



**SEPTEMBER
2024**

STATE OF THE SABHA REPORT

Prepared by the Sabha in collaboration with an External Consultant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Panthic Committee ("Committee") continues to take positive steps to address the issues noted within the Operational Audit report ("Audit"), published in December 2022. Since the February 2024 follow up Audit, the following key updates have occurred:

- **Positive Community engagement** through hosting a local Hustings events, organizing (for the second year in a row) a Southall Summer Camp and creating a children's library.
- **Refurbishing and updating** the facilities and buildings across all sites. This includes (but is not limited to); Gold work on the dome at Guru Nanak Road Gurdwara, expansion of the Park Avenue parking space and the repairing of flooring cracks within the Langar Halls.
- Implementation of a **Marketing Strategy** which ensures that all social media and non-social media marketing is in line with the Sabha's value and brand.
- Implementing a **password management system** across all Sabha emails and service providers to ensure there is no key person risk.
- **Onboarding** of a Safeguarding Advisor, Technology Consultant, Marketing Consultant and Project Manager.

The Committee have additional projects within the pipeline which they strive to implement in the remainder of 2024/ 2025.

The aforementioned updates and those documented in the previous Audit reports (December 2022, September 2023 and February 2024) highlight a positive shift in the Sabha's culture.

The Committee will continue to oversee the open audit issues and will ensure that they are addressed in timely manner. In addition, they will ensure that all completed actions (as highlighted within this report) are effectively embedded and operating as required.



1. Strategy

Detail:

There is no strategy in place to define how the Committee is planning to achieve its manifesto goals and constitutional objectives.

In the absence of a well-defined strategy, projects, programmes and initiatives are unstructured, unclear and implemented on an ad hoc basis. Furthermore, it is unclear how much time, resource (people and/ or technology) and finances are required to implement key projects, programmes and initiatives.

As a result, there is a risk that the Committee is unable to achieve their goals and objectives and a risk that the Sangat's money is being inappropriately managed and utilised.

Action Plan:

The Committee needs to create and implement a strategy which sets out how they are planning to achieve their manifesto goals and the Gurdwara's constitutional objectives.

Follow Up Assessment

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the September 2023 update.

The strategy needs to include (but not be limited to): a list of key projects, programmes and initiatives that the Committee want to implement, including timeframes, finances required, assigned owners and resources required (people and/ or technology).

August 2024 Update:

Since the February 2024 update, the Committee have implemented the project management software tool, "Monday.com". The tool is split across various functions within the Sabha and lists out the key projects, programmes and initiatives ("projects") the respective Committee members/ project owners are working on, including the status.

The Committee will continue to leverage the tool by; producing dashboards to monitor the progress of projects and assigning budgets to projects from 2025.

Conclusion: In Progress

The strategy needs to be reviewed and monitored at each Committee meeting, in order to track progress.

August 2024 Update:

The General Secretaries along with 3 Trustees review the projects logged within "Monday.com", every 2 weeks, to monitor progress and to discuss any issues or concerns. The strategy is yet to be formally reviewed and monitored at a Committee meeting.

Conclusion: In Progress



2. Governance Structure

Background

Significant enhancements are required to the governance structure, specifically:

- The monthly committee meeting does not include updates from all key operational functions as defined by the Committee structure (i.e. facilities, sports, etc).
- There is no issues, incidents and complaints log which appropriately assigns, tracks and monitors the issues, incidents and complaints to closure.
- The Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall Constitution has not been updated since March 2010.
- The committee meetings have not been shared on the Gurdwara website since March 2022.
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As a result, there is a lack of accountability amongst the Committee and a risk of key operational functions not being appropriately governed and managed.

Committee Action Plan

Sub-committees need to be set up for each of the key operational functions with a requirement of the sub-committees to provide monthly updates to the main committee highlighting key updates, issues and/ or approval requests.

Follow Up Assessment

September 2024 Update:

It was agreed by the General Secretaries that a Langar sub-committee Terms of Reference (ToR) was not required. Nevertheless, a Langar organisational chart has been created, including the list of dedicated volunteers.

With regards to the Technology sub-committee, a ToR is yet to be drafted and meetings are still not formally minuted. Nevertheless, Working Groups have been assembled to implement and manage any Technology projects/ Business As Usual (BaU) activities e.g., upgrading the conferencing system.

As noted in the February 2024 update, there are still no dedicated timeslots for the Social & Culture, Sports and Dharmic sub-committees/ functions.

Conclusion: In Progress



ISSUE DETAIL

The Committee meeting minutes should be uploaded to the Gurdwara website in a timely manner or made available (upon request) to ensure that the Sangat have full transparency.

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the September 2023 and February 2024 updates.

An issue, incident and complaints log needs to be created and actions need to be assigned to Committee members/committed volunteers. The log needs to be presented at each Committee meeting and needs to be monitored to closure.

Where appropriate, actions or tasks should be delegated to members of the Sangat who have the time, resources and skills to complete the required actions.



3. Policies and Procedures

Background

There are a lack of defined policies and procedures in place, and where policies and procedures do exist (e.g., NatWest HR policies), there has been no implementation or embeddedness to ensure that the policies and procedures are understood (through regular training) and adhered to.

Policies and procedures are required in order for the Gurdwara to set standards of behaviour and conduct. Examples of policies and procedures that do not exist include (but are not limited to):

- Safeguarding
- Approvals Process
- Use of Social Media
- Organising Events/ Socials on Gurdwara Premises
- Vendors Vetting and Onboarding
- Reserve and Investment Policy

This has resulted in a lack of consistency and accountability, all of which exposes the Gurdwara to unintended reputational, legal and financial risks.

Committee Action Plan

The Committee needs to document a list of policies and procedures across all key areas of the Gurdwara.

Follow Up Assessment

September 2024 Update:

Since the February 2024 update, the following policies and procedures, related to Safeguarding, have been implemented: Safeguarding policy and reporting procedure and an Affiliate Safeguarding agreement.

In addition, the Affiliations policy covers any events/ socials that occur on Gurdwara premises i.e., any organisation planning an event/ social on a Gurdwara premises will have to be reviewed and approved by the General Secretaries (as part of the Affiliations process) prior to the event/ social.

The Committee will continue to explore additional policies and procedures which may be needed in the near future i.e., Investment policy.

Conclusion: Complete



Policies and procedures need to be assigned to Committee members who will be responsible for the embedding of the policies and procedures and ensuring that they are kept up to date.

September 2024 Update:

Following on from the February 2024 update, a Safeguarding advisor has been onboarded and is responsible for all Safeguarding related policies and procedures

As noted, in the February 2024 update, policies across all areas have been appropriately assigned to the relevant Committee member/ sub-Committee.

Policies will be updated to include details on who the respective owners are and when the policies were last reviewed.

Conclusion: In Progress

Policies and procedures need to be embedded through:

- Ongoing mandatory training days for employees and committed volunteers;
- Workshop days for the Sangat; and
- Sharing policies and procedures on the Gurdwara website

September 2024 Update:

Following on from the February 2024 update:

- The Safeguarding advisor is in the process of implementing Safeguarding related training which will consist of various levels i.e., induction, skills building (a longer session) and CPD (app or web). In addition, where applicable the Safeguarding advisor has offered and provided any urgent training.
- The Committee is in the process of providing all staff with training on the newly implemented policies and procedures.

Conclusion: In Progress



4. Roles and Responsibilities

Background

There has been no gap analysis performed across key operational functions to highlight areas of the Gurdwara which require permanent staff (e.g., Facilities Manager), additional paid staff (e.g., Cleaners), committed volunteers and/ or external contractors. This has resulted in an over-reliance on the Sangat to perform key tasks which may lead to additional operational inefficiencies.

Specifically, examples of roles that require full time paid staff/ additional paid staff include (but are not limited to):

- **Facilities Manager:** Currently there is no one responsible for the maintenance of all Gurdwara Plant and Equipment (P&E) and the management of all service providers. The Gurdwara currently uses a “handyman” for quick fixes and repairs which has resulted in an overall lack of accountability whereby, the P&E is fixed only when it breaks/ requires urgent attention, changes to the P&E are made without updating the P&E blueprints, repairs are not in line with the current ascetics/ design of the Gurdwara and constant issues are occurring (e.g., the toilets constantly leaking).
- **Cleaners:** There are a limited number of cleaners across all Gurdwara sites resulting in a lack of regular cleaning, specifically the toilets, creating an over-reliance on the Sangat to perform these duties.

Action Plan:

The Committee needs to document all key operational functions which require permanent staff and/ or committed volunteers. This needs to be a collaborative process alongside the current employed staff to understand areas which may require additional resourcing.

The Committee also needs to consider their own strategy (i.e., proposed projects, programmes and initiatives) in order to assess operational functions which may require permanent staff, additional staff and/or external contractors.

Follow Up Assessment

September 2024 Update:

Since the February 2024 update, the following roles have been onboarded:

- Safeguarding lead
- Technology & Marketing lead
- Project Manager to support engagement events
- Langar team

The Committee is in the process of realigning roles and responsibilities. In addition, following on from the February 2024 update, all recommendations from the “Barristers Report” are being implemented by the Committee.

Conclusion: In Progress

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the February 2024 update.



Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined for all permanent staff and reassessed following the gap analysis to ensure that roles and responsibilities are appropriately and effectively distributed.

September 2024 Update:

Roles and responsibilities have been defined and documented for all permanent staff, albeit the daily checklist section within the roles and responsibility documents is still in draft.

The Committee are in the process of communicating the revised roles and responsibilities to all permanent staff.

Conclusion: In Progress



5. Employee Oversight

Background

There are no defined reporting lines in place to ensure that paid staff members and committed volunteers are being adequately monitored and reviewed, through regular performance reviews. This lack of accountability has resulted in instances of paid staff not fulfilling their responsibilities, not working their agreed hours and generally underperforming.

Furthermore, there are no Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks performed on paid staff and committed volunteers, specifically those working with children and vulnerable individuals. As a result, the Gurdwara is at risk of legal, financial and reputational damage should a member(s) of Sangat be victim to any harm or misconduct.

Action Plan:

The Gurdwara's organizational structure needs to be redesigned in line with the intended Strategy and Governance Structure (as noted in Issues 1 and 2).

Reporting lines need to be implemented across all paid staff members and committed volunteers.

The Committee needs to compile a list of committed volunteers to ensure they are also overseen on a regular basis and are appropriately vetted.

DBS checks need to be performed on all paid staff and committed volunteers. The checks need to be updated on a regular basis.

Follow Up Assessment

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the September 2023 update.

September 2024 Update:

The Committee have displayed the Committee organisational chart and list of Trustees across the Gurdwara sites and on the Sabha's website. Due to the fluidity of staff and volunteers it is not feasible to create or display an organisational chart across all areas. Nevertheless, where appropriate the Committee have created and displayed key staff lists e.g., at Park Avenue Gurdwara, a Langar organisational chart has been displayed, including the list of dedicated volunteers.

Conclusion: Complete

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the February 2024 update.

September 2024 Update:

Although this action was completed as of February 2024. It was noted that the Safeguarding Advisor is now responsible for the review and oversight of all DBS checks across all staff and dedicated volunteers i.e., those who are volunteering for events such as the Children's Summer camp. Furthermore, the Advisor is currently in the process of creating a central log which will trigger renewal alerts.

In addition, the Advisor is also creating a flow chart to simplify the process for someone who needs a DBS.

Conclusion: Complete



An assessment needs to be performed across all paid staff members and committed volunteers to determine whether or not they are capable or qualified for their role. Where appropriate, personal development training should be offered.

Performance assessments need to be performed for all staff members and committed volunteers on a frequent basis to ensure that assigned responsibilities are being appropriately and adequately performed and fulfilled. Any issues and/ or concerns need to be escalated to the respective Committee (sub-committee or main Committee) to determine the appropriate actions that need to be taken i.e., further training, formal warnings, etc.

September 2024 Update:

No further updates have been made since the February 2024 update was:

The Committee have implemented an employee appraisal process which the General Secretaries will use to evaluate the performance of all paid staff. Once the initial evaluations have been performed, the Committee will determine whether the current paid staff are capable and qualified for their roles.

Conclusion: In progress



6. Oversight of Gurdwara Affiliations

Detail:

There is no onboarding process or ongoing oversight performed over individuals/ groups who are affiliated with the Gurdwara, for example; sports clubs, social clubs, educational groups, charities and workshops.

In the absence of a robust onboarding process and regular oversight, there is a risk that the Gurdwara may be affiliated with individuals/ groups who may not adhere to the Gurdwara's policies, procedures and standards (e.g., DBS checks, health and safety standards, non-Sikh activities, etc). Furthermore, this may expose the Gurdwara to unintended reputational, financial and legal risks.

Action Plan:

Compile a list of all clubs, educational groups and workshops that are using the Gurdwara to facilitate their work.

Implement contracts/ agreements in place to ensure that the affiliates operate in line with the Gurdwara's requirements and expectations.

Assign Committee members/ committed volunteers to retrospectively perform a due diligence checks to ensure that the affiliates are aligned to the Gurdwara's standards and requirements.

Oversee the affiliates on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating in line with expectations, as per the contract/ agreement.

Follow Up Assessment

September 2024 Update:

The Committee have implemented an Affiliates policy, an annual attestation form which each affiliate will be required to sign and have designed an affiliations matrix to capture all key affiliations data. The matrix will also be leveraged to ensure that annual attestations are signed by all affiliates. The affiliations policy and process is now part of BAU activities.

In addition, the Safeguarding lead is:

- Leveraging the Affiliates log to ensure that an Affiliate safeguarding agreement is signed by each Affiliate.
- Performing ad-hoc Audits on the respective Affiliates to ensure that they are adhering to their Safeguarding requirements.

Conclusion: Complete



7. Finance & Cash Management

Detail:

There is no approved overall finance strategy that is periodically reviewed to assess appropriateness. As a result, is not possible to assess whether finances are spent in line with Gurdwara strategy and goals.

In addition, the management and handling of cash at the Gurdwara requires significant enhancements. Specifically:

- There is a lack of budgeting and forecasting to ensure that the Sangat's money is being appropriately utilised.
- The Treasurer(s) do not oversee the management and handling of all cash. As a result, there is a risk that the Gurdwara's finances are open to mishandling and/or inappropriate management or use.
- There is no accounting system in place to document and log cash payments which are non-Golak related (i.e., non-congregational cash offerings). Instead paper receipts are manually created for cash payments. As a result, there is a risk of cash being mishandled and for potential mis-conduct to occur.

Additional issues were noted during the audit, however due to security concerns the issues were not explicitly documented, instead they were verbally shared and discussed with the Committee.

Action Plan:

The Treasurer(s) need to develop, obtain formal approval of, and implement a periodically reviewed financial plan in line with overall Gurdwara strategy and goals.

Develop and implement a secure way to transport cash from the sites to the bank that includes appropriate oversight processes.

Where possible, the Committee need to implement cashless payments for all non-Golak related payments.

All receipts need to be electronically logged and produced.

Follow Up Assessment

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the September 2023 update.



8. Use of Gurdwara Facilities

Detail:

The current use of the Gurdwara's facilities and space needs to be reconsidered and reviewed to ensure it is being utilised in the best interest of the Sangat and is fit for the 21st century. Specifically,

- There are currently no private breastfeeding facilities in place.
- There are no unisex baby-changing facilities. The current facilities are limited to the Women's toilets, which are not always clean.
- The Gurdwara premises is currently being used for personal businesses, gains and promotions, which is not in line with the Gurdwara's constitution.
- The Gurdwara stage has previously been used for personal political agendas e.g., Boris Johnson election visit, which is not in line with the Gurdwara's constitution.
- The library is currently out of use and the books have been moved to the second floor. There is currently no oversight, maintenance and management of the library.

The notice boards are not updated in a timely manner, do not always provide relevant information and in some cases are out of date and no longer relevant.

Action Plan:

The Committee needs to strategically evaluate the current facilities and space by setting up workshops with the Sangat to understand what is required to develop the Gurdwara.

Follow Up Assessment

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the February 2024 update.



The Committee need to implement a plan in place which considers timeframes, finances requires and resources (people/ or technology) to ensure that the Sangat's money, time and resources are being effectively utilised.

September 2024 Update:

Since the February 2024 update, the Committee have implemented the project management software tool, "Monday.com". The tool is split across various functions within the Sabha and lists out the key projects, programmes and initiatives ("projects") the respective Committee members/ project owners are working on, including the status.

The Committee will continue to leverage the tool by; producing dashboards to monitor the progress of projects and assigning budgets to projects from 2025.

Conclusion: In Progress

The Committee needs to ensure all decisions are made in line with the Gurdwara's constitution. Any deviations should be documented in the Committee meeting minutes.

September 2024 Update:

As reflected within the Executive Summary, the Committee continue to evidence that they are making key decisions in line with the Gurdwaras constitution.

Conclusion: Complete



9. Property and Asset Utilisation

Detail:

The Gurdwara's properties are not utilised effectively and not in-line with the Gurdwara's objectives i.e., to be used for education and social projects etc. Specifically:

- There is no strategy in place to effectively manage the Gurdwara's portfolio of properties.
- There are instances of properties being used for general storage and parking. This includes (but is not limited to) outbuilding, sheds and lodges.
- There are instances of building space being occupied by unknown sevadars (volunteers).

As a result, there is a risk of lost opportunity whereby the Gurdwara can be generating passive revenue which can subsequently be reinvested into projects to benefit the Sangat e.g., education and social projects etc. In addition, a lack of oversight over the Gurdwara properties may result in the buildings being inappropriately used leading to potential legal, financial and reputational damage.

Action Plan:

For the portfolio of homes owned by the Gurdwara, the Committee needs to implement a robust lettings strategy.

For all other buildings owned by the Gurdwara (e.g., outbuildings, sheds and lodges), the Committee needs to implement a strategy to ensure that the buildings are being appropriately utilised in line with the Gurdwara's objectives.

Where necessary, any unauthorised occupants of the Gurdwara's houses and/ or buildings need to be removed immediately.

Follow Up Assessment

Conclusion: Complete

Details were provided in the September 2023 update.

