

General Purposes Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair)
Councillor Appu Srinivasan (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Samir Dwesar, Lara Fish, Patricia Hay-Justice, Joseph Lee,
Stella Nabukeera and Fatima Zaman

A meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** which you are hereby invited to attend, will be held **Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 6.30 pm. Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.**

Katherine Kerswell
Chief Executive
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

2. Disclosure of Interests

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) they may have in relation to any item(s) of business on today's agenda.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 36)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2023 and those of the previously named General Purposes and Audit Committee held on:

- 16 September 2021;
- 20 October 2021;
- 25 November 2021; and,
- 16 February 2022 as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To consider any urgent business.

5. Proposed Change to the Constitution - Appointments and Disciplinary Committee (Pages 37 - 42)

To consider increasing the size of the substitution pool for the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee (ADC).

6. Draft Council Calendar 2024-25 (Pages 43 - 56)

To make any comments and necessary amendments to the proposed Council calendar of meetings 2024-25.

General Purposes Committee

Meeting of held on Monday, 9 October 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katherine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair);
Councillors Samir Dwesar, Lara Fish, Joseph Lee and Matt Griffiths

Apologies: Councillors Appu Srinivasan(Vice-Chair), Stella Nabukeera, Patricia Hay-Justice, Karen Jewitt and Fatima Zaman

PART A

19/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Appu Srinivasan (Vice-Chair), Stella Nabukeera, Patricia Hay-Justice, Karen Jewitt and Fatima Zaman

Councillor Matt Griffiths attended as reserve for Councillor Stella Nabukeera.

Apologies of lateness were received from Councillor Kola Agboola.

20/22 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

21/22 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

Councillor Kola Agboola joined the meeting during this item.

22/22 **Proposed Changes to the Constitution Relating to Pension Matters**

The Pension Fund Investment Manager, Matthew Hallet, presented the report which proposed changes to the Constitution relating to pension matters. He informed the committee the changes were recommended by the Constitution Working Group (CWG) and the proposals were developed

in consultation with the Pension Committee, Pension Board and Aon (the pension fund advisers) to improve governance and update the constitution. He advised the committee to recommend the changes to full Council for adoption.

The committee expressed confidence the changes had been subjected to a robust process which involved due diligence performed by officers with the relevant expertise and approval by the Pension Board and Pension Committee.

RESOLVED to recommend the proposed changes in the Constitution relating to pension matters be to Council for adoption.

23/22

Independent Review of the Verification and Count Arrangements for Croydon Council Elections May 2022

The Director of Policy, Programmes & Performance, David Courcoux, presented the report which set out the independent review of the verification and count arrangements for Croydon Council elections. He informed the committee that the report had concluded that the outcome of the verification and count was transparent, safe and secure.

He highlighted the following sections:

Section 5.1 - which stated that the election fulfilled all of the statutory requirements and was an accurate reflection as it was confirmed that no potential candidate was denied the right to stand for office and no voters were disenfranchised by the politically neutral way the election was conducted

Section 5.3 – which acknowledged, at time of the elections, the Council was going through significant challenges and had more ballot papers to count than any other London Borough because of the combination of the Mayoral with other elections. Though the 600 votes difference in the Mayoral elections led to significantly tight processes being employed throughout the counting process, which made the count slower, but this safeguarded the integrity of the outcome and the review found that this was the right thing to do. However, there were lessons to be learned with regards to resource arrangements and the effectiveness of the processes and policies in place.

Section 5.7 which summarised the areas of challenge and improvement for the Council, such as, the planning for the election process, the capacity of the core elections team, the reception arrangements at the count venue, the contingency planning and escalation procedures, and the processes employed in the counting process which added to the delay.

He informed the Committee that the report set out eleven key recommendations which were for change, reiterations of best practice, and some the Council had already adopted and enacted. The action plan at

Appendix Two, which was still being developed, set out the Council's intended response to the recommendations, as well as provided detailed updates on the progress to date. The Action Plan was developed by an independent person, the Head of Electoral Services at Sutton Council and she would work closely with the Head of Elections Croydon during the implementation.

The Chief Executive Katherine Kerswell and the Deputy Chief Executive Elaine Jackson, the Director of the Director of Policy, Programmes & Performance, David Courcoux, the Head of Elections Seth Alker, provided answers to the following questions from Members.

In response to a question about an informal response to the review and if officers were confident the action plan would result in significant improvement over 2022, The Chief Executive advised the report had been helpful as a learning experience and had positively impacted the Council's culture around elections and the structure of the electoral service was being redesigned with the understanding that it had to be well resourced to support the delivery of well-run elections. Also the culture around elections was changing to give elections a central position in the council's thinking.

Members asked what lessons had been learnt about logistics of holding elections in Croydon and ensuring that the process was accessible to all. In response, officers explained that the fundamental point was the change to how elections were viewed. The count in particular is viewed as an event that needed to be managed, as well as being a verification and count process. Additional resources were needed so the Returning Officer can have staff with dedicated focus on each aspect and to run them effectively. The Returning Officer was changing the management of the count so that the venue and event management is separated from the management of the count process. Event and project management support was being brought in toto manage the venue for the count.

Members expressed concerns that the issues with the venue used for the 2022 verification and count could repeat next year. Officers explained that the Returning Officer did not have a choice of large suitable venues as other Councils but had rely on School premises which presented a unique set of challenges. However the problems that were identified in 2022 were known and will be addressed at future elections. Some of the challenges of using a school, such as time available for the set-up of the venue, will not be a problem at Fairfield Halls.

Members asked what contingency plan had been put in place in case of another over-run. Officers explained that an extra day had been booked at Fairfield Hall.

In response to the question about lead time for staff training, officers informed the Committee that the Association of Election Administrators would hold a half-day session with the Returning Officers next week and the core Electoral Services team would be trained on the changes brought about by the Election Act. All polling station staff would receive in-person

training on the duties, and there would be training count supervisors and assistants.

Members expressed concern that a contractual agreement was not signed with Trinity School last year and asked about the process for feedback from staff at the Count. In response, officers explained that a contract for 2024 elections was already in place with Fairfield Halls and that there was a process in place for feedback from staff and election agents after the count.

The Chair of the committee, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons advised that it be noted that the Committee wished:

- To receive an update, post the Mayor of London GLA elections to enable discussions on further lessons to be learned.
- The data of the 2022 elections be released by ward.
- That it be noted that a good precedent had been set by the Returning Officers acknowledging there were lessons to be learnt and paying for the review by not taking their fees. The report had put the Council on track to meeting the broad goals in the government guidance for Elections.

RESOLVED TO:

1. Note the report of the review of the verification and count arrangements for Croydon Council Elections May 2022 at Appendix 1, in particular its finding that the election was conducted lawfully and that it was transparent, accurate, safe and secure.
2. Note the recommendations of the review in full.
3. Note the action plan for implementing the review recommendations at Appendix 2.
4. Note the progress made against each recommendation since May 2022, as detailed in the action plan at Appendix 2.
5. Note that the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer did not take the RO fees for the May 2022 Election and that the £8k fee for the independent review was paid from that unclaimed RO expenditure.

24/22

Process for and Initiation of the Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024-2025

The Head of Elections, Seth Alker, introduced the report which sought for approval for the proposed timetable and processes for the next review, and to delegate authority to the (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) to amend the

timetable as necessary if the next scheduled general election fails to take place in May 2024.

He highlighted the timetable, process, and the criteria for the assessment of polling districts and polling places and informed the committee the recommendations would be presented to the committee for approval.

In response to a question about the location of polling places, the officer explained that the starting point was to try and locate the polling places within the polling district but sometimes it could not be helped if issues such as closure of a venue means the next available polling place may fall out of the polling district.

A Member asked for the number problematic polling places and the decision timeline. The officer explained there were about ten polling places that were being reviewed but not all outcomes were negative. Sometimes the outcome could be positive such an additional polling place in a polling district.

The Chair thanked the Head of Elections for the Report.

RESOLVED TO:

1. Agree the proposed timetable for the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places set out in section 4.2.
2. Agree the criteria for assessment of polling districts and polling places as set out in section 4.5.
3. Agree to the proposed consultation process as set out in Section 6, whilst noting that this is in accordance with the statutory requirements in this regard.
4. Delegate to the (Acting) Returning Officer authority to amend the timetable as necessary if the next scheduled general election, which must take place by January 2025, does not take place in May 2024.
5. Note that this was a statutory process and that the period in which it must take place, and a number of the steps in the review process are set out in legislation. The outcome of the statutory consultation as well as the recommendations arising from the consultation will be reported to members for decision.

The committee adjourned for 5 minutes at this point due to technical issues and reconvened at 7.12pm.

Implications of The Elections Act 2022

The Committee received the presentation from the Head of Elections which set out the changes to the Elections Act, how they would affect voters, when the changes would take place and how they would be implemented.

He highlighted the following changes:

- Voter ID - electors would be required to show photo ID before voting at a polling station (in force)
- Accessibility - supporting voters with disabilities and an extension to rules for companions (in force)
- First Past the Post (FPTP) - all elections in the UK were now FPTP (in force)
- Absent voting - rules regarding handling and processing absent vote applications (for May 2024 elections)
- Postal & proxy voting at election - electors would be able to apply to vote by post online - existing
- postal voters would need to renew every 3 years under the new rules (October 2023)
- Overseas electors - 15-year rule removed (no upper limit) and registration period extended to 3 years (January 2024)
- EU Citizens' voting and candidacy rights - EU citizens would no longer automatically be entitled to register to vote and stand for election. Two groups of EU citizens will retain rights (June 2024 – 1 Feb 2025).

He advised that most of the changes would be implemented ahead of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections.

In response to concerns about acceptable forms of ID and IT issues the elderly might encounter during the application for the ID, the officer advised that other acceptable forms of identification were photo IDs, blue badges, identity cards, and bus passes and there was the option for people to apply for a voter authority certificate.

A Member asked about the availability of staff training and officers advised the government was providing funding to train staff in helping to explain about the various forms acceptable ID to voters. Also, the communication team was working on an engagement plan to reach councillors, political parties, and community organisations and MENCAP were developing communication materials for residents with learning difficulties.

In response to a question about an advertising campaign to highlight the change to EU citizens voting and candidacy rights, the officer advised the changes would not take effect until June 2024 and presently, there was no detailed guidance from the government but officers were expecting a campaign from the Electoral Commission before June 2024, which would provide resources that could be used locally to create awareness and highlight this change to Croydon residents from the European Union.

The Chief Executive also advised there would be an all-Member briefing for all Councillors on these changes.

RESOLVED TO: Note the presentation.

26/22

Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

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General Purposes & Audit Committee

Meeting of held on Thursday, 16 September 2021 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Karen Jewitt (Chair);
Councillor Stephen Mann (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Joy Prince, Andrew Pelling (In place of Paul Scott),
Jason Cummings (In place of Luke Clancy) and Jeet Bains (In place of Simon Hoar)

Apologies: Councillors Chris Clark, Luke Clancy, Simon Hoar and Joy Prince

PART A

8/21 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 February 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

9/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

10/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

11/21 **Update Report on the Recruitment of the Independent Chair of GPAC**

The Committee received a report presenting an update on the recruitment and appointment of the independent Chair for the Committee.

Heather Wills, Governance Improvement Advisor Introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

a) Process: Following a question from a Member, the Officer noted that following an extensive search process, there were 4 shortlisted candidates, for which interviews were scheduled to start the week following the Committee. It was up to the Committee to decide whether it wanted just the Independent Chair or to have the Independent Chair plus one Independent

Member. The proposed revisions to the Constitution to enable the appointment of the Independent Chair would reflect Members' views on whether to have an Independent Member in addition to the Independent Chair of the Committee

b) Independent Members: Members highlighted concerns over the attendance of previously appointed Independent Members and noted that Officers had spent a considerable amount of time chasing the status of their attendance prior to meetings

c) Finance: Members asked a question around the total costing of Starfish recruitment agency. The Interim Executive Director of Resources agreed to confirm the exact figure and share it with the Committee following the meeting

d) Previously-Appointed Independent Chair: Members highlighted the previously-appointed Independent Chair and spoke about the possibility of them being contacted about them returning to post. The Chair also raised the potential benefit of looking at how other local authorities had dealt with remuneration of Independent Members.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Noted the contents of this report
2. Agreed to recommend to Full Council the approach to arrangements for the two current non-voting members of GPAC:
 - Option B: To retain one independent co-opted member alongside the independent Chair, with effect from a decision of Full Council to implement the new arrangements.
3. Endorsed the proposed changes to the Constitution set out in section 4.

12/21 **Croydon Finance Review - Phase 1, 2 and 3 Reports - Update on Implementation**

The Committee received a report providing an update on actions taken in continuing to implement recommendations relating to the Council's recent Finance Review.

Matt Davis, Interim Director of Finance introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

a) Previous 'Red' Rating: Members raised concerns over the omission of the 'red' rating. The Officer explained that red was understood to suggest an inability to be achieved. The targets previously listed as red and now moved to amber or green were intended to be achieved

b) Legal Advice: Members asked a question around the total costs spent on legal advice, and whether the figure may be decreased. The Officer explained that there was a Daily Spend Control Panel whereby all requests for external legal advice was challenged. This process had rejected some spends where it was considered inappropriate or would have been best provided in house. The Officer agreed to calculate the total spend and provide it to Committee.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Noted the latest position and progress in implementing the recommendations of the Croydon Finance Review as set out in the body and appendices to the report.

13/21 **Report in the Public Interest Action Plan - Progress Update**

The Committee received a report providing the Quarter 2 update of progress made responding to the Council's Report in the Public Interest.

Asmat Hussain, Interim Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **Recommendation 24:** Members noted recommendation 24 of the report which showed a quarterly review, and questioned how this Item would come to its close. The Officer explained that one the action was listed as complete Audit would carry out further assurance to ensure the actions were accomplished. A final report would then be taken to Full Council with a note that all of the RIPI recommendations had been completed, before the Item came to a complete finish
- b) **CareCubed Tool:** Following a question from a Member, the Officer explained that a series of training around the CareCubed tool had been scheduled and completed. An analysis would be completed by September 2020 to see the results of the tool and to conclude whether it was worth continuing with
- c) **Lessons Learned Paper:** Members raised a question around the progression of the Lessons Learned paper. The Officer noted that it had not yet been completed as it was pending the outcome of the Croydon Park Hotel Audit. Members requested for an update to be provided at each meeting of the Committee acknowledging its progress, with a potential completion date by the November Committee
- d) **Clarification:** Members requested further clarification on Recommendation 7b and 13b and Recommendation 3

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- 1.1 Noted and agreed on the progress the Council had made in regard to achieving the recommendations set out by external auditor in the Report in the Public Interest (appendix 1) with 62 out of 99 actions complete;
- 1.2 Noted the outcome of the first tranche of work to properly evidence what had been achieved so far following the initial internal audit of actions delivered to provide full assurance to members and residents on the changes achieved;

1.3 Agreed the Refreshed Action Plan including actions marked complete, progress updates against open actions and identification of actions to be embedded going forward as business as usual;

1.4 Agreed that the Q.2 Report was to go to Full Council on December 13th 2021 in order that progress on the action plan be properly noted by all members.

14/21 **Production of Formal Minutes for Council and Committee Meetings**

Asmat Hussain, Interim Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

a) Grant Thornton: Members raised concerns around the reports published by Grant Thornton, which included statements around what Councillors had or had not done in meetings. Their evidence had come only from the meetings' Minutes, which were not Ver Batum, and therefore there were a lot of inaccuracies. It was noted that the Council streamed all of its meetings online and that a recording was available on the web

b) Transcripts: Members highlighted a number of other providers which offered live transcripts. The Officer agreed to speak with the Digital team as to whether this would be possible within the Teams software, and whether there was any cost attached

c) The Chair suggested that either the January or February Committee meeting should include a report on what can be done to better the system already in place and to include the costs and length of contract already in place and details around any break out clause.

The Chair proposed a recommendation to read:

1.3) To take on board the recommendations and suggestions made by Committee this evening which will be Minuted.

This was seconded by Councillor Chris Clarke and agreed unanimously.

1.1) Noted the updated guidance from the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, in relation to the production of formal minutes of Council and Committee meetings as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report,

1.2) Noted the guide to minute writing standards in Croydon detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and

1.3) Agreed the recommendations and suggestions made by Committee this evening which have been Minuted.

15/21 **Internal Audit Update Report**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Council's Internal Audit Report findings.

Dave Phillips, Head of Internal Audit introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **ELT Update:** Following a question from a Member, the Interim Corporate Director of Resources and s151 Officer stated that they were happy to share reports on improvement to the Committee and noted that openness and transparency were important
- b) **Invoices:** Members raised concerns over invoices. The Officer explained that in some cases, supplier had erroneously issued the Council duplicate invoices. In other cases, there had been disputes with contractors invoicing the Council where the service had not been delivered.
- c) **Next Committee:** Members requested for this Item to return to the next meeting of the Committee and for the relevant Cabinet Member and Director to attend to answer any questions from Members.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- 1.1 Agreed to note the Internal Audit Report to 31 July 2021 (Appendix 1 of the report).

16/21 **Anti-Fraud Update Report**

The Committee received a report presenting the findings of the Council's recent Anti-Fraud activity.

David Hogan, Head of Anti Fraud introduced the report.

The Committee gave its thanks to David Hogan, Head of Anti Fraud for his work during his time at the Council, and offered him its best wishes in his next venture.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- 1.1. Agreed to note the Anti-Fraud activity of the Corporate Anti-Fraud team for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 July 2021.

17/21 **Work Programme**

Asmat Hussain, Interim Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

Members requested for:

- The Brick by Brick report to be presented to Committee

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- Items on the Work Programme for previous meetings to be updated regularly to ensure continuity between itself and what has been presented to Committee.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Agreed the Work Programme 2021/22

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm

Signed:

Date:

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General Purposes & Audit Committee

Meeting of held on Wednesday, 20 October 2021 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Karen Jewitt (Vice-Chair), Nina Degrads, Paul Scott, Chris Clark, Joy Prince, Steve Hollands and Simon Hoar

Apologies: Olu Olasode (Chair) and Councillor Luke Clancy

PART A

1/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

2/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

3/21 **Presentation on Information Management Risk**

The Head of Digital Operations, Dave Briggs, gave a presentation to the committee.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The reporting frequency required was due to the fact that the council had been in breach of the reporting standards in the past;
- The challenges around Freedom of Information (FOI) and SAR timescales were specifically around staffing levels;
- It was hoped that new software would assist the way in which Councillors' requests were processed which would reduce the number FOI requests being made by Councillors. It would also significantly reduce requests if certain information could be made available on the council's website;
- More data analysis was required so that requests on the same subject could be mitigated by having more information available on the website;
- The review would include benchmarking with other Local Authorities to see where patterns were and where improvements could be made;
- Exemptions were not seen as an issue;

- This area of improvement work was receiving the backing of the Corporate Leadership Team;
- Cyber security was a major concern but old systems had been closed down to reduce the risk of being hacked;
- GDPR was covered by an e-learning course which staff regularly undertook and this reminded everybody of their responsibilities;
- The ICO could impose fines if the level of responses to FOI and SAR requests did not reach adequate levels, and this was why it had been highlighted as a corporate risk.

The Committee requested that a written report on FOI and SAR would come to them quarterly or sooner if an issue arose.

RESOLVED – That the Committee agreed to note the report.

4/21 **Presentation on Budget Risk**

The Deputy s151 Officer, Matthew Davis, gave a presentation to the Committee and in response to queries raised by the Committee, the following clarified that the money spent to keep people safe during Covid had not all been covered by grants from Central Government, so the budget had taken a reduction as a result. Including savings that had not been delivered that figure was expected to be between £10 million and £20 million.

5/21 **Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy End of Year Review 2020/2021**

The Committee considered a report prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) codes of practice in respect of capital finance and treasury management. The codes recommended that members were advised of the treasury management activities for the whole of each financial year and of compliance with the various strategies and policies agreed by the Council. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of Treasury and Pensions, Nigel Cook.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The amount of debt was being accrued as the council was investing in schools and other infrastructure which would benefit future generations; but they would also be those who would have to manage the debt;

- The debt was also spread out over time to mitigate fluctuations in interest rates and market conditions so the debt would mature over the next 20, 30 or 40 years;
- A significant interest rate rise was expected but should still be within the expected range and not as high as it was 20 years ago;
- The debt, as it became due was being rolled forward on a short-term basis through the Local Authority Market which offered a lower rate than through the Public Works Loan Board. However, there were risks which needed to be managed and it was hoped to pay down some of the debt by using capital receipts.

RESOLVED - That the Committee agreed to note the report.

6/21 **Financial Performance Report**

The Committee considered a report which set out the financial monitoring position of the Council as at the end of Period 5 (August 2021). The Committee received an introduction from the Deputy s151 Officer, Matthew Davis.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- That the council would continue to incur costs related to Covid and that the grant received from Government was a one-off;
- The particular budget pressure in the Place Directorate related to the unsuccessful bid for the Landlord Licencing Scheme and to increased costs around the transport for children with Special Educational Needs. In addition, some of the parking schemes took longer to implement than expected leading to a reduction in the income;
- Pay & Display parking income had been lower than expected partly due to Covid and a claim had been made to Government for between £600,000 and £1 million for the lost income;
- The focus had been on getting the Revenue Budget sorted and more now needed to be done to ensure that the Capital Budget was also where it should be.

RESOLVED – The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Period 5 Financial Monitoring report as set out in the appendices.

7/21 **Progress Report**

The Committee considered a report which updated Members on the progress of the 2019/2020 Financial Statement and the current findings. The Committee received an introduction from the Key Audit Partner at Grant Thornton, Sarah Ironmonger.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The Pension Committee would be looking at the issue of the asset transfer again at its meeting in March 2022 as this option was now less attractive;
- The report was complex for Members to understand and it was suggested that before the Audit Findings Report was published that Members received a workshop session where the auditors could explain some of the context around the issues. In addition, it was suggested that the Members appointed to the Committee after the election in May should undertake mandatory training which already happened for the Planning and Licencing committees;
- Some of the risks highlighted in the report were very specific to Croydon Council and were more than would normally be expected which reflected the financial position of the council;
- The £13.2 million adjustment would reduce the amount of reserves and would require time to restore. However, this amount was known about when the work was undertaken to produce the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- The Croydon Affordable Homes issue outlined in the report still required work;
- The broken culture and lack of leadership had led to the Internal Auditor's notification of bank reconciliations not happening being ignored;
- Grant Thornton hoped that the 2019/2020 Financial Statement would be completed in the next few months;
- The Value for Money Report regarding the Fairfield Halls refurbishment was still being worked on and it was hoped to have it available for the next meeting of GPAC in November 2021.

The Committee suggested that this issue should have a committee meeting where it would be the only item to allow for the time needed and for Cabinet Members to attend.

8/21 **Exclusion of Public and Press**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.14 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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General Purposes & Audit Committee

Meeting of held on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Dr Olu Olasode (Chair);
Councillor Karen Jewitt (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Chris Clark, Joy Prince, Stuart Millson, Steve Hollands and Simon Hoar

Also Present: Councillor
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Apologies: Councillor Stephen Mann, Nina Degrads, Paul Scott and Luke Clancy

PART A

1/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

Councillor Pelling declared an interest as Chair of the Pension Committee in relation to Croydon Affordable Homes and the possible asset transfer.

2/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

3/21 **Dedicated School Grant Management Plan**

The Committee considered a report which updated Members on the recent Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan. The grant condition required all local authorities with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2020/21 financial year to meet the requirements as set out in the report. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of 0-25 Special Educational Needs Service, Education, Kathy Roberts and Principal Accountant, Finance, Charles Quaye.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The risk was around cost of moving children out of borough as opposed to remaining in the borough and through the transition process;
- The linkages between children's and adults social care services in the transition process were already being strengthened.

RESOLVED – That the Committee agreed to note the report.

The Interim Corporate Director of Resources & S151 Officer, Finance Investment and Risk, Richard Ennis gave a verbal update to the Committee on the issues raised together with an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the progress on the budget setting process for 2022/23.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The concerns raised by Grant Thornton around Croydon Affordable Homes were for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and that those concerns were not raised prior to 2019;
- The number of Interim staff within the Executive Leadership Team was acknowledged but was not seen as a major risk and recruitment was already underway to fill some posts;
- The Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) funding was a one-off grant and that successive governments had failed to ensure that this was properly funded;
- Reserves level was a risk and would need to be increased over the coming years and that turning around the council's financial position would take several years;
- The costs of the Executive Mayor from May 2022 had been accounted for within the budget proposals using other London boroughs as examples together with costs that would be incurred by the change to governance arrangements;
- It appeared to be likely that a number of capital budgets would roll forward at the end of the financial year;
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) would only be delivering two of the five schemes due to delays in implementation which would affect income;
- The Fairfield Halls Report in the Public Interest had been sent for consultation to the affected bodies, but it was still hoped it would be published in the first half of December.

The Committee considered a report which was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) codes of practice in respect of capital finance and treasury management. The Codes recommended that members were advised of treasury management activities of the first six months of each financial year and of compliance with various strategies and policies agreed by the Council. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of Pensions, Nigel Cook.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The amount of debt was cushioned from rises in interest rates as it covered a long timeframe but rate rises had been factored in nevertheless.

RESOLVED - That the Committee agreed to note the report.

5/21 **Anti-Fraud Corruption Strategy**

The Committee considered a report which requested members to review and approve Croydon's refreshed Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of Insurance, Anti-Fraud & Risk, Finance, Malcolm Davies.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- Approximately 120 cases of fraud were investigated each year and Mr Davies stated that he would give members more details of the types of fraud outside of the meeting;
- Officers would be able to look at having a greater involvement of members in raising fraud awareness;
- The Covid pandemic had given rise to greater exposure to fraud in certain areas;
- A risk management approach was being taken which focussed on prevention and tightening up processes where fraud had occurred. The anti-fraud team was very well regarded;
- Misrepresentation within the planning process was a risk that had been highlighted within the risk register;
- Not all cases of fraud would be handled by the authority as some would be dealt with by the Police.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed whether there were sufficient resources to back up the policy with prosecution if required.

The committee requested that data be brought to this Committee regularly, and asked that the promotion of the council's policy on openness be reflected in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.8 of the report.

The Committee also requested that a report regarding the capacity to deliver the Strategy came out before the next Committee meeting to include implications on the budget.

RESOLVED – The Committee agreed to:

- 1.1 Review and approve the contents of Croydon's refreshed Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy.

6/21 **Corporate Risk Register**

The Committee considered a report which updated Members on the Corporate Risk Register (the register) as at November 2021. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of Insurance, Anti-Fraud & Risk, Finance, Malcolm Davies.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- The risk related to Covid-19 and public health may be downgraded in the coming weeks due to the success of the vaccine roll-out;
- Corporate Management Team (CMT) now received a monthly update on corporate audits to resolve some of the culture particularly around expenses;
- There would be space on the GPAC work programme for a deep dive into the Whitgift Centre issues;
- Specific housing input would be required to understand the criteria for "high priority" blocks. Mr Davies was asked to facilitate that;
- Financial systems report recommendations were being worked through;
- Temporary accommodation frequently overspent so there was a specific item in the Cabinet report exploring possible solutions and officers had been comparing with other local authorities. The report was due to return to Cabinet on 7 February 2022. The Committee asked for this to be added to the Corporate Risk Register;

- All risks were reviewed on a quarterly basis by CMT and new senior officers are inducted into the risk management systems and the framework which provided a good way of escalating risk;
- A number of risks were expected to fall and over time it was hoped that it would become clearer as to how long some of those risks would be expected to last.

RESOLVED - That the Committee agreed to note the contents of the corporate risk register as at November 2021

7/21 **Internal Audit Update Report**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the work completed by Internal Audit so far during 2021/22 and the progress made in implementing recommendations from audits completed in previous years. The Committee received an introduction from the Head of Internal Audit, Finance Investment and Risk, Dave Phillips.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- An area with poor engagement would be reported back to the Committee via the Chair;
- Some change in culture over staff expenses had already begun.

RESOLVED - The Committee agreed to note the Internal Audit Report to 30 September 2021 (Appendix 1).

8/21 **Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021**

The Committee considered a report which explained that legislation required that the Council conduct a review at least annually of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to prepare a statement on internal control in accordance with proper practices. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which was published with the Statement of Accounts, was to provide an accurate representation of the Council's governance arrangements in place during the year and to identify areas where there were significant gaps or where improvements were required. The Committee received an introduction from the Interim Corporate Director of Resources &

S151 Officer, Finance Investment and Risk, Richard Ennis and the Governance Improvement Adviser, Heather Wills.

In response to queries raised by the Committee officers clarified that the Governance Statement for 2019 to 2020 was issued separately from the accounts.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- A governance review had previously been agreed but that this was different from a full constitutional review and it was good practice to have a Constitutional Review Working Group to constantly ensure that it was fit for purpose. However, it was agreed to add a paragraph which reflected the changes that had been made.

A motion was proposed by Councillor Pelling that the report should be withdrawn and that the work carried out on the previous governance review be included and brought back to the next meeting.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Fitzsimons.

RESOLVED – The Committee agreed that the report was withdrawn for comments to be incorporated and for it to return to the next meeting of the Committee:

For the next two items the Chairman handed over to the Deputy Chair, Councillor Karen Jewitt.

9/21 **Use of the Powers available Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 - year ending 31 December 2020.**

The Committee considered a report regarding monitoring compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 to support the Council's approach to corporate governance. The Committee received an introduction from the Information Management and Governance Co-ordinator, Legal Services, Howard Passman.

RESOLVED - That the Committee agreed to note the report.

10/21 **Implementation of Mayoral Governance Model**

The Committee considered a report which set out the programme of work that needed to be undertaken to ensure effective implementation of the Mayoral model of governance which would be effective from 9 May 2022. The Committee received an introduction from the Interim Monitoring Officer, John Jones.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- There were proposals to meet with the prospective candidates to explain how the council currently worked but also to gain some insight into their expectations;
- It would be up to whoever was elected to decide on the role of Cabinet but the pre-meetings would give officers time to prepare;
- Other models were being looked at to see how other authorities were working and under the Constitution work stream would include effective Forward Plans and Access to Information.

RESOLVED - The Committee agreed to the following recommendations set out in the report:

1. Note actions underway to implement the Mayoral governance model.
2. Identify any further issues which require consideration and/or action by the Programme Board.

The Deputy Mayor handed the Chairmanship back to the Chair.

11/21 **General Purposes and Audit Committee Member Development**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on training delivered and planned for members of the Committee. The Committee received an introduction from the Governance Improvement Adviser, Heather Wills.

During consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- The training needed to be at the right level and that some of it should be compulsory;

- The members of this Committee were elected for just one year and there was merit in the appointments being for a longer time period to ensure consistency and that knowledge was not lost.

RESOLVED - The Committee agreed to the following recommendations set out in the report:

1. Note training delivered and planned for the Committee
2. Suggest any further training required for the Committee during 2021/22 or as part of Member Induction in 2022.

12/21 **General Purposes and Audit Tracker Report**

The Committee considered a report which presented a proposed format for a Tracker to be presented at ordinary Committee meetings to enable progress against actions agreed in Committee to be monitored. The Committee received an introduction from the Governance Improvement Adviser, Heather Wills.

RESOLVED – The Committee agreed to the following recommendation set out in the report:

To review and agree the format of the Action Tracker.

13/21 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Committee's proposed work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year.

The Interim Corporate Director of Resources & S151 Officer, Finance Investment and Risk, Richard Ennis reminded Members that some elements of the Work Programme were due to needing clear the backlog.

RESOLVED - The Committee agreed the Work Programme 2021/22 with acknowledgement that four meetings per year were not enough to cover the current workload.

The meeting ended at 10.23 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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General Purposes & Audit Committee

Meeting of held on Wednesday, 16 February 2022 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Karen Jewitt (Vice-Chair in the Chair);

Councillors Chris Clark, Clive Fraser, Lynne Hale, Ola Kolade, Stuart Millson,
Paul Scott, Margaret Bird (In place of Ian Parker), Pat Clouder (In place of
Nina Degrad) and Sean Fitzsimons (In place of Joy Prince)

Also Present: Dr. Olu Olasode

Apologies: Councillors Nina Degrad, Ian Parker, Joy Prince

PART A

11/22 **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2022, and the Minutes of the meetings held on 26 April 2021 and 8 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

12/22 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

13/22 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

14/22 **Appointment of External Auditors**

The Committee received a report asking for its agreement to recommend to Full Council that the external auditor for the Council and for the pension fund for the audit years 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 should be appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd.

Dave Phillips, Head of Internal Audit, introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **New External Auditor:** Members highlighted the issues the Council had faced with its current External Auditor. It was noted that the problems currently being faced would remain to be solved even if a new Auditor was appointed
- b) **Rotation:** Members highlighted the benefits of a potential rotation of External Auditors. Although it was noted that this would come with its own set of hindrances, including inconsistency of service, Members suggested it might be in the Council's best interest to implement such a recommendation. The Officer explained that by going out to tender every 5 years, whereby there is fair competition, even if the current contractor is again successful it is not the same as simply extending an existing contract. Notwithstanding, he did acknowledge members concerns regarding rotation of the external auditor
- c) **Role of PSAA:** Members asked a question around what may have happened if you were dissatisfied with service provided. The Officer explained that the PSAA were wholly responsible for the contract management of the External Auditor from the Council and would deal with any concerns had regarding its function.

Councillor Paul Scott proposed additional wording be added to the recommendation requesting for a rotation so that a new External Auditor would be appointed.

This was seconded by Councillor Stuart Millson and agreed unanimously by the Committee.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Agreed to recommend to Full Council that the external auditor for the Council and for the pension fund for the audit years 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 should be appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA), which was a subsidiary of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) which was wholly owned by the Local Government Association, with a request for a rotation so that a new External Auditor would be appointed.

15/22 **Internal Audit Report**

The Committee received a report detailing the findings of the Internal Audit Report.

Dave Phillips, Interim Head of Internal Audit introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **Timeframe:** Following a question from a Member, the Officer explained that there was not a specific timeframe by which it was expected to see an improved culture. It was noted that culture change was a process that took time. There had been a lot of movement already, led by CMT actions. Another factor was with new Council staff being appointed, who brought culture in from their previous local authorities, thereby helping improve Croydon's culture.
- b) **Audit Workshops:** Members noted the recent Audit Workshops held by CMT and asked whether they could access the actions and timeframes produced within them. The s151 Officer confirmed that this could be put into place subject to the removal of any Part B sensitive information
- c) **Placement Deposits Audit:** Following a request from a Member, the Officer agreed to circulate the Placement Deposits Audit to Committee Members and ensure it was published online
- d) **FoI/SARs Audit:** The update response detailed in the report to the FoI/SAR report was discussed. Noting that the Council used Power BI to complete a number of tasks and functions, particularly in holding individual teams and services to account for accuracy and providing performance reporting, the update response was queried and clarification was requested.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Agreed to note the Internal Audit Report to 31 December 2021 (Appendix 1 of the report).

16/22 **Care Cubed**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the procurement, implementation and effectiveness of the CareCubed costing tool for working age adult and children's social care placements.

Richard Eyre, Head of Improvement introduced the report.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **Projected Savings:** Following a question from a Member, the Officer explained that it was not possible to predict at that moment how much money may be saved overall
- b) **Staffing:** Members highlighted pressures in staffing, particularly within the disability teams. The Officer agreed to note that four critical vacancies had recently been recruited to, including a number of experienced team managers who had taken post
- c) **Report:** It was noted that it would be beneficial for colleagues in Children's Services to bring an update on their area to a future Committee, and for the responsible Cabinet Member to attend. This

would give the Committee more insight and detail on the progress of works and savings.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Agreed to note the progress of implementation; and identified for a Committee in Period 6 of 2022/23 for a further progress update

17/22 **Work Programme**

The Committee received a report detailing the Work Programme for forthcoming meetings of the Committee.

Sarah Keeble, Democratic Services and Governance Officer, introduced the report, highlighting that the report contained an Item for 3 March meeting titled 'Report in Public Interest Action Plan' which should be amended to read: Fairfield Halls: Report in the Public Interest Action Plan.

The following matters were raised by Members:

- a) **Subject of Deep Dive:** The Independent Chair highlighted that the Committee had been asked what it would like to see on the next Deep Dive. Members noted that it may be possible to make a more informed decision on what they would like the Deep Dive to report on following the next presentation of the Corporate Risk Register, which was scheduled to come to the meeting of the Committee on 3 March
- b) **Pre-Council Meeting:** Members highlighted the importance of each Group's Pre-Council Meeting. There had been a recent clash in scheduling of a Special Committee meeting which had caused issues for the Majority Group. It was requested that once the Chief Whip from each party had nominated their Pre-Council Meeting date that it be formally put in to the Council diary to avoid any clashes in the future.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

1. Considered the agreed work programme for the Committee in 2021/22.

The meeting ended at 8.58 pm

Signed:

Date:

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT TO:	General Purposes Committee	
DATE OF DECISION:	28 November 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Proposed Changes to the Constitution – Increasing the size of the substitution pool for the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Jane West, Corporate Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer	
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Sean Fitzsimons	
DECISION TAKER:	Full Council following consideration by the General Purposes Committee	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	The terms of reference of the General Purposes Committee (see Part 3 of the Constitution, Responsibility for Functions) allow it to conduct periodic reviews of the Constitution and consider changes to the Constitution recommended by the Constitution Working Group and to refer any proposals to full Council for approval.	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** This report contains proposed changes to the Council's Constitution relating to the number of substitutes that can be appointed to the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee. More specifically, it is proposed that the substitution pool is tripled. The changes are recommended by the Constitution Working Group (CWG) following their consideration and deliberations on 16 November 2023.
- 1.2** The purpose of this report is for the General Purposes Committee to consider the proposals and make recommendations to full Council for final approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 For the reasons set out in the report, the General Purposes Committee is recommended:

2.1.1 To consider the proposed changes to the Constitution discussed in the report; and

2.1.2 To recommend to full Council the proposed changes to the Constitution set out at paragraph 5.6.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The aim of the proposed changes is to improve decision making by providing for more flexible substitution arrangements for the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 Generally, the function of making appointments to Council committees (both regular and substitute members) is reserved to full Council. Political groups make nominations to full Council, but cannot themselves decide the membership of committees. However, full Council is required to exercise its power so as to give effect to the wishes of the relevant political group.

4.2 The Constitution currently makes provision for the appointment of substitute or reserve members as follows:

“2.7 For all non-Executive Committees, the Council will appoint the same number of substitutes in respect of each political group as that group holds ordinary seats on that Committee.” (Part 4A - Council Procedure Rules)

4.3 According to the Constitution, the Council’s Pay Policy Statement 2023-24 and established practice, among other things, the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee (ADC) has the delegated power to carry out interviews and approve or recommend the approval (as appropriate) of appointments at director level and above.

4.4 ADC also has the power to approve the grading and conditions of service of officers subject to the JNC Chief Executive and JNC Chief Officer conditions of service.

5 PROPOSALS

5.1 In the main, one substitute for each regular member of a committee works well but is problematic for ADC.

- 5.2** Six members are appointed to ADC: three Conservative and three Labour. Both the regular and substitute Conservative members of ADC are Cabinet members.
- 5.3** However, as there are nine members of Cabinet (including the Executive Mayor), it is not currently possible to ensure that every Cabinet member is able to consider, for example, approving the appointment of an officer at director level and above even if the appointment relates to their portfolio.
- 5.4** Greater flexibility is required for ADC and it is proposed that the Constitution is amended so as to increase (by tripling) the pool of substitutes for ADC. This would then allow full Council to appoint the three other Cabinet members to ADC and thereby making it possible for a regular member of ADC to allow the relevant Cabinet member to substitute for them.
- 5.5** Of course, it affords the same flexibility to the Labour group too in relation to Shadow Cabinet membership. CWG recommended tripling (as opposed to merely doubling) the substitution pool to afford political groups the greater flexibility of appointing non-Cabinet/Shadow Cabinet members as substitutes too.
- 5.6** It is proposed that the Constitution is amended as follows:

“2.7 For all non-Executive Committees, other than the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee, the Council will appoint the same number of substitutes in respect of each political group as that group holds ordinary seats on that Committee. For the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee, the Council will appoint the triple the number of substitutes in respect of each political group as that group holds ordinary seats on that Committee.”

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1** This is a common issue for councils. The solution some councils have adopted is to appoint a standing main committee and then allow that committee to appoint a sub-committee for each appointment in order to ensure that the membership of the sub-committee matches, for example, the appointment in hand.
- 6.2** On balance, however, that is not the preferred option because in practice it often creates as many problems as it is intended to solve. It means that for each relevant decision there has to be two separate meetings which is not an effective use of the time of members and officers and is an inefficient use of limited Council resources. Requiring some members to attend two meetings in close succession can also create availability issues.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation on the proposals has been with the Executive Mayor and CWG.

8 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 Outcome 1; Priority 4:

Ensure good governance is embedded and adopt best practice.

9 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed changes.

9.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.2.1 The law relevant to the proposed changes has been referenced in the body of the report.

9.2.2 Adopting changes to the Council's Constitution is a non-executive function reserved to full Council which is why the Committee is asked to consider the proposed changes and make a recommendation.

9.2.3 According to s9P of the Local Government Act 2000 the Council must keep its Constitution up to date.

9.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

9.3.1 There are no direct workforce implications arising from the proposed changes.

9.3.2 All members of ADC (including appointed substitutes) will receive training on relevant HR matters in early 2024.

9.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.4.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising its functions to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct

prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

9.4.2 “Due regard” is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to each need is a matter for the Council. As long as the Council is properly aware of the effects and has taken them into account, the duty is discharged.

9.4.3 There are no equalities impacts directly arising from the proposed changes.

10 APPENDICES

10.1 None.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	General Purposes Committee	
DATE OF DECISION	Tuesday 28 November 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Council Calendar 2024-25	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	
LEAD OFFICER:	Adrian May Interim Head of Democratic Services	
LEAD MEMBER:	N/A	
DECISION TAKER:	General Purposes Committee Council	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	<p>Part 4A of the Constitution of the London Borough of Croydon states that the General Purposes Committee will determine the dates on which Council will meet for each municipal year.</p> <p>The full Council is then expected to approve the full schedule of meeting dates for the municipal year 2024-25 at its meeting on Wednesday 13 December 2023.</p>	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	N/A

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** The dates for Council are to be agreed by the General Purposes Committee (GPC) and the early production of the Council Calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2024-25 is designed to enable future planning of Council business.
- 1.2** Before its presentation at Council the GPC is asked to make any comments and necessary amendments to the proposed calendar.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report General Purposes Committee is recommended:

- 2.1** After making any necessary amendments, to agree the Council meetings for the municipal year 2024-25;
- 2.2** To note the Cabinet meeting dates for the municipal year 2024-25; and,
- 2.3** To recommend that full Council approves the meeting dates for all other committees for the municipal year 2024-25.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** This version of the calendar has been circulated to lead officers and the Corporate Management Team ahead of this meeting, and this is the final opportunity for members of the GPC to raise any major issues with the draft calendar before it is presented to Council.
- 3.2** Changes should only be made if there is no possibility of avoiding a clash by other means, and at this stage minimal amendments are expected.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1** This version of the calendar has been approved by CMT in consultation with the political group leads, and GPC is expected to only raise any otherwise-unresolvable issues with scheduling the meetings as presented.
- 4.2** The final version of the calendar will be considered by Council at its meeting on 13 December 2023.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1** This version of the calendar has been drafted in consultation with lead officers across the council; however, where it arises that any meeting dates are not possible for good reason it can be amended before going to Council.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** Lead officers for all council committees, CMT, the Monitoring Officer, and political groups have been approached for comment and numerous drafts of this calendar have been produced before being presented to GPC.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1** The calendar is produced early enough that good forward planning of council business may take place.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 No financial implications have been identified as a result of this decision.

8.1.2 Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for Assistant Chief Executive and Resources on behalf of the Director of Finance. 20/9/23

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 Council Procedure Rule 3.1 provides “Seven meetings of the Council, including the Annual and Council Tax Meetings, shall be scheduled to be held at the Town Hall, Croydon, on such dates as the General Purposes Committee may agree on behalf of the Council and occasionally as the Chair shall direct during each Council Year”

8.2.2 Paragraph 6.1 of the Non-Executive Committee Procedure Rules provides “The dates of scheduled meetings with the exception of those for the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee and Licensing Sub-Committees shall be as printed in the Council diary”.

8.2.3 Comments approved by Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation & Corporate Law & Deputy Monitoring Officer. Date: 13.09.2023

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 The Council should pay due regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising their functions. This includes having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as detailed:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. (Section 149(1)(a))
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Section 149(1)(b))
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Section 149(1)(c))

8.3.2 There are no breaches of this duty or further equalities impacts arising from the recommendations in this report.

8.3.3 Comments to be approved by Naseer Ahmad for the Equalities Programme Manager. (Date 06/11/2023)

8.4 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 There are no immediate Human Resources implications arising from this report.

8.4.2 Comments approved by Gillian Bevan, Head of HR Resources and Assistant Chief Executives directorates on behalf of the Chief People Officer. 19.10.23

9. APPENDICES

9.1 *A Draft Council Calendar of meetings by committee*

B Draft Council Calendar of meetings by date

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None

11. URGENCY

N/A

Draft Council Calendar 2024-25 by Committee

Regulatory Committees and Boards (Other bodies meeting dates not agreed at Council).

2024	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
Audit & Governance Committee		27			19	31	28		30		13	24	
Cabinet		26	24		25	16	20	4	22	12 (Budget)	26	23	
Council	15 (Annual)		17			9		11		28 (Budget)		16	14 (Annual)
Ethics Committee			10				13				5		
Health & Wellbeing Board		19				16			29		12		
Licensing Committee			8		2					3		28	
Pension Board			25			17			16			10	
Pension Committee		11			17			10			18		
Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	23	13	4, 25	15	5, 26	17	7	5, 19	16	27	20	10	8
Scrutiny and Overview		4	23		24		19		21	11 (Budget)	25	22	
Scrutiny Children and Young People		25			10				20		18		
Scrutiny Health and Social Care		18				15			27		11		
Scrutiny Homes			16			28				4		14	
Scrutiny Streets, Environment			9			8			28			1	
General Purposes Committee		10					5		14			29	
Constitution Working Group		6	11		18	24	14	12	23	13	6	3	

The remaining statutory committees and boards, due to their roles and responsibilities will be called as and when required:

- Appointments & Disciplinary Committee
- Civic Mayoralty & Honorary Freedom Committee

Draft Council Calendar 2024-25 by Date

Regulatory Committees and Boards (Other bodies meeting dates not agreed at Council).

May	13	14	15	16	17
Committee			Council (Annual)		
May	20	21	22	23	24
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
May	27	28	29	30	31
Committee					
June	3	4	5	6	7
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee		Constitution Working Group	
June	10	11	12	13	14
Committee	General Purposes Committee	Pension Committee		Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
June	17	18	19	20	21
Committee		Scrutiny Health and Social Care Sub-Committee	Health and Wellbeing Board		
June	24	25	26	27	28
Committee		Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee	Cabinet	Audit and Governance Committee	
July	1	2	3	4	5

Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
July	8	9	10	11	12
Committee	Licensing Committee	Scrutiny Streets, Environment Sub-Committee	Ethics Committee	Constitution Working Group	
July	15	16	17	18	19
Committee		Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee	Council		
July	22	23	24	25	26
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet	Pension Board	
				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
July / August	29	30	31	1	2
Committee					
August	5	6	7	8	9
Committee					
August	12	13	14	15	16
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
August	19	20	21	22	23
Committee					
August	26	27	28	29	30
Committee					

September	2	3	4	5	6
Committee	Licensing Committee			Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
September	9	10	11	12	13
Committee		Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee			
September	16	17	18	19	20
Committee		Pension Committee	Constitution Working Group	Audit and Governance Committee	
September	23	24	25	26	27
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet	Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
September/October	30	1	2	3	4
Committee					
October	7	8	9	10	11
Committee		Scrutiny Streets, Environment Sub-Committee	Council		
October	14	15	16	17	18
Committee		Scrutiny Health and Social Care Sub-Committee	Health and Wellbeing Board	Pension Board	
			Cabinet	Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	

October	21	22	23	24	25
Committee				Constitution Working Group	
October / November	28	29	30	31	1
Committee	Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee			Audit and Governance Committee	
November	4	5	6	7	8
Committee		General Purposes Committee		Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
November	11	12	13	14	15
Committee			Ethics Committee	Constitution Working Group	
November	18	19	20	21	22
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet		
November	25	26	27	28	29
Committee				Audit and Governance Committee	
December	2	3	4	5	6
Committee			Cabinet	Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
December	9	10	11	12	13
Committee		Pension Committee	Council	Constitution Working Group	

December	16	17	18	19	20
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
December	23	24	25	26	27
Committee					
December/January	30	31	1	2	3
Committee					
January	6	7	8	9	10
Committee					
January	13	14	15	16	17
Committee		General Purposes Committee		Pension Board	
				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
January	20	21	22	23	24
Committee	Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee	Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet	Constitution Working Group	
January	27	28	29	30	31
Committee	Scrutiny Health and Social Care Sub-Committee	Scrutiny Streets, Environment Sub-Committee	Health and Wellbeing Board	Audit and Governance Committee	
February	3	4	5	6	7
Committee	Licensing Committee	Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee		Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	

February	10	11	12	13	14
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee (Budget)	Cabinet (Budget)	Constitution Working Group	
February	17	18	19	20	21
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
February	24	25	26	27	28
Committee			Council (Budget)		
March	3	4	5	6	7
Committee			Ethics Committee	Constitution Working Group	
March	10	11	12	13	14
Committee		Scrutiny Health and Social Care Sub-Committee	Health and Wellbeing Board	Audit and Governance Committee	
March	17	18	19	20	21
Committee		Pension Committee		Planning Committee & Planning Sub-Committee	
		Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee			
March	24	25	26	27	28
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet		

March/April	31	1	2	3	4
Committee		Scrutiny Streets, Environment Sub- Committee		Constitution Working Group	
April	7	8	9	10	11
				Pension Board	
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub- Committee	
April	14	15	16	17	18
Committee	Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee		Council		
April	21	22	23	24	25
Committee		Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cabinet	Audit and Governance Committee	
April / May	28	29	30	1	2
Committee	Licensing Committee	General Purposes Committee			
May	5	6	7	8	9
Committee				Planning Committee & Planning Sub- Committee	
May	12	13	14	15	16
Committee			Council (Annual)		
May	19	20	21	22	23
Committee					

May	26	27	28	29	30
Committee					

The remaining statutory committees and boards, due to their roles and responsibilities will be called as and when required:

- Appointments & Disciplinary Committee
- Civic Mayoralty & Honorary Freedom Committee