



Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee

Report by: Head of Audit and Inspection / Head of Policy and Corporate Governance

Contact: Jillian Campbell/ Michelle Booth

NET ZERO AND CLIMATE PROGRESS MONITORING CITY POLICY COMMITTEE

RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS

Purpose of Report

To advise members of the main findings from the recent independent assessment of the Net Zero and Climate Change Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee, undertaken as required by the Council's Standing Orders.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report.
- 2) Agree to the implementation of the action plan, to be led by the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair; and
- 3) Refer the report for inclusion in the consolidated report to Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ☐

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐

consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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 Chair in years 1 and 2 and an independent assessment will be carried out in year 3 and every third year thereafter.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of the year 3 independent assessment of the Net Zero and Climate Change Progress Monitoring (Net Zero) City Policy Committee which was undertaken by the Head of Audit and Inspection and Head of Policy and Corporate Governance.
- 1.3 The Net Zero City Policy Committee has representation from all parties on the Council and the Chair is a member of the Scottish Greens and Vice Chair is a member of the SNP.
- 1.4 The Committee meets every six weeks (outwith recess). The current Chair was appointed by the Council in May 2022 and has been in post for all meetings within this assessment period.
- 1.5 The Terms of Reference for the Committee were approved in May 2022 and are available [here](#). In summary, the remit of the Committee is:

To fulfil the functions of policy development (including consideration of equalities issues) as they relate to net zero and climate progress, services and activities. These functions include:

- *Climate Plan and associated plans*
- *Climate Adaptation Plan*
- *Air Quality and Low Emission Zone*
- *Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Glasgow Tree Plan*
- *Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy*
- *Flood Risk Management*
- *Cross-Council Sustainability and Climate Action 2.*

In addition to the above functions, this committee will receive reporting from the activities of the Council's Just Transition Working Group.

- 1.6 As part of this review, the Chair, Cllr Reid-McConnell was interviewed as was the Lead Officer for the Committee, Gavin Slater, Head of Sustainability. A number of Committee meetings were also viewed either in person or through viewing the recording.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Generally, the Committee is operating effectively with no major areas of concern identified. Workplans and agendas are agreed in advance and agendas are well managed by NRS officers.
- 2.2 The Chair is clear on her role and demonstrates a strong understanding of the papers that are presented at Committee and manages the questions from other Members effectively ensuring that everyone gets a chance to ask questions.
- 2.3 The Committee reflects the political make up of the Council and is chaired by a Member who is not part of the administration. Committee attendance is very high with all Members generally attending regularly or having a substitute attend in their place. However attendance in person by Committee Members is often low, with generally less than half of members being in person which can affect the level of discussion.
- 2.4 One of the challenges of the Committee is that scope is fairly narrow but that some of the papers cover some complex areas and the workload and volume of papers can be intense. This can lead to challenges in engaging Committee Members in the papers. It is noted that there is a small core group of Members that generally ask questions related to the papers. To combat this, NRS officers have introduced workshops and site visits outwith the Committees to try and engage the Committee Members more. To date these have had mixed attendance.
- 2.5 The workplan is regularly reviewed and the Committee is provided with an update on the workplan every circa. 6 months. In the last 12 months, all areas on the Committee terms of reference have been covered by papers presented to the Committee. Although officers have also observed that some areas of the Committee's remit have less focus than other areas. It is also noted that there are some areas which would potentially sit better within the remit of the Net Zero City Policy Committee which are currently reported elsewhere, for example Active Travel.
- 2.6 There is a well established pre-agenda process for the Committee. However, the current way of working by officers supporting the Committee requires papers to be submitted a number of weeks in advance of the Committee. This brings added administration for officers and may mean that information is less up to date by the time of the Committee. It is also noted that officer involvement in the lead up to the Committee is significant.
- 2.7 Officer support and attendance at Committee is strong. NRS officers have established an area of good practice that should be considered for replication in other committees: to proactively encourage attendance from officers that do not

ordinarily attend or present papers to observe committees as development opportunities.

- 2.8 Whilst the frequency of meetings is six weekly (outwith recess), officers observed that the frequency could be reduced which may alleviate some of the pressures on officers and enable the Committee to focus more on delivery of the strategic priorities related to carbon reduction.
- 2.9 No significant issues were identified with the quality of papers being brought to the Committee, however where questions are unable to be answered by officers at Committee, there is no set process for ensuring that these are followed up and answered. Other Committees have adopted a Question and Answer paper included on the agenda for the next meeting, which could be considered.
- 2.10 One minor observation is that the Committee name doesn't reflect the Committee's remit and the Council's focus on the Climate emergency.

3. Role of the Committee

- 3.1 The Committee has a very wide and varied remit, and the Chair/Vice Chair and senior officers are clear on the remit of the Committee.

4. Committee papers including Work Plan

- 4.1 Committee papers were found to be of a high standard, although most are asking the Committee to note or consider the contents of the reports.
- 4.2 The Committee workplan is regularly reviewed and a plan for the coming 6-month period is presented at the January and August meetings.
- 4.3 There is no overall workplan for the Committee, which details the areas to be covered by the Committee over the full Council term of five years and the link to the Council Plan and Grand Challenges.
- 4.4 There is a limited amount of performance information that is presented to the Net Zero City Policy Committee. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Council has an Operational Delivery and Scrutiny Committee, in order to fulfil its role in relation to policy development, it is important that the Net Zero City Policy Committee is aware of the performance of the areas under its remit.
- 4.5 Where there are any questions that cannot be answered during the meeting, there should be a process to ensure that these are circulated to all Members.

5. Committee Meetings

- 5.1 The frequency of the meetings, at 6 weekly, worked for officers and the Committee. However, both the Chair and the senior officer are of the view that frequency could be reduced and still be practical but would take account of work pressures and reduced officer resource.
- 5.2 The Chair gave all Members the opportunity to ask questions both from within the Committee room and those attending online.
- 5.3 Although the hybrid model is available it is noted that the majority of Members attend the meeting online whilst officers tended to attend in person.
- 5.4 There is a very high attendance rate from Committee Members, with all but one regularly attending or on the odd occasion having a substitute attend of their behalf. However, it was noted that there are a few core Members that regularly ask questions/actively participate in the meetings.

6. Action Plan

- 6.1 An action plan is included below, detailing areas where improvements could be made to the current arrangements for the Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee.

6. Action Plan

No.	Observation	Recommendation
1	There is no overall workplan for the Committee, which details the areas to be covered by the Committee over the full Council term of five years and the link to the Council Plan and Grand Challenges.	At the start of each new Council term, a 5 year workplan should be considered for the Committee which is linked to the Council Plan. This will help ensure that the Committee is kept on track in delivering it's role. The five year workplan should be reviewed on a regular basis.
2	There are some areas of work that could sit under the remit of the Net Zero City Policy Committee, that are currently reported elsewhere, e.g. Active Travel.	As part of the wider Committee review, consideration should be given to the remit of the Net Zero City Policy Committee and whether any of the remits from other Committees would sit better within the Net Zero City Policy Committee.
3	There is a limited amount of performance information that is presented to the Net Zero City Policy Committee. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Council has an Operational Delivery and Scrutiny Committee, in order to fulfil its role in relation to policy development, it is important that the Net Zero City Policy Committee is aware of the performance of the areas under its remit.	As part of the next wider Committee review, consideration should be given as to the level and frequency of performance information that should be presented to all of the City Policy Committees.
4	Due to the complex nature of some of the reports that are presented, officers have introduced site visits and workshops to try and engage the Committee Members.	As part of the ongoing development of the Committee and encouraging engagement, officers should continue to seek opportunities to bring the issues under the Committees remit to life by the use of workshops and site visits.
5	The current frequency of meetings could be reduced and still cover the remit of the Committee whilst reducing the pressures on officers and Committee Members.	As part of the wider Committee review, consideration should be given to the frequency of meetings to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Any opportunity to reduce pressures on officers and Committee Members should be taken.

6	Where questions are not able to be answered by officers attending the Committee, the process to follow up on these and ensure they are answered could be improved.	Consideration should be given to adopting a process to ensure that any questions not able to be answered during the Committee are circulated to all Members. .
7	A minor observation, but the current title of the Committee is not reflective of the Council's strategic priorities.	As part of the wider Committee review, consideration should be given to the name of this Committee, taking into account the potential increase in remit as detailed in recommendation 2.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: None arising from this report

Legal: None arising from this report

Personnel: None arising from this report

Procurement: None arising from this report

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify. Not applicable

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? Not applicable

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. Not applicable

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: Not applicable

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? Not applicable

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? Not applicable

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts: None arising from this report

8. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report.
- 2) Agree to the implementation of the action plan, to be led by the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair; and
- 3) Refer the report for inclusion in the consolidated report to Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee.