Item 5

11th October 2023

Glasgow City Council

Operational Performance Delivery and Scrutiny Committee

Report by: Councillor Maureen Burke, Convener

Contact: Duncan Black **Ext**: **74053**

Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee Annual Assessment

Purpose of Report:

To provide an Annual Assessment of the work of the Committee as required by Standing Order 31.

Recommendations:

Committee is asked to consider and note the Annual Assessment.

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Council's Standing Order 31 requires that an annual assessment of the work of each Scrutiny Committee shall be carried out to assess the effectiveness of the working of the committee and to assess any training needs of members and officers. The assessment will be carried out by the relevant Convener in years 1 and 2 and an independent assessment will be carried out in year 3 and every third year thereafter.

1.2 One year has now passed since the first meeting of the Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee (OPDSC) under the new Council term. This report provides a summary of the year 1 assessment.

1.3 OPDSC was re-established in May 2022 following the 2022 Local Government Elections. The Committee has representation from all 4 parties on the Council and the Convener and Vice Convener are members of the opposition, in line with recommended best practice. It has met every 4 weeks (out with recess).

1.4 The Terms of Reference were approved by Council on 19 May 2022, available here. In summary the remit of the Committee is: "To scrutinise and monitor the operational performance of all Council Family Group Services (services and ALEOs) in relation to the Council's policy objectives and performance targets".

2. Workplan

2.1 Following the 2022 Local Government Elections, the new Council plan was being developed whilst the first scheduled meetings of OPDSC took place. The Committee therefore agreed a short term, iterative workplan, focussing on induction matters and certain standard/recurring items, such as the Glasgow Household Survey and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

2.2 The Council Strategic Plan was agreed at Full Council in October 2022. The OPDSC was then tasked with monitoring the delivery of the Plan, and an updated workplan was agreed at the 16 November 2022 meeting. A key consideration was flexibility within the workplan to enable the Strategic Plan to be scrutinised through a cost of living lens; and address areas of Service activity that may arise in response to cost of living issues. This reflected the narrative set out in the Strategic Plan which highlighted that the Council agreed to prioritise cost of living measures in the delivery of core services. The November meeting also considered a new performance template to help enhance scrutiny of performance reports being presented by Services and ALEOs.

2.3 For the remainder of the year's work of the Committee, the most relevant missions from the Council Plan relating to the cost of living crisis were selected for focussed scrutiny.

2.4 During 2022/23, the Committee also received updates from officers on the actions arising from the Internal Audit review of the Council's Performance Management arrangements. Significant work has been completed on a new Performance Manual, which is designed to address the key actions agreed as part of the audit, and the new manual was considered by OPDSC on 16 August 2023. Similarly, on 31 May 2023, the Committee considered a refreshed ALEO Governance Framework, designed to enhance the Council's scrutiny of ALEO performance.

2.5 All Committee Members were invited to input into the workplan. Members are welcome at any time to raise suggestions with the officers that support the committee or directly with the Convener.

3. Call ins

3.1 Scrutiny committees are responsible for hearing any call in of Council decisions. The call in process is designed to allow members to subject decisions by the City Administration Committee to further scrutiny and to make further recommendation for action. There were no Call ins for OPDSC to consider during the first year of meetings.

4. Attendance

4.1 The Committee continued to meet in a hybrid format, allowing Committee Members, officers, and observers, to attend virtually online or in person. Generally this approach has worked well, enabling a broadly high level of attendance by Committee Members. However, for some meetings, in person attendance remained lower than online attendance and this is noted under review of effectiveness at paragraph 6.2 below.

4.2 Meetings are recorded and webcast, enabling access to the Committee's business by members of the public and other stakeholders in accordance with Open Government commitments.

5. Development needs

5.1 The Committee received an initial induction session at its meeting on 17 August 2022. No specific requests for additional training were raised during the following year, but a further session was arranged for the Committee on 16 August 2023, run via the Improvement Service. This was well attended and resulted in strong discussion around the meaning of scrutiny and workings of scrutiny committees.

5.2 Committee Members are encouraged to raise any additional areas of training or development that would assist them in their roles on the Committee. This can be done via the Convener, Vice Convener, support officers, or via the Business Bureau for any more generic training.

6. Effectiveness of the working of the Committee

6.1 Whilst the workplan of the Committee was unusually iterative during the last year, this was unavoidable due to the sequencing of the Council Plan following the 2022 Local Government Election. Feedback on this approach is welcome, but it is the Convener's view that this enabled agile focus on the cost of living crisis, whilst maintaining the throughput of other Committee business in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

6.2 As noted above, attendance at Committee by Members has been generally good, but in person attendance is often lower than online attendance. It is the Convener's view that in person attendance does result in better discussion and scrutiny and so Members are encouraged to attend meetings in person wherever possible, taking account of the many other commitments on their time.

6.3 The quality of reports being brought forward by officers has been generally very good. The performance updates on the Strategic Plan have benefited from the revised corporate template. Any suggestions on improvements to the reports being presented to Committee are welcome and can be fed back to the Convener or lead officers.

6.4 One of the challenges of OPDSC as a scrutiny committee is that Members can ask questions about a wide variety of matters, in particular where broad performance reports are brought forward by Services. Officers continue to try and answer questions wherever possible during the course of the meeting, but sometimes specific or detailed questions need to be taken away for full answers to be provided by the relevant service or ALEO. However, a "Q&A" standing item has been added to the Committee's agenda to allow these answers to be fed back to the whole Committee at the next scheduled meeting, and allow for any further discussion. This also ensures that the information being provided is done so in the public domain and that a clear record is maintained. It is recognised that Members of the Committee would like all questions to be able to be answered at the meeting, but there is a balance to be struck between this and a reasonable expectation of attendance by what could potentially be a wide range of Council officers.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None
Legal:	None
Personnel:	None
Procurement:	None

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes	Not applicable as this is a review of Committee effectiveness.

2021-25? Please specify.	
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	No significant impact
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Not applicable as this is not a policy / proposal.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	Not applicable as this is a review of Committee effectiveness.
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	Not applicable as this is a review of Committee effectiveness.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Not applicable as this is a review of Committee effectiveness.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	No impact

8. Recommendations

8.1 Committee is asked to consider and note the Annual Assessment.