

Staff Report



To Committee of the Whole
Service Area Corporate Services
Date Wednesday, September 3, 2025
Subject **Facilities Cleaning Services Value for Money Audit**

Recommendation

1. That the report titled Facilities Cleaning Services Value for Money Audit dated September 3, 2025, be received.
2. That staff be directed to incorporate audit recommendations into appropriate staff workplans.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this audit is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the facilities cleaning services, ensuring that public funds are being used optimally; and identify improvement opportunities. The audit was conducted using the Council approved value for money (VFM) framework.

Key Findings

Strengthening Governance, Transparency, and Operational Efficiency in Cleaning Services

This audit has revealed opportunities for modernizing and strengthening the governance, transparency, and efficiency of cleaning operations across the organization. Currently, departments rely on legacy internal methodologies to guide service delivery—practices that have not been benchmarked against recognized industry standards. By establishing standardized, industry-aligned cleaning protocols, the organization can drive improvements in consistency, accountability, and cost efficiency across all serviced divisions.

Financial oversight presents another critical area for improvement. Present reporting structures do not isolate cleaning expenditures from broader maintenance costs, obscuring visibility and impeding effective resource allocation. Introducing dedicated budget lines and conducting routine expenditure analyses by facility and service category will support evidence-based decision-making and reinforce fiscal discipline.

The absence of formal Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and structured feedback channels has created a disconnect between service provision and client expectations. Introducing SLAs and introducing regular client satisfaction surveys

will foster greater transparency, bolster accountability, and ensure that cleaning services are responsive to site-specific requirements.

Operational efficiency is further hindered by the lack of scheduling software and undefined job roles. Implementing a scheduling solution within CBM will improve staff deployment, reduce errors, and enhance coverage consistency.

Simultaneously, clearly defined job descriptions, especially for all cleaning focused roles will help eliminate role ambiguity, facilitate equitable workload distribution, and establish a foundation for measuring performance.

Our audit evaluated whether there are chances to outsource cleaning services or centralize them under Corporate Building Maintenance (CBM) as part of the efficiency evaluation. Efficiency can be increased by outsourcing and centralization, but in different ways. Redundancies are decreased and processes are streamlined by centralization but possibly at the risk of service reduction. Conversely, outsourcing can save operating expenses by unloading non-core activities and utilizing specialized skills. The results of these evaluations are described in full below.

Centralizing Cleaning Service Function

While the concept of centralizing cleaning services under Corporate Building Maintenance (CBM) has been explored, the organization is not yet prepared for implementation. Key foundational elements such as formal agreements, standardized processes, and consistent oversight must be established first. Nonetheless, if the recommended actions are undertaken—including service benchmarking, role clarification, expenditure transparency, and enhanced coordination, the organization will be well-positioned to unlock significant gains in economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. We recommend that senior management consider a centralized model once the recommendations of this audit are completed.

Outsourcing Cleaning Services Function

The audit identified significant barriers to pursuing outsourced cleaning services at this time. A primary challenge is the lack of clearly defined consistent cleaning standards across city facilities, which undermines the ability to develop accurate Request for Proposals (RFPs) or measure service performance. Without building-specific benchmarks for cleaning scope, frequency, and quality expectations, outsourcing would lack a solid operational foundation and risk inconsistent service delivery.

Moreover, the current staffing model relies heavily on employees with mixed responsibilities, often blending cleaning with other operational duties such as event setup. This functional overlap makes it difficult to isolate actual cleaning requirements and define a clean scope of work for a third-party provider without risking service gaps or inefficiencies.

Past attempts to outsource elements of cleaning were discontinued due to poor service quality and a high volume of complaints. Since then, internal staff have maintained service delivery, with only minimal reliance on temporary external support during staff absences.

Until formal cleaning standards are established, and role clarity is improved, the organization is not in a position to responsibly consider outsourcing. Developing

internal benchmarks is essential to define needs, evaluate current performance, and hold any future provider accountable to consistent service levels aligned with city expectations. This foundational work will be critical to inform any future procurement strategy.

These recommendations collectively represent a pragmatic and strategically phased roadmap toward a more accountable, data-informed, and performance-oriented approach to cleaning service delivery.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The recommendations identified are designed to close control gaps, strengthen processes and improve the internal control environment related to the Facilities Cleaning Services. The audit supports the objective of 'Maintain the City's healthy financial position' objective under the 'Foundations' theme.

Future Guelph Theme

Foundations

Future Guelph Objectives

Foundations: Maintain the City's healthy financial position

Financial Implications

The audit recommendations should lead to a more effective control environment of the facilities cleaning services provided to the City. There may be costs associated with implementing the recommendations. Implementing the recommendations should lead to longer-term savings.

Report

Background

The City of Guelph is committed to maintaining clean, safe, and well-managed public facilities that serve residents, employees, businesses, and visitors. CBM plays a critical role in ensuring the health, safety, and satisfaction of facility users while contributing to the efficient operation of city-owned buildings.

The City of Guelph manages a diverse portfolio of facilities, including administrative offices, libraries, transit stations, recreational and cultural facilities, and public works buildings. Cleaning services for these facilities are delivered mostly through in-house staff, however contracted service providers are used to cover absences and special events at certain sites. The scope of work typically includes daily janitorial tasks, periodic deep cleaning, waste disposal, sanitization, and other tasks that ensure compliance with health and safety standards.

Table 1: Total Cost of Cleaning Services

Year	Total Cleaning Cost
2022	\$2.1 million
2023	\$2.4 million
2024	\$2.7 million
2025	\$2.5 million *

*Includes forecast figure for 2025 based on actuals to April 30, 2025. According to information obtained from an ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association) consultant, the City of Guelph is slightly above range with the industry standard for cleaning costs per square foot of building surfaces.

The labour rate for cleaners in the City of Guelph is in line with current industry standards based on comparative data for public sector institutions. This rate reflects fair market compensation for custodial work, taking into account factors such as job responsibilities, local cost of living, and prevailing wage trends in the cleaning industry. Maintaining this alignment ensures the city remains competitive in attracting and retaining qualified cleaning staff while also upholding budgetary responsibility and service quality.

To enhance the effectiveness of the internal audit of facilities cleaning services, the expertise of ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association), a globally recognized authority on cleaning industry standards, best practices, and benchmarking was engaged. ISSA provided specialized knowledge and independent insights that supported the Value for Money (VFM) audit by assessing the city's cleaning services at a limited number of sites compared to industry benchmarks, regulatory requirements, and operational best practices.

ISSA performed a '360° Discovery Assessment'. This focused on assessing the current state of cleaning practices across the City of Guelph's three selected facilities, identifying operational inefficiencies, staff performance gaps, and cleaning efficacy challenges. This included:

1. Cleaning Efficacy Testing: Using advanced tools such as Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) monitoring to evaluate the facility's cleaning quality.
2. Human Capital Analysis: Engaging with staff to understand processes and identify potential gaps.
3. Operational Optimization: Analyzing staffing, scopes of work, quality expectations and supplies for optimization and improving efficiency, reduce costs, and elevate cleaning standards.
4. Regulatory Compliance: Ensuring adherence to industry standards and environmental policies.
5. Training & Work loading Program Development: Review and provide gap analysis of current training & work loading processes, procedures, and content.

ISSA overall ATP testing results indicate that high-touch surfaces are generally well managed. Most touchpoints, including office desks and doors, remained within or near acceptable ranges, reflecting consistent cleaning practices. These results support continued routine cleaning, with added attention to specific hotspots to ensure sustained hygiene and safety.

The ISSA operational review identified opportunities to enhance efficiency, strengthen service consistency, reduce operational costs, and improve overall outcomes across City of Guelph facilities. The following findings are based on ISSA site observations, staff feedback, and labour benchmarking data.

Staffing and Work loading Analysis

Table 2: Building Square footage per full-time equivalent (FTE) analysis at various divisions

Building Square footage	Corporate Building Maintenance	Museum	Recreation (Excluding River Run, Sleeman and Sports Dome)	Solid Waste
Sq foot per FTE	48,043.00	26,611.33	22,023.52	19,659.00

- The Corporate Building Maintenance Division is responsible for the cleaning and upkeep of approximately 480,430 square feet of City of Guelph facilities.
- A comparison of the square footage cleaned per full-time equivalent (FTE) across various divisions reveals some disparity; however, all areas remain within or above industry benchmarks for the facility type comparator. This variation is largely attributed to the unique operational demands and contextual factors of each division.
- In **Museum facilities**, the square footage per FTE is lower due to the highly specialized nature of the work—cleaning involves delicate handling of artifacts, precise techniques, and additional responsibilities beyond standard janitorial tasks.
- Similarly, in **recreation facilities**, the cleaning workload is impacted by high daily foot traffic, frequent use of multiple change rooms, shared duties by other facility staff and the added responsibility for cleaners of setting up and tearing down equipment for community events and programs.
- In the **Solid Waste division**, a single cleaner is assigned across multiple locations, with duties extending beyond cleaning to include various other tasks, thus reflecting a broader scope of responsibilities.
- Taking together, these unique characteristics explain the apparent differences in cleaning productivity across divisions. Importantly, the data does not indicate any overstaffing or inefficiencies when benchmarked against industry standards.
- The **CBM (Corporate Building Maintenance)** division shows signs of being under-resourced, as its FTE-to-square-footage ratio is above the industry expectations, suggesting a need for further review and potential staffing support.

ISSA made similar observations in their report that the current staffing levels across City facilities appear to be below optimal industry levels. This reduced

workforce limits the ability to consistently meet daily cleaning demands, and more thorough deep cleaning routines placing strain on existing staff and impacting the overall effectiveness of cleaning efforts. With more staffing in place, tasks could be distributed more evenly, allowing for greater attention to detail, improved consistency in service delivery, and the ability to address both routine and restorative cleaning needs more effectively. Ensuring adequate staffing is critical to maintaining cleaning service standards once they are established and supporting the long-term upkeep of City facilities.

Facility-Specific Demands

A number of City facilities have heightened labour requirements owing to their physical characteristics, occupancy rates, and functional purposes. A combination of administrative and public areas, and a large number of areas of high-touch surfaces also contribute to unique demands. This creates a tremendous amount of time and labour necessary for daily cleaning, most notably in stairwells, change rooms, bathrooms, and high use meeting rooms to be constantly maintained in terms of appearance and sanitation.

Recreation facilities experience fluctuating occupancy throughout the day due to scheduled programs, drop-in usage, and community events, making it difficult to establish a consistent cleaning rhythm. Additionally, the pool area introduces unique challenges, including humidity, slip hazards, and the need for specialized chemical management and grout maintenance, all of which require targeted custodial expertise and flexible staffing support. Facilities with heavy public use are put under heavy operational stress by long hours, high occupancy rates, and intermittent use throughout the day. The variable and busy nature of these sites—along with unpredictable spikes in occupancy for special events further complicates maintaining consistent levels of cleanliness without using part time employees or flexible schedules.

Labour Challenges

Supervisor and custodial staff feedback repeatedly cited labour shortfalls, excessive absenteeism, and scheduling constraints as obstacles to top-notch service delivery. Frequently, cleaning staff are multitasking in several areas or buildings, narrowing time for detailed work and preventive deep cleaning.

Absenteeism, especially if it is unscheduled, creates gaps in operations that are hard to plug in today's staffing model. Without a larger relief pool or part-time backup in place, workday services will fall behind or be missed, leading to a loss of sanitation and undue stress on remaining employees.

Audit Objectives and Scope

The objectives of the review were to assess the extent of regard for economy, efficiency and effectiveness as it relates to facilities cleaning services and identify improvement opportunities.

The key objectives of the audit were as follows:

- To consider if a centralized model that brings cleaning services under one department should be implemented.
- To evaluate the overall achievement of value for money in the facilities cleaning services.

- To assess the effectiveness of current cleaning services and whether they meet the needs of the city.
- To identify areas for improvement in terms of cost-efficiency, service delivery, and compliance with both contractual and regulatory obligations.
- To review the processes for monitoring and managing cleaning services, ensuring the city is obtaining expected outcomes.

The scope of this audit covered the following areas:

- A review of the current in-house cleaning service and external provider practices at all city owned or occupied facilities.
- An evaluation of the performance of the cleaning services, including the timeliness and quality of services rendered.
- An assessment of the cost structure, including a comparison with industry standards and any opportunities to potential identify cost savings.
- A review of internal controls related to monitoring and overseeing cleaning services, and the overall governance framework.
- The review period covered the last three fiscal years to provide a comprehensive assessment of trends and performance.
- The scope included a review of other city departments that oversee their own facilities cleaning services.

Audit Approach

The following approach was used to conduct the audit:

- The review included a combination of interviews, documentation review, site visits, analysis of service performance data, and benchmarking where available.
- The team completed a detailed review of documents and records to validate the processes and controls. Potential opportunities for improvement and accompanying recommendations are provided below.
- The audit team met with the management of respective departments to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations to ensure timely actions are developed to mitigate the key risks identified.
- The timelines for management action plans outlined in this report reflect the importance of timely resolution while ensuring alignment with staff work plans and priorities. Each phase of implementation has been structured to balance urgency with feasibility, allowing for thorough analysis and informed decision-making.

Consideration for Centralization of Cleaning Services

The centralization of cleaning services under CBM was explored as a potential strategy to streamline operations and enhance consistency across departments. While the concept offers possible long-term benefits such as standardized service delivery and centralized oversight, a thorough assessment of the current organizational landscape, it is our opinion that the organization is not ready to proceed with this shift.

One of the key challenges is the division of labour and the distinct operational models across departments, particularly within recreation centres. These facilities have unique service demands that are closely tied to programming schedules, public usage patterns, and site-specific needs. Currently, no formal service level agreements (SLAs) are in place to define expectations, responsibilities, or performance standards between departments. Without such foundational

agreements, any attempt at centralization could result in service gaps, misaligned expectations, and confusion over accountability.

Additionally, there is insufficient evidence at this time to determine whether centralization would lead to greater efficiency or cost savings. In fact, there is a valid concern that it could lead to service decline at specialized sites like recreational centers, where cleaning tasks are deeply integrated into daily operations and often performed by multi-role staff. Introducing a separate, centralized function may inadvertently disrupt this balance and create unexpected inefficiencies.

Given these factors, it is recommended that the organization defer the centralization of cleaning services decision until further readiness is established. This includes the development of SLAs, a clear evaluation of service needs by site, and a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact on service quality, staffing, and operational efficiency. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project that includes establishing a cleanliness standard and a work loading analysis at some selected facilities to gain a better understanding of potential impacts centralization of services could have across the organization. We recommend that senior management consider a centralized model once the recommendations of this audit are completed.

By leveraging ISSA's independent assessment, the audit benefited from an expert evaluation, enhancing credibility and providing data-driven recommendations. ISSA's insights helped ensure that the audit's findings are based on best-in-class practices, strengthening the city's ability to make informed decisions about its facilities cleaning services. The ISSA assessment report was provided to departments for consideration, action and follow-up. We recommend departments consider engaging an external cleaning expert to assess all city facilities.

Consideration for Outsourcing of Cleaning Services

Currently, there are no formally defined cleaning standards across city facilities, which presents a challenge when considering future options like issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) pursuing outsourcing. Without a clear understanding of specific cleaning needs and desired service levels, it will be difficult to develop an accurate and comprehensive RFP. To address this, it is essential to develop internal cleaning standards on a building-by-building basis which will help determine the exact number of hours required and guide the cleaning system design and implementation of effective cleaning processes. These standards will provide a consistent framework for evaluating current performance, determining required service levels, and informing any future procurement process. Establishing these standards will also ensure that any outsourced service provider is held accountable to consistent performance expectations, aligned with the City's cleanliness and operational goals.

Based on our assessment the organization is not in a position to consider outsourcing at this stage due to the complexity of current staffing arrangements related to cleaning tasks. Many cleaning duties are performed by staff in mixed-responsibility roles, making it difficult to clearly isolate and define the actual cleaning requirements. Additionally, cleaners are often involved in a range of non-cleaning tasks, such as set up and teardown for events and activities, which are integral to the operation of the facilities. This overlap makes it challenging to develop a clear scope of work for outsourcing and poses a risk of service disruption

if these interconnected responsibilities are not properly accounted for through an external service provider.

It is important to note that some cleaning services were being provided with support from external contractors prior to December 2024. However, due to the high volume of complaints received from facility users and the consistently disappointing quality of service, the contract was terminated. Since then, all cleaning services have been managed and delivered solely by internal staff. The only exceptions to this are instances where service gaps arise due to staff absences, in which case short-term temporary external support may be engaged to maintain minimal service levels.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

Observation #1: Reliance on Non-Data Driven Historical Cleaning Standards and Labour Estimates for Cleaning Metrics

The organization currently relies on historical internal experiences for defining cleaning standards, but these methods have never been benchmarked against industry standards to establish a clear and measurable cleanliness standard for the buildings being serviced. As a result, in some cases there are gaps between the services being provided and the expectations of the receiving divisions. This lack of standardized benchmarks has led to inconsistencies in cleaning quality, with some areas not meeting expected levels of cleanliness. Additionally, during audit interviews, multiple receiving divisions expressed dissatisfaction with the cleaning services, citing concerns about incomplete cleaning, inconsistent quality, and unclear service scope.

Similarly, the cleaning service labour requirements are determined based on historical practices rather than established industry standards which are based on the size and measurements of the cleanable area. There is no formal methodology to validate these estimates against recognized benchmarks. Industry benchmarks for cleaning times are not utilized in determining staffing levels or service expectations e.g., square feet cleaned per full time worker or cost per square foot of cleanable area. Additionally, there is currently no confirmed measurement of cleanable square feet at any city facilities. During the course of the audit, CBM staff did provide an estimate by building. CBM is responsible for cleaning an increasing number of facilities despite having fewer staff. However, it is difficult to determine whether the current staffing levels are adequate due to the absence of a data driven method to establish industry benchmark cleaning standards.

Recommendation #1

We strongly suggest that all departments responsible for facilities cleaning utilize the services of the Continuous Improvement Office (CIO) in implementing the recommendations below. CIO has indicated that it can assist in the following:

- Documentation of processes (tasks, sequence, flow through buildings)
- Data collection to capture current (baseline) performance of processes (to inform understanding of efficiency/effectiveness gaps and enable data driven decision making)
- Implementation of standardized processes (and support including workplace organization and job visuals)
- Mechanisms to maintain service delivery levels (performance measures and targets, sustainability)

1.1: All departments should establish organizational cleaning standards by conducting detailed building-by-building work loading analysis to rebalance staff assignments, ensuring tasks are equitably distributed and high-priority areas are consistently covered. As part of the review, we recommend a discussion regarding tasks and demands that fall outside of the standard daily schedule, such as interim and restorative or deep cleaning needs. These activities often require additional planning and resources and may impact overall labour availability and scheduling efficiency if not properly accounted for. A corporate policy could be applied to allow for temporary room closures or blocks for cleaning in rental calendars to allow time for restorative or deep cleaning needs. Consideration should be given to engaging an external consultant to lead the evaluation exercise when planning a revamp of the services provided to internal departments. A consultant can offer an objective assessment, industry's best practices, and tailored recommendations that align with organizational goals. (Efficiency and Effectiveness).

1.2: Better key performance data is needed to control costs in order to systematically determine the number of employees required to complete all expected cleaning tasks. Following a workload analysis (1.1 above), a data-driven model should be developed to determine the appropriate number of cleaning staff required for all the facilities based on the confirmed cleanable square feet. Conducting a benchmarking study will allow comparison of current labour allocations with industry norms to identify gaps, adjusting cleaning schedules and staffing levels accordingly to improve efficiency and service quality, and implementing a periodic review process to ensure continued alignment with best practices (Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness).

Table 3: Management Action Plan, Recommendation 1

Number	Department/Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
1.1	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree - Work with CIO office to document processes, determine baseline conditions, implement policies and determine performance standards.	Under consultation with CIO, estimated completion end of 2027 after opening of new Baker Library to allow for inclusion in building-by-building workload analysis.

	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services	Agree – Following adjustment to work plans, leaders can prioritize working planning analysis to contribute to establishing cleaning standards, in consultation with CIO and other facility managers and / or external consultant, as budget allows.	Under consultation with CIO and acknowledging demand on Recreation staff with the opening the new Recreation Centre (Fall of 2026), estimated completion by end of 2027 to allow for inclusion of South End Community Centre in building-by-building workload analysis.
1.2	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree - Work with the CIO office and a consultant to conduct a benchmarking study to provide recommendations on staffing, scheduling, performance measures and periodic reviews.	Under consultation with CIO, estimated completion Q2 2028 following analysis in 1.1.
	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services	Agree – In consultation with CIO, Managers and / or external consultant, as budget allows. Cleaning staff required by cleanable square fee data will also consider and evaluate uniqueness of program offerings and spaces along with volume of participants using the facilities.	Under consultation with CIO and acknowledging demand on Recreation staff with the opening the new Recreation Centre (Fall of 2026), estimated completion Q2 2028 following analysis in 1.1.

Observation #2: Lack of Clear Job Descriptions for Cleaning Focused Roles

Throughout the organization Facility Maintainers are routinely performing cleaning duties alongside dedicated cleaning staff. Job descriptions for these roles have not been developed that outline the cleaning responsibilities performed. This lack of role clarity creates challenges in staff planning, workload allocation, and performance management. It also increases the risk of overlapping duties and inefficiencies in service delivery, as expectations are not formally documented or standardized.

Outdated or nonexistent position descriptions make it difficult for management to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of performance and to review the potential impacts of large service changes on the operations.

Recommendation #2

2.1: It is recommended that all departments organize work to reflect the current job duties on job postings (i.e. cleaner, facility maintainer, downtown maintainer,

certified maintainer). Clearly defined roles will also assist in performance evaluations and resource allocation decisions (Economy and Effectiveness).

2.2: In the longer term, it is recommended that all departments work with Human Resources to develop City-wide job descriptions for (1) Facility Maintainers, (2) Downtown Maintainers and (3) cleaners to clearly outline the duties of each role. This will support effective staff planning and work loading exercises, ensure transparency in role expectations, and help maintain accountability and efficiency in operations (Economy and Effectiveness).

Table 4: Management Action Plan, Recommendation 2

Number	Department/ Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
2.1	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree – Managers will support revisions to job duties on job postings for consistency across the corporation.	Guided by Human Resources, completion by the end of Q2 2026
	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services	Agree – Managers will support revisions to job duties on job postings for consistency across the corporation.	Guided by Human Resources, completion by the end of Q2 2026
2.2	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM Human Resources	Agree – Managers will support revisions to job descriptions for consistency across the corporation.	Guided by Human Resources, completion by the end of Q4 2026
	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services Human Resources	Agree – Managers will support revisions to job descriptions for consistency across the corporation.	Guided by Human Resources, completion by the end of Q4 2026

Observation #3: Cost Management of Facilities Cleaning Services

The current management financial reporting does not provide department leaders with a clear or detailed view of cleaning service expenditure, as these costs are embedded within broader departmental budgets and not monitored separately. This lack of structured and isolated reporting limits the organization’s ability to produce meaningful financial and operational insights related to cleaning services. As a result, management lacks the necessary data to support informed decision-making, evaluate service efficiency, or assess cost-effectiveness between in-house and outsourced cleaning options.

Without specific reporting on cleaning costs, it is difficult to perform accurate budget-to-actual variance analysis, track spending trends, or establish reliable performance metrics. Additionally, the absence of a dedicated financial reporting structure increases the risk of incomplete or misallocated charges and creates challenges in identifying budget shortfalls or inefficiencies. Some cleaning-related expenses are charged back to other divisions, further complicating transparency. The lack of relevant data also impedes the ability to set key performance indicators or track outcomes over time. Ultimately, this highlights a broader deficiency in management information systems, which currently do not support effective oversight or strategic planning for cleaning operations.

Recommendation #3

3.1: Establish a clear cost classification system to separate cleaning service costs from other division expenses. Utilize financial reporting systems to track and report cleaning-related expenditures separately. Ensure that future budgets explicitly include cleaning costs as a distinct line item to facilitate better financial planning. Where cleaning costs are charged back to other divisions, ensure that accurate cost data is available to justify fair and complete chargebacks. Implement regular financial reviews to monitor cleaning service costs, assess trends, and optimize expenditure (Effectiveness).

3.2: Establish a periodic review process (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to compare actual cleaning costs against the budget. Introduce variance reporting by developing a standard variance analysis report to identify and explain deviations from the budget. Utilize financial monitoring tools and leverage financial reporting systems to automate tracking and improve budget transparency. Develop a structured approach for addressing budget variances, ensuring timely corrective actions (Economy and Effectiveness).

Table 5: Management Action Plan, Recommendation 3

Number	Department/ Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
3.1	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree – Work with Finance department to break apart budget for cleaning services. Report on variance in conjunction with current process. Incorporate financial implications of cleaning services into Service Level Agreements.	Guiding by finance, set up new accounts through 2027 budget confirmation (in 2026) to begin tracking expenditures in Q1 2027.

Number	Department/ Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services	Agree – Work with Finance department to break apart budget for cleaning services. Report on variance in conjunction with current process. Consider tracking resources and data on multi-role staff that also have cleaning duties to share a complete picture.	Guiding by finance, set up new accounts through 2027 budget confirmation (in 2026) to begin tracking expenditures in Q1 2027.
3.2	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree – with leadership from Finance, current budget monitoring occurs monthly, with quarterly reporting to Council. Where negative variances are identified, more detailed reporting can be shared along with mitigation strategies to address over expenditure.	Guided by Finance, complete by end of Q1 2027 (after financial system set up, 3.1)
	Culture and recreation / Recreation Services	Agree – with leadership from Finance, current budget monitoring occurs monthly, with quarterly reporting to Council. Where negative variances are identified, more detailed reporting can be shared along with mitigation strategies to address over expenditure. Consideration will be given to revenue generation (or increase in revenue). Any automated systems subject to budget approval.	Guided by Finance, complete by end of Q1 2027 (after financial system set up, 3.1)

Observation #4: Absence of Formal Service Level Agreements and Customer Satisfaction Feedback Mechanism

Interviews conducted with divisions/sites currently receiving cleaning services from CBM revealed several concerns regarding service consistency and coverage. Multiple divisions reported inconsistent cleaning quality, with some areas of their facilities receiving thorough attention while others were frequently overlooked. Additionally, staff from these divisions/sites noted that certain spaces were either not cleaned at all or had never been formally discussed as part of the cleaning service provided, leading to gaps in expectations and service delivery. It should be noted that CBM was previously providing the cleaning services in conjunction with

the external contractor. However, since the termination of the external cleaning contract at the end of 2024, there has been a noticeable organic improvement with a reduction in complaints from users. Several departments have shown increased interest in utilizing the in-house cleaning services managed by CBM.

CBM currently does not have a formal service level agreement (SLA) in place for cleaning services with individual departments that have either dedicated facilities or a need for additional cleaning considerations above a standard office environment, such as higher usage areas or locations that are operating continually. However, this is a work in progress. SLAs for general maintenance services are being established with certain departments, and similar agreements are in development for others. As these maintenance SLAs evolve, cleaning services should also be incorporated within them. This integration is expected to occur gradually and organically over time, aligning with departmental needs and service maturity.

By implementing SLAs, CBM division can enhance service quality, accountability, and operational efficiency while fostering better collaboration with the divisions it serves. SLAs will ensure that:

- There are clear guidelines on the level and frequency of cleaning services, eliminating inconsistencies in service delivery.
- There is a structured mechanism to hold CBM accountable for performance and making it easy to assess service effectiveness.
- Issues are resolved objectively.
- Resource allocation is optimized, eliminating over- or under-servicing of specific areas.
- key performance indicators (KPIs) are established to monitor and improve service efficiency.

CBM currently lacks a formal mechanism to assess customer satisfaction for the cleaning services it provides to other divisions. There are no supervisory quality assessment routines, structured customer feedback forms or surveys, or performance reviews in place to gauge service quality or identify areas for improvement. This may result in a potential decline in service quality due to lack of performance monitoring, increased complaints from divisions without a formal resolution process and missed opportunities for service improvement and efficiency.

Recommendation #4

4.1: CBM should establish formal Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with all divisions receiving custodial cleaning services (Effectiveness and Efficiency).

The SLAs should include:

- Clearly define the cleaning tasks, including routine and deep-cleaning services.
- Specify cleaning frequency (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly) and the timing of services noting specific areas that may need more cleaning, such as higher usage areas and facilities that require greater cleaning frequency due to operational considerations.
- Establish measurable standards (e.g., cleanliness ratings, response times for complaints) to ensure consistency.
- Define the obligations of both the CBM division and the receiving divisions.
- Implement KPIs and regular performance reviews to track compliance with SLAs.

- Outline procedures for handling service complaints or performance-related disputes.
- Include a provision for periodic SLA reviews to adapt to changing needs and feedback.

4.2: CBM should implement a documented structured quality assurance program, including routine inspections and performance assessments by supervisors, to ensure consistency and compliance with the defined standards. Staff should be provided ongoing training on updated cleaning protocols and industry best practices to enhance service delivery and maintain a consistent level of cleanliness (Effectiveness).

4.3: CBM should conduct periodic feedback surveys to assess the quality of cleaning services and appoint a designated contact person to handle customer feedback and ensure prompt action on concerns (Effectiveness).

Table 6: Management Action Plan, Recommendation 4

Number	Department/ Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
4.1	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree - work is already underway. Working with finance and customer departments on financial tracking and incorporating cleaning scope of work details and standards into the Service Level Agreements where cleaning is being performed.	In consultation with customer departments, estimated completion is end of 2027 in alignment with recommendation 1.1.
4.2	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree - Establishment of supervisor inspection and performance assessment standards are in progress.	Estimated completion is end of 2026
4.3	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	In consultation with customer departments, feedback process to be added into the Service Level Agreements.	Estimated completion is end of 2027 in alignment with recommendation 4.1.

Observation #5: Absence of Scheduling Software for CBM Cleaning Staff

CBM is currently not utilizing a scheduling software solution to manage and assign shifts for cleaners across various buildings and sites. Instead, shift scheduling is handled manually through spreadsheets or informal communication methods. This is largely due to the recent and ongoing expansion of CBM’s responsibilities, as it has gradually taken over additional facilities and cleaning duties. The resulting increase in workload and staffing has evolved organically over time. Given this growth, it is now an appropriate and timely opportunity to explore the implementation of scheduling software to improve efficiency, coordination, and

oversight of cleaning operations. The Culture and Recreation department has scheduling software in place with part-time causal staff (e.g. 7shifts, Sling) and would benefit from software that captures the full and part-time staff.

The lack of automation increases the risk of scheduling conflicts, inefficiencies, and potential gaps in cleaning coverage, especially as the staff is rotated at different sites during the day. There are several risks associated with manual shift scheduling such as:

- Increased likelihood of overstaffing or understaffing at certain sites, leading to unnecessary labour costs or service gaps.
- Higher risk of shift overlaps, last-minute adjustments, and employee dissatisfaction.
- Management lacks real-time visibility into staff attendance, making it difficult to track performance and respond to issues proactively.
- Potential non-compliance with labour regulations regarding working hours, overtime, and shift rotations.

Industry best practices recommend the use of scheduling software to optimize workforce management, ensure adequate coverage, and improve operational efficiency. Automated scheduling tools help reduce human errors, improve workforce productivity, and provide real-time visibility into staff allocation.

Recommendation #5

5: It is recommended that CBM implement a scheduling software solution to enhance shift management and overall operational efficiency. Recreation Services has already adopted an automated scheduling system, with part-time causal staff, that supports effective resource allocation based on availability, workload, and priority sites. CBM should engage with Recreation Services to explore the feasibility of adopting the same or a similar software solution for all staff. If the system meets CBM’s operational requirements, its implementation could significantly improve scheduling accuracy, optimize resource deployment, and support long-term planning. (Efficiency and Effectiveness).

Table 7: Management Action Plan, Recommendation 5

Number	Department/Division	Action Plan	Target Completion Date
5	Facilities and Energy Management/ CBM	Agree - Review and trial of the Sling Scheduling app for cleaners.	Staff currently underway in setting up a trial for the sling app.

Financial Implications

The audit recommendations should lead to a more effective control environment of the facilities cleaning services provided to the City. There may be costs associated with implementing the recommendations. Implementing the recommendations should lead to longer-term savings.

Consultations and Engagement

Findings and recommendations have been discussed and reviewed with the affected department General Managers, and the Executive Team.

Attachments

None.

Departmental Approval

None.

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