**THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **AUDIT AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 2026** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Councillors James Slater (Chair), Janet Grauberg, Samata Khatoon, Lorna Jane Russell and Nanouche Umeadi; and Fehintola Akinlose and Alan Layton (Independent Members)

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT**

Councillors Matt Cooper, Steve Adams, Nasim Ali, Richard Cotton and Nazma Rahman

**The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

**MINUTES**

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adam, Ali and Cooper.

## 2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, COMPULSORY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND VOLUNTARY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

## 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

**Webcasting**

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet and was recorded and later made available on the website. Those addressing the meeting were deemed to be consenting to their contributions being recorded and broadcast.

**Agenda Order**

The Chair announced that the Borough Solicitor had requested that Agenda Item 10 be taken as the first substantive item of business due to a long-standing commitment later in the evening. The Committee agreed to this change in the order of the agenda.

## 4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

## 5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There was no notification of urgent business.

## 6. MINUTES

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## 7. DRAFT 2026-27 INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATIONS PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director Corporate Services.

A Committee Member enquired about fire safety, noting it was last reviewed in 2021 and was not contained within the plan for 2026-27. The Head of Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management explained that a detailed review with extended follow-ups had been conducted previously and that there were other safeguards in place, including external assurance and inspections. The Audit Manager added that recent work on the commercial property portfolio had touched on fire safety, with recommendations applied to the wider portfolio. He confirmed that the Director covering fire safety had also raised it for consideration in the work plan for 2027-28.

In response to a question about the bank reconciliation and capital account/asset management lines in Appendix C, the Head of Audit, Investigations and Risk Management confirmed that previous follow-ups had all been closed. She advised that finance follow-ups were tracked regularly with the finance senior management team, which helped in closing actions. The Audit Manager provided further reassurance that all follow-ups were tracked until implementation, with updates due to be provided to the Committee in July.

The Committee requested that future annual reports in July include information on the aging of recommendations in order that the Committee could have an overview of the effectiveness and speed of closure.

**ACTION BY: Head of Audit, Investigations and Risk Management**

In relation to homelessness and temporary accommodation, the Audit Manager confirmed that a narrower review was still being delivered as part of the current year's plan and would be completed in Q1, with outcomes reported in the summer.

Further to a question about the risk-based reviews of seven schools, the Head of Audit, Investigations and Risk Management explained that school selection for audit plans considered various factors, such as time since the last audit, new headteachers, suspected fraud, or concerns from finance colleagues. Deficits alone were not the sole indicator, as many schools faced them due to declining pupil numbers. The Audit Manager apologised for the outdated dates on the School's Financial Value Statement, confirming it was an oversight and that the statements were up to date.

The Chair enquired about resourcing the plan and the future of external resourcing. The Head of Internal, Audit, Investigations and Risk Management stated that the internal team was well-resourced, with the last vacancy filled and the team fully staffed. She confirmed that the PwC arrangement was ending, and a procurement process for a new cross-council assurance framework was underway. She expressed confidence that delivery would not be disadvantaged by a later start for new providers, as only a few audits were done externally, and some areas like IT had been brought in-house in 2025/26.

**RESOLVED –**

(i) THAT the Internal Audit Strategy at Appendix A of the report be approved;

(ii) THAT the 2026-27 Internal Audit Plan at Appendix B be approved;

(iii) THAT the Principal Risk Assurance map at Appendix C be approved; and

(iv) THAT the 2026-27 Annual Investigations Plan at Appendix D be approved.

## 8. PRINCIPAL RISK UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director Corporate Services.

The Chair advised that the rescheduling of the SEND and school sufficiency deep dive had been agreed due to uncertainties surrounding the schools' white paper and it was hoped that the situation would be clearer later on in the year.

In response to a question about the overspends referred to in paragraph 2.4 of the report, the Director of Finance confirmed that the majority of spend pressures were from temporary accommodation, adult social care and children's services, due to the levels of demand and complexity in those areas. Other pressures were much smaller in scale. He noted these were known national issues, with contingencies in place, but acknowledged that a quick resolution was unlikely.

In response to a question about the definition of "temporary accommodation" officers undertook to provide a precise definition to Members in writing, but it was understood to cover all types of temporary accommodation. From an audit perspective, it was a wider definition covering homeless individuals and families in temporary accommodation, those for whom the Council had a duty of care or housing due to homelessness. There would be a contribution to accommodation costs from benefits, but it was often insufficient to cover the full rent.

**ACTION BY: Head of Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management**

A Committee Member asked if there was any update on the situation with the Coroner's Service. The Risk Manager confirmed that the situation was being monitored very closely by the risk lead and added that, while the uncertainty of the Pan-London transfer was an additional risk, staffing pressures had stabilised.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

## 9. CAMDEN LIVING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the Camden Living Limited audited financial statements for the 12-month period to 31st March 2025 be noted.

## 10. MINOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL REPORT TO MAY COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the suggested changes to the Constitution detailed within the report, and the intention to include those changes in the annual report to Council in May, be noted.

## 11. ACCOUNTING POLICIES FOR THE 2025/26 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND UPDATE ON FINANCIAL REPORTING

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance.

A Committee Member asked for clarification of the point on page 94 of the agenda regarding the depreciation of assets under construction using historical cost. Officers explained that assets under construction were carried at historical cost and would not be depreciated until they became operational. The Director of Finance undertook to provide further clarification of this point in writing.

**ACTION BY: Director of Finance/Chief Accountant**

**RESOLVED –**

(i) THAT the Accounting Policies for the financial year 2025/26, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be approved;

(ii) THAT authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, to approve any further amendments to the accounting policies that are found to be required during preparation of the accounts, nothing that these will be reported to the Committee when the accounts are presented for approval; and

(iii) THAT the update to the reporting of the 2024/25 accounts be noted.

## 12. WORK AND TRAINING PLAN AND ACTION TRACKER

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor.

Members made the following comments:-

- It would be useful to include an explanation of the local government audit backlog and the backstop arrangements within the induction material for members of the Committee.
- A training session on how to read and interpret accounts should be included in the induction programme for the Committee.

**ACTION BY: Director of Finance/Democratic Services Manager**

The Chair reported that Members of the Committee would shortly receive a link to a survey on the Committee's effectiveness over the course of the 2025/6 municipal year and he encourage Members to take the time to complete the survey.

**RESOLVED –**

(i) THAT the work plan for the 2026/27 municipal year, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;

(ii) THAT the plans for Member induction and ongoing training be noted subject to the comments recorded above; and

(iii) THAT the action tracker for actions arising from previous meetings in 2025/26, as per Appendix C to the report, be noted.

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.13pm.

**CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**