COMPTROLLER & CITY SOLICITORS DEPARTMENT 2026/2028 BUSINESS PLAN

1. About Us

C&CS purpose, aims & impacts

C&CS strategic and operational purpose is to ensure that the City acts lawfully, to contribute to corporate plan and departmental objectives, outputs and outcomes by providing expert high quality legal advice and support to the City's departments, institutions and academies.

To deliver electoral registration and elections legally and efficiently in compliance with the Electoral Commission and City of London standards.

To deliver expert data protection advice to departments institutions and schools; coordinate FOI and SAR requests and to monitor corporate performance in these areas. Compliance with ICO standards.

These deliverables mitigate the risk of legal challenge, financial and reputational damage to the City and support all Corporate Plan outcomes.

C&CS achievements challenges and outcomes 2025/6 in summary

1. Delivered expert legal support on property sales and planning agreements enabling the department to exceed the local risk income target of £841k contributing to financial sustainability and supporting strategic investment in public services.

2. Parliamentary and 'All out' Common Council elections successfully delivered in March 2025 ensuring that the City fulfils its statutory electoral duties.

3. Lawyer chargeable hours 2025/2026 forecast to exceed annual target overall by 15% some of the highest among benchmarked London local authority legal teams a key C&CS KPI.

4. EEDI - successful attendance and engagement at the London careers festival resulting in work placements, staff survey action plan in place, neurodiversity awareness training and groupwork session at the C&CS staff conference, confidential safe space process re-launched, these pragmatic EEDI initiatives support more diverse inclusive staffing.

5. Conducting and settling several high-profile cases in Employment law, Construction Law and a high value Commercial Contract dispute to an Early Neutral Evaluation process. Building and strengthening the team through successful recruitment.

6. Delivered the Corporate Charities Review (relating to sundry trusts) which is nearing completion, reducing the number of charities from 59 to 26.

7. Planning Legal Team voted 2nd highest rated council planning law team in 2025 by Planning Resource demonstrating that the service is excellent.

8. Delivered full legal support to London Councils relating to the creation of a dynamic purchasing system for Electric Vehicles Charging Points across London Boroughs thereby supporting sustainable environment outcomes.

9. Advising on the renewal of the pan London Sexual health project relating to managing an IT provider to continue delivering postal kits to patients and liaising with clinics for test results, which has already achieved an estimated saving of £13.1 million in local authority expenditure on STI testing and treatment between 2018 and 2023.

10. Bridges: various engineering contracts for maintenance and refurbishment of the City's bridges e.g. Blackfriars Bridge (NEC4 contract for Phase 2 refurbishment works) and Millennium Bridge. Tower Bridge - contracts for replacement of hydraulic motors and mud tanks, and for fire suppression systems.

2. Our outcomes and how they align with Corporate Plan 2024-2029

As an enabling service the C&CS legal function delivers support on corporate Initiatives, projects and programmes via the City's departments and institutions it therefore contributes to Corporate Plan outcomes as determined by client instructions. The core outcome of the C&CS service is the delivery of an excellent service in support of the City's departments and institutions, the breadth of work undertaken by the department contributes to all six Corporate Plan outcomes dependent on strategic and operational priorities:

- Diverse Engaged Communities
- Dynamic Economic Growth
- Vibrant Thriving Destination
- Providing Excellent Services
- Flourishing Public Spaces
- Leading Sustainable Environment

3. Our key objectives, priority workstreams and major projects

Financial sustainability

1. Deliver expert legal support on major development projects, property management:

    - Liverpool Street and other major re-developments
    - City Surveyors Investment Property Group disposal and headlease re-structuring programme
    - Deliver legal support to City Bridge Foundation (CBF) on a completely new volume of work dealing with the restructuring of the CBF property portfolio.

    This work supports all six Corporate Plan overarching outcomes.

2. Deliver legal support to Open Spaces on increasing volumes of work already evident in 2025 and which will continue in 2026/2027, supporting Corporate Plan outcomes vibrant thriving destination and flourishing open spaces.

Transformation

1. Continue to develop and in-house legal case management system solution to replace the existing external system to deliver the functionality and efficiencies required. Local risk budget savings estimated at £50k per annum.

2. Develop in collaboration with the external software supplier a tablet canvassing solution for electoral registration and an online solution for the City Database Occupiers Survey.

3. Review and plan C&CS workforce resourcing of legal staff to meet increasing volumes and complexity of work.

4. Continue to deliver the corporate charities review ongoing with particular focus on the Natural Environment charities.

Statutory

1. Ensure that the City of London acts lawfully and meets its statutory duties.

2. Elections:
    - Deliver one scheduled aldermanic election, the GLA 2028 election and other unscheduled elections as they arise.
    - Deliver the annual canvass and voter registration.
    - Elections Act 2022 accessibility requirements – review all polling stations and equipment to ensure, as far as possible accessibility standards are met.
    - Implement the upcoming elections act which includes voting at 16, this affects both the Ward List and the Electoral Register.

3. In collaboration with departments and institutions maintain compliance with Data Protection statutory duties including mandatory training for all staff, and the processing of Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests.

EEDI

1. Continue to develop the work of the C&CS EEDI Group focussing on recruitment, staff development and inclusion in the department this will involve attendance at the London careers festival, targeting recruitment at under-represented groups and work placements.

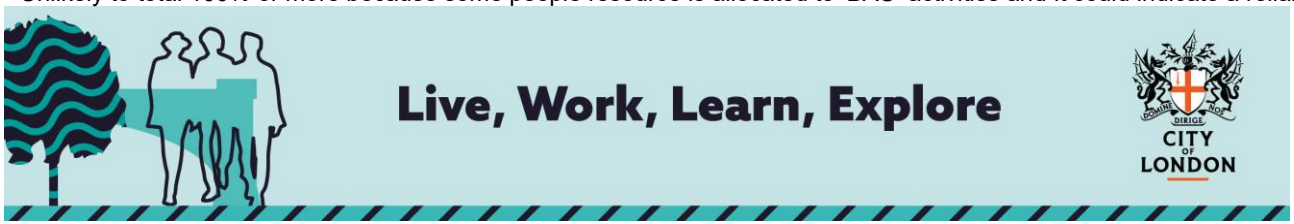
2. Contribute to corporate EEDI projects and programmes across the division as determined by corporate initiatives.

3. Deliver legal advice and support to the Corporate EEDI Team.

4. Action Plan and Measuring Success

Priority workstream	Funding allocation %	Are workstreams fully funded?	People resource %	Describe any new impacts on /dependencies with enabling services	Corporate Plan 2024-2029 Outcomes	Outcome focused Performance measures	Outcomes / Impacts
Add the workstream name and list key deliverables across the period. Note activities and milestones and give the date these will be achieved. Be clear on delivery during 2026/27 and delivery later.	*Estimate the % (of the total 100%) budget that will be allocated*[1]	*Indicate if workstreams & activities are fully, partially or not funded*	*Estimate the % (of the total workforce) that will work on this*[2]	*e.g. recruitment, L&D, IT needs etc. State here if these have been discussed with relevant functions*	*List all the CP outcomes this workstream contributes to*	*CP 2024-2029 Performance Measures should be shown in **bold***	*State what will be different*
Provide expert legal support on all major projects, property management, and statutory duties, including: -Liverpool Street Station re-development -Investment Property Group's disposal and restructuring programme -CBF property portfolio re-structure -Ensuring compliance with all statutory obligations	86%	Local risk budget	Variable dependent on programme of projects priorities. Delivering excellent services		Dynamic Economic Growth Vibrant Thriving Destination Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces Leading Sustainable Environment	% chargeable hours achieved against (target 100%) Client satisfaction survey outcome 2026 - % rating service as excellent target 80% LEXCEL Compliance 100%	Dependent on the outcomes of major projects.

[1] Does not total 100% because some departmental budget is allocated to 'BAU' activities and/or is unprogrammed for emerging or unexpected activities that arise in-year.
[2] Unlikely to total 100% or more because some people resource is allocated to 'BAU' activities and it could indicate a reliance on additional working time to deliver activities



Elections: 1. Deliver one scheduled aldermanic election, the GLA 2028 election and other unscheduled elections as they arise. 2.Deliver the annual canvass and voter registration. 3.Elections Act 2022 accessibility requirements – review all polling stations and equipment to ensure, as far as possible accessibility standards are met. 4.Implement the upcoming elections act which includes voting at 16, this affects both the Ward List and the Electoral Register.	6%	Local Risk Budget	8%		Providing excellent services	Elections activities delivered 100% lawfully in compliance with Electoral Commission requirements i.e. without legal challenge	Elections & canvass delivered in compliance with required Electoral Commission standards.
EEDI initiatives	<1%	Local risk budget	1%	HR for staff survey	Diverse engaged communities	% of C&CS staff who report good levels of engagement target 70%	Diverse engaged communities.
Develop case management system	1%	LRB	1%	DITS support	Providing excellent services	System deployed user feedback positive	Deliver efficiencies and Local risk budget savings



How success will be measured

The C&CS Business Plan is reported to ELB and subsequently Corporate Services Committee for approval.

As an enabling department C&CS contributes to the six Corporate Plan Outcomes through the delivery of a professional service in line with the Corporate Plan outcome Providing Excellent Services.

The service measures it's success by:

Professional Standards

Compliance with the standards determined by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority, The Law Society by compliance with the LEXCEL Quality Standard, the Electoral Commission and the Information Commissioner.

Service Outcomes

Measured by the feedback from clients via the bi-annual Client Satisfaction Survey and by the delivery of effective professional support to enable the delivery of corporate projects and programmes, the success of these is measured by client departments and institutions.

Measures:

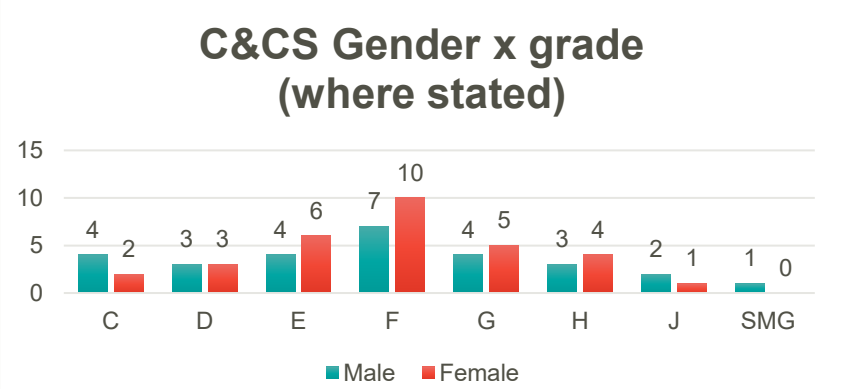
- Service KPI's
- Lawyer chargeable hours against target which is benchmarked against other London local authorities and is a standard appraisal objective.
- EEDI is a standard appraisal objective for all C&CS staff.
- As an enabling service support to the Corporate Outcomes via client departments and institutions is a core golden thread for all staff.

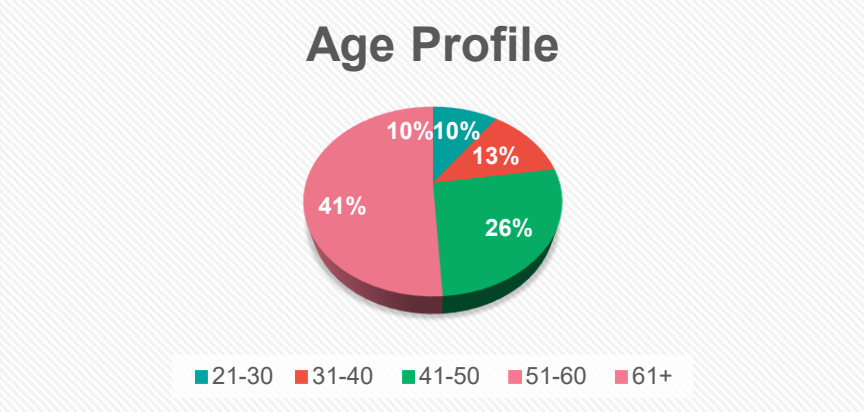


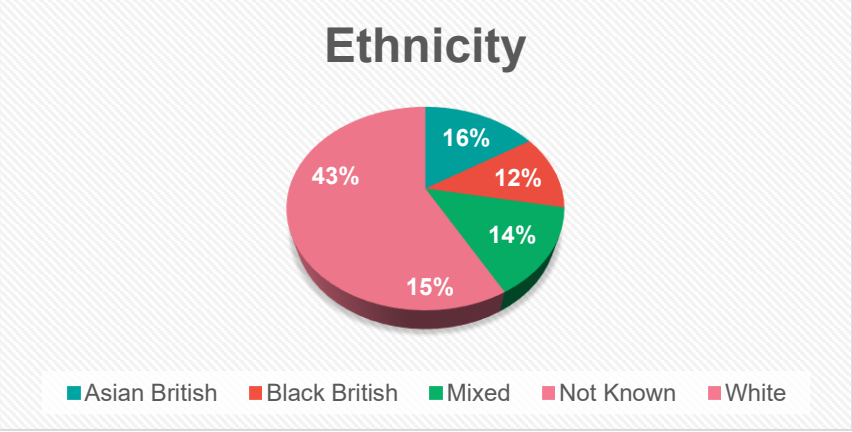
5. Enablers

People

The Comptroller & City Solicitor's department comprises a diverse and experienced workforce of 59 staff members, including 52 permanent and 10 agency staff. The gender balance is broadly even across grades, with representation at all levels from Grade C through to Senior Management Group (SMG).
Staff Survey Action Plan: Completed 2025.
Resource challenge: recruitment of staff with appropriate competencies to deliver the increasing complexity of work.







EEDI Priorities

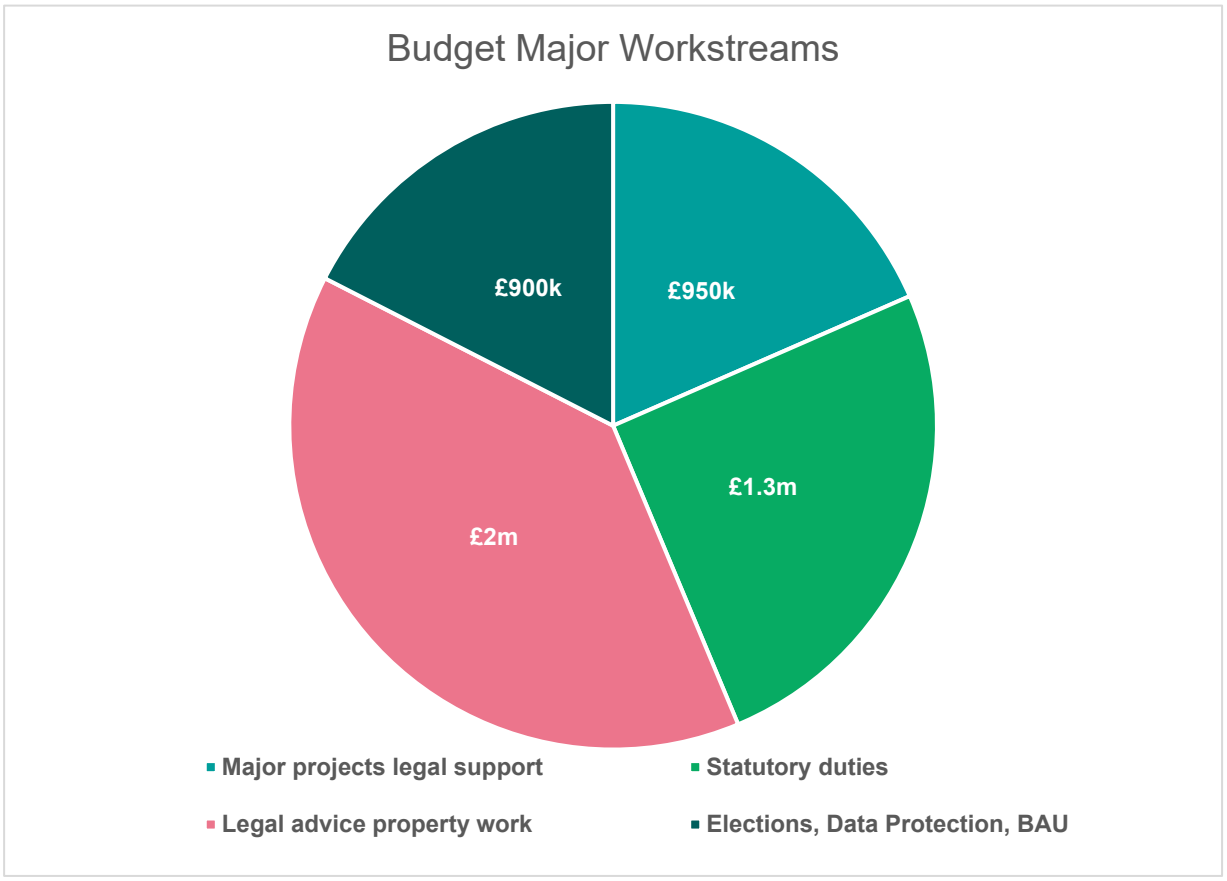
1. Safe space confidential system to enable staff to report unacceptable behaviours to the Comptroller & City Solicitor. **(Inclusive and trustworthy leadership).**
2. The C&CS SLT will monitor the workforce profile trends, will challenge discriminatory behaviours and take pro-active action to ensure that the department is inclusive. **(inclusive and trustworthy leadership)**
3. Attendance/presentations at the annual careers festival to inform alternate (non-graduate) apprenticeship routes into the profession in support of the corporate objective attracting, developing and retaining excellent, diverse, local and national talent and in support of social mobility. **(Inclusive and diverse workforce)**
4. Targeted recruitment advertising to encourage under-represented groups to join the organisation. **(Socio-economic diversity).**
5. Deliver direct action in support of the corporate equalities objectives as these crystalise. **(All corporate equality objectives).**

Finance

Proposed budget 2026/27	***£***
Local Risk	
Expenditure	*£6,035,000*
Income	*£4,582,000*
Total Local Risk	
Central Risk	*£0*
Total Local and Central Risk	
Recharges	*£1,453,000*
Total net expenditure	*£0*

Staffing resource is a significant budget pressure due to increased volumes of more complex work most obviously in the Property Division though also in other teams due to staffing turnover and an increasing reliance on locum staff to deliver in-house legal support. Agency staff currently constitute 18% of the staff base. Due to the higher cost of agency staff this has created a 2025/6 forecast overspend of £500K This is likely to continue into the 2026 2027 financial year.

Estimated budget spend (forecast) on priority workstreams



Priorities and plans being considered in the medium term

What Medium Term action is required? (e.g. New legislation, services, projects, automation)	When? 2026/27	When? 2028/29	When? 2029/30	Is this Funded or Unfunded?
Revised career structures (subject to outcome of Ambition 25)	**X**			**Uncertain**
Replacement Case Management system	**X**			**Yes**

Risks

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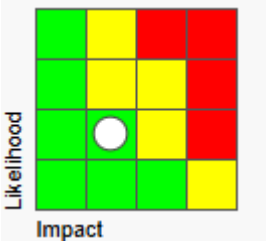
C&CS does not currently have any red or amber rated corporate or departmental risks.

A LEXCEL (Law Society Quality Mark) accredited system is in place to manage risks associated with specific legal cases. Internal Audit undertook a review in July 2025 and found the standard and compliance to be robust.

The key departmental risk is the procurement of lawyers with the expertise, experience and competencies to undertake complex work in-house. The risk is being mitigated by recruitment of agency locums and fixed-term contract lawyers. C&CS resourcing is reviewed monthly by the C&CS SLT.

The risk rating is currently 4.



Health & Safety

1. Staff wellbeing and health, stress management.
2. Office environment quality
3. Effective health & safety support for hybrid working

Operational Property

Has your department's office space utilisation data (Guildhall complex) been provided to the City Surveyor's Department?

Yes (on 30.11.2025)