

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Tuesday, May 6, 2025
Subject	Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference Update

Recommendation

1. That the revised Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference, included as Attachment- 1 to report 2025-190, be approved.
-

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference to shift Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) reporting from the Governance and Office of the CAO (CAOs Office) section to the Corporate Services section.

Key Findings

In 2024, City Council amended the Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference to include CAOs Office reporting in the Governance section. Since that change was made, the Finance department has moved from Corporate Services to the CAOs Office. As a result, report volumes from the CAOs Office have gone up considerably, while reports to the Corporate Services section of Committee of the Whole have gone down considerably.

To ensure relative balance between the workload attached to each Committee of the Whole section, staff are recommending that the Corporate Services section be renamed the Corporate Services and Office of the CAO section. If City Council approves this change, all reports from the Finance and Strategic Initiatives and Intergovernmental Services departments will go to the Corporate Services and CAOs Office section.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report supports the Lead with Accountability objective of the Strategic Plan by ensuring that City Council processes are continually reviewed and improved to ensure effectiveness.

Future Guelph Theme

Foundations

Future Guelph Objectives

Foundations: Lead with accountability

Financial Implications

None.

Report

The Committee of the Whole, as established in its Terms of Reference, has historically been comprised of five sections, each chaired by a distinct member of City Council:

- Corporate Services (CS)
- Infrastructure, Development and Environment (IDE)
- Public Services (PS)
- Audit
- Governance

The CS, IDE, and PS sections receive all staff reports from departments within their respective service areas. The Audit and Governance sections operate differently, receiving reports from any service area, provided the report aligns with the section's mandate as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

In early 2024, this structure was amended to include the CAOs Office within the Governance section (effectively creating the Governance and Office of the CAO section). This change was necessitated by the increased volume of reports produced by the CAO's Office, requiring a specific section and chair to manage the workload effectively. This adjustment maintained the balance among the Committee of the Whole sections and provided clarity for CAOs Office reporting.

However, in late 2024, the Finance department was moved from CS to the CAO's Office. Consequently, Finance reports are now directed to the Governance and CAOs Office section. This shift has resulted in an imbalance in the workload distribution between sections, particularly affecting CS. Data from 2024 indicates that the CS section received only two reports not originating from the Finance department. If no changes are implemented, the CS section may convene only once or twice throughout 2025, while other sections meet roughly every other month.

The low number of reports from the remaining CS departments is due to the nature of their work. Departments such as Strategic Communications and Community Engagement and Information Technology, do not require frequent Council reporting to fulfill their mandates effectively. While staff in these departments often contribute to staff reports, they are rarely the primary author. The City Clerk's Office and Internal Audit both frequently report to the Committee of the Whole, but that reporting typically goes to the Governance and Audit sections, respectively. Legal and Court Services primarily report directly to City Council, rather than to the Committee of the Whole, due to the urgent and confidential nature of the work.

To address this imbalance and create a more equitable distribution among Committee of the Whole sections, City staff recommend moving the CAO's Office to the CS section, thereby forming the Corporate Services and Office of the CAO section. This change would bring relative parity to the sections, with the nature of CAO's Office reporting aligning more closely with CS than with IDE or PS.

Included as Attachment-1 is a revised version of the Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference have been amended to reflect this proposed change only, no additional changes were considered at this time.

Financial Implications

None.

Consultations and Engagement

The Governance Chair and Vice-Chair (Mayor Guthrie and Councillor Busuttil) and the CS Chair and Vice-Chair (Councillors Caron and Caton) were consulted regarding these proposed changes.

Attachments

Attachment- 1 Revised Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference

Departmental Approval

Tara Baker, Chief Administrative Officer

Report Author

Dylan McMahon, Acting General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk

This report was approved by:

Dylan McMahon
Acting General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 2811
dylan.mcmahon@guelph.ca

This report was recommended by:

Gene Matthews
Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 3337
gene.matthews@guelph.ca