



**Glasgow City Council**

**Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee**

**Report by: Director of Communication and Corporate Governance**

**Contact: Colin Edgar 70901**

**Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods 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 Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods 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 by the lead officer and 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 Convener 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 Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee which was carried out by the Director of Communication and Corporate Governance.
- 1.3 The committee consists of members of the Scottish Green Party, Scottish Labour Party and Scottish National Party. The Chair is a member of the SNP and the Vice Chair is a member of the Scottish Greens.
- 1.4 The Committee meets every six weeks (outwith recess).
- 1.5 The Terms of Reference for the Committee 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 Council policies and services for environment, liveable neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood and community services. These functions include:*

- *liveable neighbourhoods and public realm*
- *active travel*
- *transport infrastructure*
- *highway maintenance and improvements;*
- *lighting strategy;*
- *parks maintenance, development, regeneration and events;*
- *cleansing and street environment;*
- *waste and recycling*
- *environmental health;*
- *trading standards;*
- *scientific services*
- *Nuclear Free zones*
- *Food plan;*
- *Community safety including Safe Glasgow and Glasgow Violence against Women Partnership;*
- *estates energy management;*
- *Property and Land Strategy*
- *People Make Glasgow Communities;*
- *Local environmental and neighbourhood infrastructure improvement funds*
- *Any other issues not within the Terms of Reference of any other Policy Development Committee*

These functions are largely contained within Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability with limited overlap with other services and ALEOs.

The split of work between committees focussing on NRS has been stable for some time and does not appear to need to be reviewed now.

- 1.6 As part of this review, the chair and lead officer were interviewed and committees were observed in person or webcast recordings.

## **2. Findings**

- 2.1 The committee appears to operate collegially and without rancour. Disagreements between members appear to be sincerely about political principle and where questions to officers are robust that seems to be sincerely in pursuit of eliciting information.
- 2.2 The Chair is also of the view that the committee operates collegially. She has spent some time considering the behaviour of members of the committee and is confident in demanding that members treat each other, officers presenting and indeed herself with respect. She perceives that where she has brought people's behaviour to their attention the behaviour has stopped.
- 2.3 The Lead Officer is clear on his role. He perceives the chair to be playing a significant role in ensuring the committee runs smoothly.
- 2.4 It appears however that officers sometimes spend too long and go into too much detail in presenting papers. The reviewer's observation is that members asking questions are more often than not asking questions based on their reading of the paper, rather than responding to the presentation of the paper. There is an opportunity to use the committee's time more effectively here.
- 2.5 Attendance at the committee in person, as opposed to online, tends to be low. It is not clear that when a majority of members are online the committee is able to run as effectively as if there was a majority in the room. Technology problems can also have an outsized impact on the committee when the majority are online. There has recently been a request to consider whether the Full Council operating effectively with a large number of members online and the chair and Lead Officer may want to consider this question for the committee specifically.
- 2.6 The workplan is regularly reviewed.
- In common with other committees ELN should consider whether a five year workplan covering the council plan to be agreed next year would be appropriate.
  - The Lead Officer is of the view that it would be better for the committee to work more closely to a 1 year plan, rather than effectively having six month plans.
  - Papers are sometimes not ready for the agreed date and this can lead to congestion at the following committee. Whilst this is not ideal the chair and the Lead Officer demonstrate flexibility in managing committees with larger agendas and making sure the committee's workplan is delivered.

- 2.7 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. Given that the size of agendas can change from meeting to meeting it might be better to consider circulating questions to members in writing outside of the meeting schedule.
- 2.8 The remit of the committee covers a lot of the same policy areas which lead constituents to contact members. While specific cases can sometimes illustrate a general point, there are other more appropriate avenues to pursue action on ward matters. It may be helpful to remind members that the MLU process is more appropriate.

### **3. Action Plan**

- 3.1 An action plan is included below, detailing areas where improvements could be made to the current arrangements for the Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee.

## 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   | Some of the officer presentations are very long and detailed. It is clear from members' questions that the papers have generally been read in advance and so long presentations may not always be necessary.                                     | The lead officer should give consideration to advising presenting officers to be more concise.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 3   | Attendance in person by members is sparse. Other than the chair there are often only one or two members physically present.                                                                                                                      | The chair should consider whether members are able to properly consider policy when the majority of members are not physically present. It may be appropriate to encourage members to attend in person.                                                                               |
| 4   | There appears to be no formal process for questions not answered in the meeting to be answered in writing. A number of committees have a process of recording questions and answering them in writing for the attention of the entire committee. | Consideration should be given to capturing questions which are not able to be answered during the committee and circulating these in writing to all members.                                                                                                                          |
| 5   | The frequency of meetings appears to be appropriate. The length of meetings varies and heavier agendas can be quite long, however it does not appear that the workload is unmanageable.                                                          | The lead officer and the chair should keep the frequency of meetings under review.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 6   | Members can sometimes use the committee to pursue ward matters. This is not generally appropriate for a committee whose purpose is policy development.                                                                                           | The Chair and Lead Officer should remind members that the MLU is the appropriate route to resolve ward matters.                                                                                                                                                                       |

## 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:

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