



Colchester
City Council

Governance and Audit Committee Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

Wednesday, 13 December 2023 at 18:00

The Governance and Audit Committee considers and approves the Council's Statement of Accounts and reviews the Council's annual audit letter. The Committee also deals with the Council's governance, risk management and audit arrangements. To make recommendations to the Council on functions such as Elections and bye laws, and determine Community Governance Reviews.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions and representations from members of the public at most public meetings. If you would like to speak at a meeting and need to find out more, please refer to the Have Your Say! arrangements here: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/haveyoursay>.

Audio Recording, Mobile phones and other devices

The Council audio records public meetings for live broadcast over the internet and the recordings are available to listen to afterwards on the Council's website. Audio recording, photography and filming of meetings by members of the public is also welcomed. Phones, tablets, laptops, cameras and other devices can be used at all meetings of the Council so long as this doesn't cause a disturbance. It is not permitted to use voice or camera flash functions and devices must be set to silent. Councillors can use devices to receive messages, to access meeting papers and information via the internet. Looking at or posting on social media by Committee members is at the discretion of the Chairman / Mayor who may choose to require all devices to be switched off at any time.

Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, using the contact details below and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

Facilities

Toilets with lift access, if required, are on each floor of the Town Hall. A water dispenser is available on the first floor.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. Make your way to the assembly area in the car park in St Runwald Street behind the Town Hall. Do not re-enter the building until the Town Hall staff advise you that it is safe to do so.

Colchester, CO1 1JB
telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish to call
e-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk
www.colchester.gov.uk

Governance and Audit Committee - Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

Accounts, Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud

To consider and approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and the Council's financial accounts, and review the Council's external auditor's annual audit letter.

To consider the findings of the annual review of governance including the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement.

To have an overview of the Council's control arrangements including risk management and in particular with regard to the annual audit plan and work programme, and to approve the policies contained in the Council's Ethical Governance Framework.

Miscellaneous regulatory matters

To make recommendations to Council on functions such as elections, the name and status of areas and individuals, and byelaws.

To determine and approve Community Governance Reviews.

An overview of the Council's complaint handling procedure and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigations.

Shareholder Committee for Council owned companies

To consider, review and make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the activities and financial performance of Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited, its subsidiary companies and Colchester Borough Homes Limited.

Consider an annual review of the business plans of Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited (including its subsidiary companies) and performance of the companies including delivery of the dividend; and the Annual Report, Governance Statement and performance of Colchester Borough Homes Limited.

The creation of any arrangements for any future Council owned company including activities and performance.

Standards

To consider reports from the Monitoring Officer on the effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct, and to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code.

To receive referrals from the Monitoring Officer into allegations of misconduct and to create a Hearings Sub-Committee to hear and determine complaints about Members and Co-opted Members referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.

To conduct hearings on behalf of the Parish and Town Councils and to make recommendation to Parish and Town Councils on improving standards or actions following a finding of a failure by a Parish or Town Councillor.

To inform Council and the Chief Executive of relevant issues arising from the determination of Code of Conduct complaints.

To grant dispensations, and to hear and determine appeals against refusal to grant dispensations by the Monitoring Officer.

To make recommendations to Council regarding the appointment of Independent Persons.

General

To review of the Constitution including governance issues around formal meetings, processes and member training and to make recommendations to Council.

The complete Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee are contained within the Council's Constitution.

COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Governance and Audit Committee
Wednesday, 13 December 2023 at 18:00

The Governance and Audit Committee Members are:

Councillor Chris Pearson	Chair
Councillor Paul Smith	Deputy Chair
Councillor Paul Dundas	
Councillor Dave Harris	
Councillor Alison Jay	
Councillor Sara Naylor	
Councillor William Sunnucks	

The Governance and Audit Committee Substitute Members are:

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

AGENDA
THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING
(Part A - open to the public)

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally dealt with briefly.

1 Welcome and Announcements

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

2 Substitutions

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

3 Urgent Items

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

No minutes are presented for approval at this meeting.

6 Have Your Say! (Hybrid Council meetings)

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting, or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Committee via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition, a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre-register for those attending the meeting in person.



7 Verbal update from the Council's S151 Officer with regard to the Council's statement of accounts.

The Committee will receive a verbal update from the Council's S151 Officer with regard to the Council's statement of accounts.

8 Housing Overview Report

9 - 16

The Committee will consider a report setting out the approach to assessing the condition of the Council's housing stock, and how this informs the 5 and 30 year investment programmes. The report also provides the current regulatory and legislative context regarding damp and mould in social housing as well as the position with regard to damp and mould in the Council's own housing stock.

9 Review of the Council's Ethical Governance Policies

17 - 134

The Committee will consider a report requesting it to review the Council's updated Ethical Governance policies. These are the key policies which set out the standards of conduct and integrity that the Council expects of councillors, staff, partners, suppliers and customers when conducting Council business.

10 Annual review of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Council's Localism Act Arrangements

135 -
158

The Committee will consider a report requesting it to review the Councillors' (Members') Code of Conduct, and the Council's Localism Act Arrangements for dealing with complaints made regarding Councillors.

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| 11 | Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24 | 159 -
200 |
| | The Committee will consider a report requesting that it reviews the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2023/24. The Local Code of Corporate Governance is how the Council demonstrates that its structures comply with the recognised principles of good governance. | |
| 12 | Review of the Member / Officer Protocol | 201 -
212 |
| | The Committee will consider requesting that it review the Member / Officer Protocol, which provides a framework for good working relationships between Councillors and Officers, and which is included in the Constitution. | |
| 13 | Gifts and Hospitality – Review of Guidance for Councillors and Policy for Employees | 213 -
224 |
| | The Committee will consider a report requesting that it approved updated guidance for Councillors regarding any gifts and hospitality received in their role as a Councillor, as well as an updated policy for employees in relation to any gifts and hospitality received. | |
| 14 | Work Programme 2023-2024 | 225 -
228 |
| | The Committee will consider a report setting out its work programme for the current municipal year. | |
| 15 | Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive) | |
| | In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972). | |

Part B
(not open to the public including the press)