

**CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 8 January 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held at Guildhall on  
Wednesday, 8 January 2025 at 1.45 pm

**Present**

**Members:**

Deputy Alastair Moss (Chair)  
Deputy Randall Anderson  
Deputy Henry Colthurst  
Steve Goodman  
Gregory Lawrence  
Edward Lord  
Catherine McGuinness  
Timothy James McNally  
James Tumbridge

**Observers:**

Benjamin Murphy  
Philip Woodhouse

**Officers:**

Ian Thomas	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller & City Solicitor
Alison Littlewood	- Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer
Dionne Corradine	- Chief Strategy Officer
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Chamberlain
Greg Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk
Polly Dunn	- Assistant Town Clerk
Simon Gray	- Chamberlain's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Fay Johnstone	- HR Department
Oli Sanandres	- Town Clerk's Department
Mike Hill	- Town Clerk's Department
John Cater	- Committee Clerk

**1. APOLOGIES**

In advance of the meeting, formal apologies were received from Deputy Keith Bottomley, Alderman Sir Charles Bowman, Anthony Fitzpatrick, Deputy Christopher Hayward, Florence Keelson-Anfu, Benjamin Murphy, Mandeep Thandi, and Philip Woodhouse.

**2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations under the Code of Conduct.

3. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the draft public minutes and non-public summary of the last meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

4. **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-26 - CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered a joint Report of the Town Clerk, the Chief Strategy Officer, the Comptroller & City Solicitor, the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer, and the Chamberlain concerning the revenue budgets in relation to the operational services directly overseen by the Corporate Services Committee.

In response to a query, the Chamberlain confirmed that the additional £310,000 sum in the Comptroller & City Solicitor's departmental budget was an approved carry-forward from the last financial year. The Comptroller & City Solicitor stressed the benefits of being able to procure external specialist advice for matters such as, for example, the purchase of the Barking Power Station site. He and the team would continue to keep these types of spends monitored and, if invested in an in-house option became more appropriate and efficient for certain areas that would be explored in consultation with the relevant Committees.

Further to a request at the Finance Committee recently, the Chamberlain informed Members that, in an effort to better clarify the budgetary process, her team was looking at revising the nomenclature and presentational style in these Reports going forward.

Several Members stressed the importance for the Committee to be able to challenge officers throughout the year on how the budget was being managed. Historically, it had not always been easy for Members to maintain vigilance on departmental finances and grip issues when pressures or challenges emerged in-year. Officers would ensure that the Committee was well briefed throughout the financial year on budgetary issues.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee:

- Note the latest revenue budget for 2024/25.
- Review and approve the estimate for 2025/26 for submission to the Finance Committee.
- Authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Chief Strategy Officer and the Comptroller and City Solicitor to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, other reviews and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme,
- Authorise the Chamberlain to agree minor amendments for 2024-25 and 2025-26 budgets arising during budget setting.

5. **PEOPLE STRATEGY BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 1: APRIL 2024 TO SEPTEMBER 2024**

The Committee received a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer which outlined the bi-annual progress update for the City Corporation's People Strategy.

In response to a suggestion, officers confirmed that they would look to implement a rolling 5 -year comparison in order to give Members a longer overview of trends.

The Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer informed Members that the average sick days rate across the organisation, namely, 8.8, was inclusive of a full calendar week (i.e. this rate included weekends). In future iterations of the Report, Members asked for more sickness leave comparison data with other similar organisations.

Separately, a glossary would be included in future iterations of this Report clarifying some of the terminology in the paper.

Whilst acknowledging that this document was separate to the Corporate Plan, Members asked that future iterations included some reference to the aims of the organisation, i.e. to provide impactful services to our customers and service users.

Members asked that future iterations of the Report provided more nuance around staff sentiment about Members; clearly, most officers across the organisation would have zero or minimal interactions with Members on an annual basis and this should be recognised in the Report, with a further drop-down question provided to those officers who do have regular interactions with Members to gather their views.

A Member asked that, going forward, the staff retention figure was given the same prominence as the recruitment figure.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee noted the Report.

6. **ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP) PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a joint Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Programme.

Officers confirmed that rigorous user testing via workshops would be taking place from February and that they would report back to the Committee in due course. When glitches or problems did occur escalation pathways were being outlined, with Digital Services Committee being designated as the central Member Committee that needed to be notified of any serious issues that arise.

Separately, officers would be reporting to both the Digital Services Committee and the Finance Committee on the programme's financials. The sum involved,

namely, £20m plus an £8m contingency, was significant and it was imperative that this was closely monitored as the programme progressed.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee noted the Report.

7. **HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE**

The Committee received a Report of the Town Clerk concerning Health and Safety.

In response to a query, officers would reflect on ways in which Members, more broadly, could be provided with assurance that the risks created by third parties utilizing/hiring Corporation assets was being effectively monitored, currently there was a concern that, despite the Frameworks being in place for third parties, the risks could still fall between the cracks in the City's governance arrangement, so it was important that at least one Committee owned the corporate risk and that it was being regularly sighted as third party events/hires were confirmed.

Members commended the work of the team and were pleased that the April target for 100% completion of the Quadriga recommendations was on course to be achieved. Officers added that it was important to stress that despite the successful efforts to begin to put the right processes, governance and frameworks in place, the cultural transformation across the organisation still had a long way to go and a lot of hard work was required to ensure that all stakeholders were aware of and actively engaged in meeting their responsibilities. A follow up with Quadriga on progress would take place later in 2025 and an update would be provided to Members in due course.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee noted the Report.

8. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the Committee's forward workplan.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee noted the Report.

9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other urgent public business.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED** – that the draft non-public minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
13. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
There were no questions.
14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**  
There was no other urgent non-public business.
15. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED** – that the draft confidential minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
16. **AMBITION 25**  
The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning Ambition 25.
17. **TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE**  
The Committee received an oral update of the Town Clerk concerning several issues.

**The meeting ended at 3.35 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: John Cater**  
**John.Cater@cityoflondon.gov.uk**