committee later in 2022. For 2020/2021 financial year EY issued ["unqualified" audit opinions](#) on the financial statements, value for money conclusion and whole of government accounts which provided assurance to the Council.

### **Public Services Network**

The Council completed the Cabinet Office compliance verification process for the Public Services Network Code of Connection (PSN), and a certificate was issued. This demonstrated that the information technology infrastructure was sufficiently secure to connect to the PSN.

### **The Financial Management Code**

Strong financial management is an essential part of ensuring public sector finances are sustainable, and CIPFA launched a Financial Management Code to support this. Councils are required to be compliant with the code from the 2021/2022 financial year.

A key goal of the code is to improve the financial resilience of organisations by embedding enhanced standards of financial management. The code incorporates existing requirements on local government, to give a comprehensive picture of financial management in the Council.

Our evaluation has demonstrated that the requirements of the code are being satisfied. This process has also helped us to identify further opportunities to improve our financial resilience which have been agreed by the Leadership Team.



## Impact of Coronavirus

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Pandemic events have the potential to significantly affect our governance, risk and control environment. Immediate impacts could include the Council's decision-making processes, risk management, and the overall capacity and capability of the Council. In the longer term it can also impact our strategic outcomes, financial and organisational resilience, stakeholder engagement and accountability.

The financial year 2021/2022 was another year in which council services were disrupted by the impacts of the global coronavirus pandemic. Restrictions and regulations changed during the year. Some services continued largely unaffected, whilst others (such as the Corn Exchange and other live cultural events) were not able to operate "normally" until later in the year. Even when services were allowed to operate normally, the continuing presence of coronavirus in the community lead to periods of sick leave and isolation, reducing our capacity to deliver some services at times.

In response to the pandemic we implemented mitigating measures through our business continuity framework, with continuous risk management, and proactively worked with our stakeholders, partners and customers. This has positively contributed to many of the principals from our Local Code of Governance, such as engaging with stakeholders, determining interventions to achieve outcomes, managing risk, and adapting our internal controls.

Our [Annual Report for 2021/2022](#) illustrates how it was an exceptional year and highlights how council services sought to adapt to the restrictions imposed by the government in response to the global coronavirus pandemic, seeking new ways of working – including with communities and partners - to deliver the services that are important to local people and to respond to the challenges of Covid-19.

The pandemic has also illustrated how important 'good governance' has been to enable and sustain a whole system response. It has highlighted the systemic risks beyond the Councils control that can have a significant impact on achieving intended outcomes for the residents of Cambridge. This includes, for example, our ability to sustain partnerships, joined up delivery of services and multi-agency co-ordination mechanisms with police, fire, NHS, and other local authorities, where they are under significant strain, or under-resourced, or take a different approach to managing risk, accountability and transparency.

## Progress from the last Annual Governance Statement

The Council prepared an [Annual Governance Statement for 2020/2021](#) which was approved by the Civic Affairs Committee in September 2021:

Action	Update and status
Managing our recovery and resilience	2021/2022 continued to be an exceptional year and council services adapted to the restrictions imposed by the government in response to the global coronavirus pandemic, seeking new ways of working (including our communities and partners) to deliver the services that are important to local people and to respond to the challenges of Covid-19. We continued reviewing how we delivered our services and the best way to do this as we responded to further changes from the pandemic.
Transformation, resources and risk management	We reviewed the Risk Management Framework to best practice guidance. We developed a revised Strategy and Toolkit to reflect our current risk appetite and support an agile and transformative approach to working. The revised documents approved by the Civic Affairs Committee.
Maintaining financial resilience and compliance	External pressures continue to create financial uncertainty. It is important the council proactively manages this risk.  We delivered an action plan from our earlier high-level assessment of the Financial Management Code. This aims to improve our financial resilience by embedding enhanced standards of financial management and provides assurance that we are managing our financial risks.
Minimising the fraud and error risks	We have started to review and update our local policies and procedures to reflect best practice guidance such as national Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy.  We completed post assurance work on Business Grant Schemes, working with the Cabinet Office, BEIS, and HMRC through data sharing initiatives. This included high levels of transactions and regular updates were reported to our Stakeholders.
Maintaining good ethical governance	The Council is committed to maintaining good ethical governance, and our Local Code of Governance reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life in local government. To help enhance this process we started to review our local guidance and promote any changes. This good practice will continue into 2022/2023.
Proactively preparing for emerging legislative change	We will monitor and respond to emerging legislation (across key areas such as procurement, planning, environmental). This will be reflected in our Corporate Plan which will be revised, along with supporting policies and procedures.

## Review of effectiveness

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The Council has a number of policies and procedures which are recorded in its [Local Code of Governance](#). These are mapped to the seven principles of good governance.

The effectiveness of the key elements of the governance framework is reviewed throughout the year. This activity is informed by the work of senior officers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and from comments received from external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Council is involved in partnership working and has group relationships with other entities. The Cambridge City Housing Company Ltd, Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP, and the Cambridge Live Group are incorporated into Group Financial Statements in our Statement of Accounts. Activities of the groups are also reflected in our review of effectiveness where these have a significant impact on our governance arrangements.

The review concludes that the Council has complied with its Code. Additional examples of good practice, emerging controls, and governance issues from the last twelve months, considered when completing the review are recorded below, and will be incorporated into the next revision of the Code where appropriate:

Principle	Review of effectiveness
<p>A Behave: integrity, ethical values, respect rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continued to work closely with Public Health colleagues to coordinate and support the wider county' public health response to the pandemic, including sharing local community intelligence to help contain outbreaks and reduce community transmission of the virus. The Council has been an active partner in implementing the local outbreak management plan in the city as directed by a multi-agency Covid-19 Health Protection Board and has also participated in local recovery and resilience planning. We redeployed staff to activities such as keeping the city centre safe, and used our <a href="#">website</a> to signpost to national guidance, policy and advice on Health and Safety.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Local Code of Governance</a> was reviewed and updated to reflect the latest professional standards and guidance.</li> <li>• We proactively implemented risk-based controls to mitigate the increased potential for Business Grants fraud and deliver prompt funding support to businesses in the community.</li> </ul>
<p>B Openness &amp; stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We maintained openness through access to meetings, information and online support.</li> <li>• We actively communicated with residents throughout the pandemic. This included using the <a href="#">website</a> to signpost people to where they could get help, keeping them updated on changes to services, and financial support for businesses and residents.</li> <li>• The 2021 Annual Briefing for Cambridge Businesses and Organisations was <a href="#">delivered online</a>. The <a href="#">budget</a> for the next financial year was also promoted online to help engage with our stakeholders, residents and businesses. Priorities were set to tackle the systemic challenges facing the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change emergency and biodiversity emergencies;</li> <li>○ Tackling poverty &amp; inequality and helping people in the greatest need;</li> <li>○ Building a new generation of council homes and reducing homelessness; and</li> <li>○ Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We continued to consult and engage with stakeholders, including: Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document; Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Preferred Options.</li> </ul>

Principle	Review of effectiveness
C Defining outcomes - economic, social, environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new <a href="#">Corporate Plan 2022-2027</a> was set during the 2021/2022 year, to define our outcomes and strategic level objectives.</li> <li>• The Council received updates on significant developments, such as the current status of the programme to build new council homes funded through the Combined Authority.</li> <li>• The Council approved the Resident Involvement Strategy for 2021/2024, which incorporated business plan objectives, feedback from the 2020 Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey and recommendations from the Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020).</li> <li>• Three <a href="#">new housing policies</a>, were developed with South Cambridgeshire District Council, and will form annexes to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.</li> <li>• The Environment &amp; Scrutiny Committee approved the <a href="#">Council's Climate Change Strategy for 2021-2026</a>, and the <a href="#">Carbon Management Plan for 2021-2026</a> which was consulted with the public in autumn 2020. The revised strategy builds on what the Council has achieved to date, but sets out new ambitions in the context of the Climate Emergency, including working more with residents, communities, businesses and institutions.</li> <li>• The Housing Scrutiny Committee approved a <a href="#">pilot project to retrofit up to fifty Council properties</a> to establish the actual cost and methodology of achieving net zero carbon in existing Council properties.</li> </ul>

Principle	Review of effectiveness
<p>D Determine interventions to achieve outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Corporate Plan 2019-2022, defined our outcomes and strategic level objectives in this review year. Performance, achievements, and further actions linked to the Corporate Plan are included in our <a href="#">Corporate Plan Annual Report</a>. It reflects the impact of the pandemic including activities which could not be delivered, and also new activities which could not be planned.</li> <li>• In response to the Covid-19 pandemic we continued to help support the public and provided regular updates on our website. We also provided support to businesses by providing information, and financial assistance through the distribution of national and local business support grants. This included £55 million awarded to support businesses since the pandemic started.</li> <li>• The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted our response to pandemic which was set out in the Outline Coronavirus Recovery Plan. We worked in partnership across the County to deliver a Public Health response with the County Council, NHS, to deliver mutual aid networks. The Committee <a href="#">received updates</a> on the ongoing work that the Council had undertaken during the pandemic to respond to the needs of the City, and proposals for grant funding support. The Committee also received an update on the Council’s intermediate housing company, Cambridge City Housing Company Limited (CCHC) and Business Plan.</li> </ul>
<p>E Develop capacity and capability of entity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pandemic challenged our capacity to manage the governance framework. Digital enabling technology enabled the Council to adapt and respond with different ways of working.</li> <li>• Our new Chief Executive started in April 2021 and the existing Interim Chief Executive was temporarily appointed to the statutory positions of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer during the transition. This helped maintain business continuity for delivery of the elections in May 2021.</li> <li>• Members of the Council <a href="#">appointed Councillor Anna Smith as the new Leader</a> of the Council.</li> <li>• The Council received updates on the work of the <a href="#">Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Board</a> (formerly the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership), <a href="#">Greater Cambridge Partnership</a> and other growth-related partnerships. This is provided as a part of the Council’s commitment, given in its “<a href="#">Principles of Partnership Working</a>”, to set out annual reports summarising the work of the key partnerships it is involved with.</li> </ul>



Principle	Review of effectiveness
F Manage risk & performance, internal control, finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council approved financial reports including Revenue and Capital Outturn reports for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts, which had been prepared using the new Financial Management System. A <a href="#">report presented to the council's Strategy and Resources Committee</a> on 12 July 2021 estimated that the cost of the pandemic to the council is £18.5million due to increased spending on housing and providing accommodation, alongside reduced income from car parking, Council Tax and Cambridge Live events. These additional costs have only partially been mitigated by government grants.</li> <li>• Scrutiny Committees received annual Performance reports for the Shared Services. This communicated that increased collaborative working between partners is assisting in delivering the benefits set out in the original business plans.</li> <li>• The Council maintains a Risk Management framework, which considers both risk and opportunity. We also considered risks in response to Covid-19 to help manage the impact with timely and proportionate mitigation as part of our Contingency Planning. Both our <a href="#">Strategy and Framework</a> were reviewed as good practice and approved by our Civic Affairs Committee.</li> <li>• The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee received an update and Business Plan for the Council's intermediate housing company, Cambridge City Housing Company Limited (CCHC), plus an update on North-East Cambridge (NEC) programme and progress against the three key projects associated with its strategic regeneration. The Environmental and Community Scrutiny Committee received an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cambridge Community Safety Partnership as a part of the Council's commitment given in its "<a href="#">Principles of Partnership Working</a>".</li> </ul>

Principle	Review of effectiveness
G Transparency, reporting, audit, accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We received an unqualified opinion on the Statement of Accounts for 2020/2021. Both the Council and the externally appointed auditors worked together to conclude these as promptly as possible, and progress updates were communicated to and approved by the Civic Affairs Committee. There is continuing pressure to complete accounts nationally to the prescribed timetable, and legislation was set to assist Councils with the completion of their 2020/2021 accounts. We completed our accounts after the standard statutory deadline, but within revised timetable, and this was a significant accomplishment for the Council as the majority of Councils could not achieve this.</li> <li>• Council agreed to use <a href="#">Public Sector Appointments Ltd (PSAA)</a> as the appointing person for procuring External Auditors for the Council.</li> <li>• The Civic Affairs Committee received the <a href="#">annual report on transparency</a>, including Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations.</li> <li>• We successfully delivered the local elections. This complex process was more challenging due to the pandemic, and lessons learnt have been considered by the Civic Affairs Committee.</li> </ul>

## Action plan

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The governance arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with our framework and this is recognised in our conclusion below.

The review process helps us to identify opportunities to improve the governance arrangements over the next twelve months.

Some of these may feature in previous statements where the work is continuous and ongoing. They consider both historic governance issues that have arisen during the 2021/2022 financial year and up to the date the Statement of Accounts are approved, and we also look ahead for potential issues for 2022/2023 from our risk management process, corporate plans and strategies. These focus on the following themes, which are developed into detailed action plans for improvement across our governance framework:

Theme	Details
Managing our recovery and resilience	The UK has faced a sequence of significant and ongoing macroeconomic shocks over the past three years. We developed and adapted our processes and governance arrangements during the pandemic, which continued into 2021/2022. At the end of the year, the war in Ukraine presented new challenges for the council in ensuring refugee guests from Ukraine were welcomed and safely housed, and the emerging cost of living crisis raised the prospect of our many residents in the city facing further economic hardship in the months ahead. High inflation, a tight labour market, and supply chain disruption also create pressures and uncertainty. We will continue to respond to emerging challenges and seek new ways of working (including our communities and partners) to deliver the services that are important to local people.
Transformation, resources and risk management	In 2020/2021 the council initiated an ambitious programme of transforming and modernising the way it works, the Our Cambridge Programme. This will deliver a more customer-focussed and efficient approach to service delivery, and a systems-based approach to delivering the council's vision of "One Cambridge, Fair for all" in partnership with communities and a wide range of partners and stakeholders. We will continue the transformation by reviewing the organisation design of the council, identifying savings to achieve a balanced budget, and implementing revised project governance. We will also continue to review our risk management framework to ensure it is complimentary to the Our Cambridge Programme.
Minimising the fraud and error risks	We are reviewing and updating our local policies and procedures to reflect best practice guidance such as national Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy. The fraud landscape continues to develop, and it is important that we proactively respond to this. We will continue this work into 2022/2023 to help maintain effective governance arrangements.

Theme	Details
<p>Maintaining good governance and proactively preparing for emerging legislative change.</p>	<p>The council is committed to maintaining good ethical governance, and our Local Code of Governance reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life in local government. To help enhance this process we are reviewing our local guidance and will promote any changes. We will also respond to professional guidance issued following the national Redmond Review.</p> <p>External factors continue to create uncertainty to developments in national legislation which could impact Councils. We will continue to monitor and respond to emerging legislation (across key areas such as procurement, planning, environmental). This will be reflected in our Corporate Plan which will be revised, along with supporting policies and procedures.</p>

## Conclusion and opinion

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The Council has in place strong governance arrangements which we are confident protect its interests and provide necessary assurances to our citizens and stakeholders. No significant governance issues were identified from our review of effectiveness. We have identified opportunities for improvement, and these are included in our Action Plan above.

We are satisfied that the planned actions will improve our governance arrangements, identified from our review of effectiveness. We will monitor their implementation and operation throughout the year and report their progress as part of our next annual review.