

# Council Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/20



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the second annual effectiveness report for Full Council. As Members will be aware, as part of their interim assessment of the Council's governance arrangements in 2016, CIPFA recommended that committees review the extent to which they had operated within their Terms of Reference, through an annual report. This year, the Council was the first in Scotland to be awarded the CIPFA Mark of Excellence in Governance, and the annual effectiveness report was again highlighted by CIPFA as one of the examples of good governance implemented by the Council. The annual effectiveness report also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance and enables officers and members to identify if any changes are required or desirable, for example to the Council and Committee Terms of Reference. The effectiveness report also contributes to the Council's Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the Council's Annual Accounts which are presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The annual report is a good mechanism for the Council to support the organisation's improvement journey by demonstrating the ways in which the Council, as the decision making body, supports the principle of the Target Operating Model and contributes to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, whilst also providing the opportunity to reflect on the business of the Council during 2019/20 and to look to the focus for 2020/21.
- 1.3 Throughout 2019/20, the Council made a number of significant decisions, many of which were taken at the budget meeting, where the Council set balanced budgets despite extremely challenging financial circumstances. It is pleasing to see the progress that has been made in relation to the Scheme of Governance as well as approval of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. As the Council's Armed Forces Champion, I was very pleased to see progress being made in terms of the Armed Forces accreditation process.
- 1.4 On a personal level, I was saddened by the passing of sitting Councillor Sandy Stuart in July 2019. Sandy had served his ward and the Council extremely well since first being elected in 2012 and I am sure I speak on behalf of all Members when I say he is greatly missed. Former Councillors Brett Hunt, Catriona Mackenzie and Stephen Flynn all stood down during 2019/20 and we thanked them for their service and wished them well in their future endeavours. As a result of the various by-elections we welcomed Councillors Sarah Cross, Jessica Mennie, and Audrey Nicoll and we also welcome newly elected Councillor Miranda Radley.
- 1.5 This annual report has been submitted to Council six months later than originally planned as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it is pleasing that the committee structure is back up and running and I would like to pay tribute to all staff across the organisation who have been involved in the Council's response to the pandemic.

It has been a very challenging time but together we are stronger and there have been so many examples of people going above and beyond the call of duty both within the organisation and across Aberdeen. As Lord Provost and 'Aberdeen's first citizen', I am extremely proud of the city.



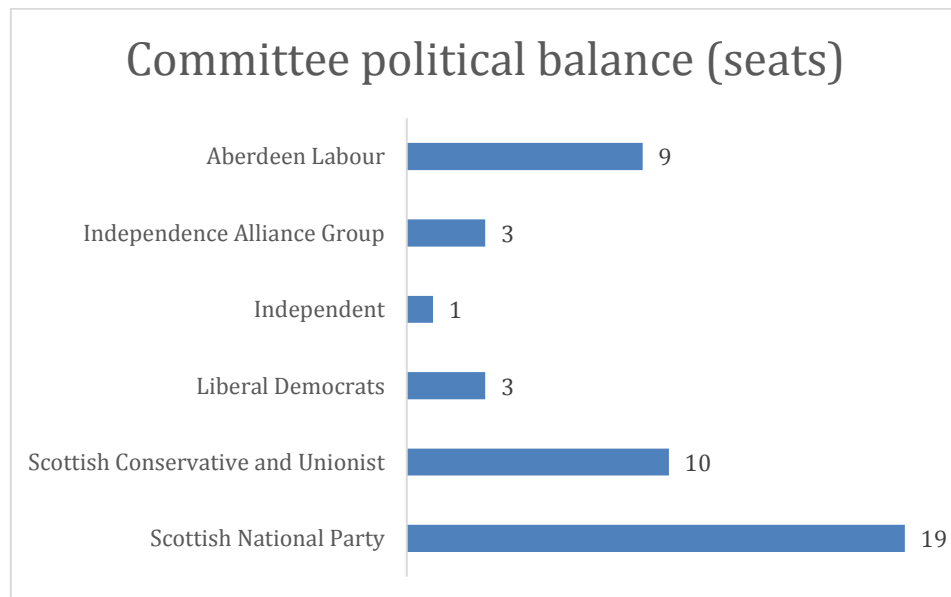
**Councillor Barney Crockett**  
**Lord Provost**

## 2. THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

- 2.1 The Council is the overall decision making body of the organisation. It is responsible for agreeing the Council's budget and setting Council Tax. Council delegates the discharge of its functions to various committees and joint committees, as well as officers under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. However, any delegation to a committee or an officer does not prevent the Council from determining the matter or exercising the power so delegated.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference for Council, as approved by Council in March 2019, are appended to the report.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL DURING 2019/2020

- 3.1 The Council has 45 Elected Members and the composition is presented below.



## 4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 4.1 There were several membership changes during 2019/20. Former Councillor Sandy Stuart sadly passed away in July 2019 and former Councillor Brett Hunt resigned his position, both were Councillors for the Bridge of Don ward. At the subsequent by-election on 3 October 2019, Councillors Sarah Cross and Jessica Mennie were elected.
- 4.2 Former Councillor Catriona Mackenzie resigned in August 2019. At the subsequent by-election on 21 November 2019, Councillor Audrey Nicoll was elected to the Torry/Ferryhill ward.

- 4.3 Former Councillor Stephen Flynn MP resigned following the Council meeting on 3 March 2020. Although the by-election on 5 November 2020 was outwith the reporting period, it is noted that Councillor Miranda Radley was elected to the Kincorth/Nigg/Cove ward.

## 5. MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances
Councillor Barney Crockett, Lord Provost	5	5
Councillor Jennifer Stewart, Depute Provost	5	5
Councillor Al-Samarai	5	5
Councillor Allan	5	5
Councillor Allard	5	5
Councillor Alphonse	5	5
Councillor Bell	5	5
Councillor Boulton	5	5
Councillor Cameron	5	5
Councillor Cooke	5	5
Councillor Copland	5	5
Councillor Cormie	5	5
Councillor Cross	3	3
Councillor Delaney	5	5
Councillor Donnelly	5	5
Councillor Jackie Dunbar	5	5
Councillor Lesley Dunbar	5	5
Councillor Duncan	5	5
Councillor Flynn	5	5
Councillor Graham	5	5
Councillor Grant	5	5
Councillor Greig	5	5
Councillor Henrickson	5	5
Councillor Houghton	5	5
Councillor Hunt	1	0
Councillor Hutchison	5	5
Councillor Imrie	5	5
Councillor John	5	5
Councillor Laing	5	5
Councillor Lumsden	5	5
Councillor Macdonald	5	5
Councillor MacGregor	5	5
Councillor Avril MacKenzie	5	5
Councillor Catriona Mackenzie	1	1

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances
Councillor McLellan	5	5
Councillor McRae	5	5
Councillor Malik	5	5
Councillor Mason	5	5
Councillor Mennie	3	3
Councillor Alex Nicoll	5	5
Councillor Audrey Nicoll	3	3
Councillor Noble	5	5
Councillor Reynolds	5	5
Councillor Sellar	5	5
Councillor Sandy Stuart	1	0
Councillor Townson	5	5
Councillor Wheeler	5	5
Councillor Yuill	5	5

## 6. MEETING CONTENT

6.1 During the 2019/20 reporting period (29 April 2019 to 30 April 2020), the Council had 5 meetings and considered a total of 21 reports.

### 6.2 Terms of Reference

Of the 21 reports received the following table details how the reports aligned to the Terms of Reference for Council. Some reports did not fall within specific Terms of Reference and were reported to Council in terms of statute, or in terms of Standing Order 48.7 - Council can determine any matter which would otherwise fall to be determined by a committee or sub committee.

Terms of Reference	Count of Terms of Reference
1	1
2	5
5	3
7	4
8	1
10	1
13	2

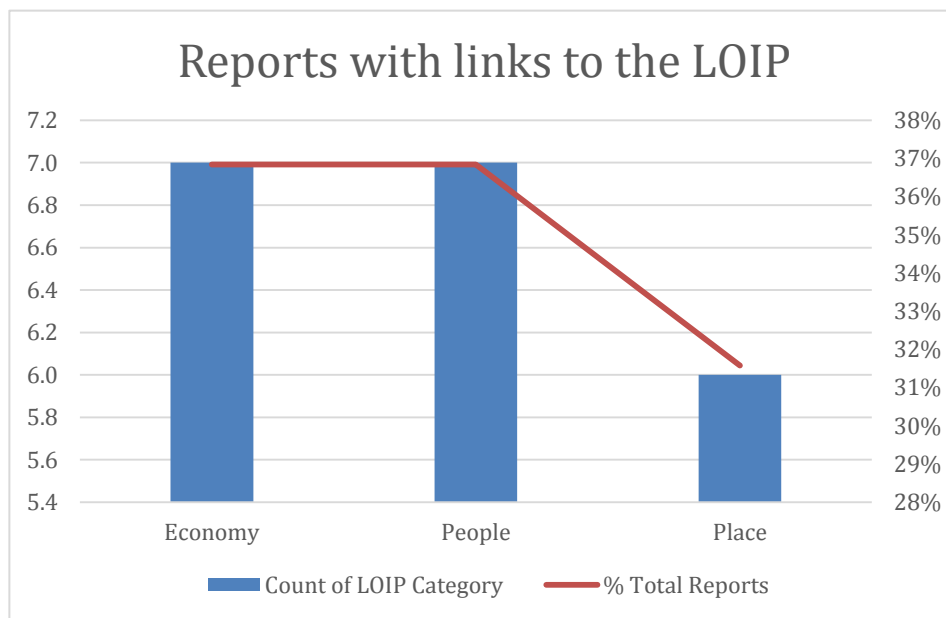
6.3 During the course of 2019/20 the Council received reports under seven of the fifteen sections of the Terms of Reference, with the highest number of reports relating to the setting of a balanced budget, including the setting of fees and charges.

6.4 Of the eight sections of the Terms of Reference where there were no reports, the Council has little or no control in relation to three of them (4, 6, and 11), i.e. they either rely on consent issued by Scottish Ministers, the submission of a planning application which requires a pre determination hearing, or reports being received by the Standards Commission for Scotland. In relation to the remaining five sections (3, 9, 12, 14 and 15), no reports were required - for example no Appointment Panels or Working Groups required to be established, however those Terms of Reference need to remain in place as reports will undoubtedly fall under those Terms of Reference in the future.

6.5 Generally, there has been a reduction in the number of reports being considered by Full Council compared to previous years. This can be partly attributed to committees considering business which may have otherwise been considered at Full Council. Historically, Full Council has been viewed as a catch all destination for decision making, and the place for reports to be submitted if they missed the committee they should have been reported to. The empowerment of committees through the Scheme of Governance together with better forward planning of reports has contributed to a more focused agenda at meetings of Full Council.

**6.6 Local Outcome Improvement Plan**

The following table details of the 21 reports how many had a link to the themes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.





## 6.7 Reports and Council Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Council's consideration of the 21 reports presented to it throughout the year.

	Total	% Total Reports
Confidential	0	0%
Exempt	0	0%
Number of reports where the Council amended officer recommendations	7	33%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	14	67%
Number of reports or service updates requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	3	14%
Number of decisions delayed for further information	0	0%
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour and the ethical values of Public Life	0	0%
Number of late reports received (i.e. reports not available for inspection by members of the public at least three clear days before a meeting)	0	0%

## 6.8 Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public

Number of notices of motion	10
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended and the specific Standing Orders suspended	0
Number of deputations or other indicators of interface with the public, i.e. engagement and social media.	0
Number of petitions considered	0
Number of Meetings held by the Convener with other Conveners, relevant parties, to discuss joint working and key issues being raised at other Committee meetings	Regular meetings held with Co-Leaders

## 7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 Training sessions specific to the various committees have taken place and details of these are contained within their annual reports.
- 7.2 More generally, training sessions for all elected members on topics such as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, data protection law, guidance on appointments to outside bodies and ALEOs, equalities, and the Councillors' Code of Conduct have been delivered throughout 2019/20.
- 7.3 Induction training covering a wide variety of topics was also delivered to the new elected members, Councillors Cross, Mennie and Audrey Nicoll, upon their election in October and November 2019.

## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 21 declarations of interest were made by Councillors during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

## 9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 Civic leadership and engagement is at the heart of the Target Operating Model approved by the Council in August 2017. The values and principles of civic leadership and engagement are being driven through the Council's transformation programme.
- 9.2 There have been a number of good examples of civic engagement in the course of business submitted to Council in 2019/20, for example in relation to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the review of polling districts and polling places.
- 9.3 Further civic engagement activities are set out in each committee's individual annual effectiveness report.

## 10. OFFICER SUPPORT TO COUNCIL

Officer	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitute Attendances
Chief Executive	5	5	
Chief Operating Officer	5	5	
Director of Customer Services	5	5	
Director of Resources	5	5	
Chief Officer - Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership	5	5	
Chief Officer - Finance	5	4	

Officer	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitute Attendances
Chief Officer - Governance	5	4	1
Chief Officer - Integrated Children's & Family Services	5	5	

## 11. EXECUTIVE LEAD'S COMMENTS

- 11.1 In March 2018, the Council approved its first Scheme of Governance. This was a significant step for the Council and in keeping with the journey to attaining the CIPFA Mark of Excellence. The Scheme of Governance was updated in 2019 and 2020, and officers will report back to Full Council in 2021 following another annual review. The practice of annually reviewing the Scheme of Governance, together with data from the annual effectiveness reports, will help members and officers to identify improvements to the Council's decision making structures and help ensure that those arrangements remain effective.
- 11.2 On 3 March 2020, the Council approved its annual budget and noted the associated Council Delivery Plan. The delivery of the budget is monitored through the City Growth and Resources Committee whilst service performance is monitored against key categories by the relevant committees.
- 11.3 It is noted that 33% of reports with Council officer recommendations were amended, compared to the average for committees of 5%. However, some of these reports where recommendations were amended, were submitted to the Budget meeting and this is generally normal practice, with such reports rarely being unanimously approved.
- 11.4 No late reports were submitted to Full Council and no decisions on reports required to be delayed which evidences that business was appropriately managed and scheduled.
- 11.5 Finally, it is pleasing to note that Full Council has operated in a transparent manner, with no reports marked as exempt as a result of containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. It is acknowledged that on occasion reports need to be considered in private in terms of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, however it is reassuring that the number of instances where decisions have been taken in private has been minimised.

## 12. NEXT YEAR'S FOCUS

- 12.1 In March 2021, the Council will be asked to consider proposals following the annual review of the Scheme of Governance. Specific to Council, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed in line with the business submitted to Council and officers will reflect on whether any areas require refinement moving forward to ensure the efficient operation of the Council.
- 12.2 During the course of 2020/21, officers will progress the transformation programme to allow the Council to set a budget in a manner that strategically allocates resources against the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and associated strategies as envisaged by the Target Operating Model. The

outcome focused approach will be set out in the budget report and associated delivery plan due to come before Full Council in early 2021.

### 13. COMBINED COMMITTEE DATA

Total number of reports for Committees during the reporting period	318	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Number of confidential reports	3	1%
Number of exempt reports	26	8%
Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations	17	5%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	283	89%
Number of reports or service updates requested by Members during consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	25	8%
Number of reports delayed for further information	0	
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour and the ethical values of Public Life	0	
Number of late reports received by the Committee	4	1%
Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees, in terms of Standing Order 33.1	0	
Number of notices of motion	1	
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended	1 - SO 14.1	
Number of deputations or other indicators of interface with the public, i.e. engagement and social media	8	
Number of petitions considered	1	

**Council Terms of Reference**  
**Approved by Council on 4 March 2019**

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

The Council itself reserves the following functions:

1. The setting of council tax in accordance with s93(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or the setting of a reduced amount of council tax under s94 of that Act or paragraph 3 of Schedule 7 to that Act.
2. The setting of a balanced budget annually, including the setting of fees and charges.
3. The borrowing of money as provided for in section 56(6)(d) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
4. The approval of any annual investment strategy or annual investment report required by any consent issued by Scottish Ministers under s40 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
5. The approval of the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy.
6. The determining of an application for planning permission for a development where a pre determination hearing is held in terms of s38A(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
7. The appointment of committees and the number and allocation of seats, the appointment and removal from office of the Lord Provost, Depute Provost, Leader or Co Leaders and/ or Depute Leader, Business Manager and Depute Business Manager, a convener for each committee and a vice convener as appropriate and the approval of senior councillor allowances.
8. The approval of the Local Development Plan.
9. The approval of an Administration's political priorities.
10. Consideration of each committee's annual report of its effectiveness.
11. The consideration, where required, of reports by both the Standards Commission for Scotland and the Financial Conduct Authority, and the overseeing of members' standards of conduct.
12. The establishing of Appointment Panels in accordance with Standing Orders.
13. The approval of the Council's Scheme of Governance.
14. The approval of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils.
15. The establishment of Working Groups.

Executive Lead: Chief Executive

