

# Public Protection Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2020/21



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am pleased to introduce the third annual effectiveness report for the Public Protection Committee. This maintains the good practice in governance terms and evidences our continued commitment following successfully receiving CIPFA accreditation.
- 1.2 The Public Protection Committee (PPC) performs an important role in the Council's overall public protection arrangements. It continues to provide local democratic oversight to key areas including child and adult protection, environmental health and resilience. It also discharges the Council's obligations in terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
- 1.3 I continue to seek to bring a collaborative approach to the business of the Public Protection Committee not just with elected members, but with all officers, and the Council's partners, including the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland. I truly value our partners' contribution to the Public Protection Committee. I continue to look forward to maintaining the strength of our relationships which are essential as the city looks to deliver the aspirations of the most recently refreshed Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 1.4 I have appreciated the support of council officers in delivering the business of the PPC particularly against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. I extend my personal thanks to the Police and Fire Service for continuing to keep us safe in these extraordinary difficult and uncertain days.
- 1.5 As Convener, I have strived, with the cooperation of the committee, to keep public safety at the forefront of all we deliver for the city and the safety of the residents of Aberdeen.
- 1.6 We have been hampered this year in much of our delivery of council and partner services due to the necessary operational response to the pandemic, however I express admiration for the innovative processes and procedures adapted, modified and created by officers and our partners to assist us through the pandemic.
- 1.7 I remain in hope and trust that as we return to a new-normal, we continue to fulfil our public service duty, now and in the future whilst recognising the changes placed upon us all by Covid-19.

My very best and warm regards

Councillor Jennifer Stewart, Convener



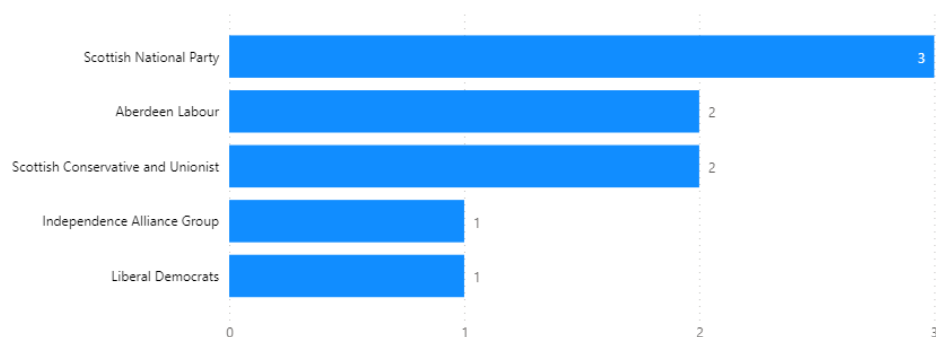
## 2. THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1** The role of the Committee is to maintain assurance overview of the statutory regulatory duties placed on the Council in certain areas of public protection and on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland.
- 2.2** The Committee discharges this function by receiving assurance reports from the respective council services and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE DURING 2020/2021

- 3.1** The Public Protection Committee has nine Elected Members.

Committee Political Balance (Seats)



## 4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 4.1** During the reporting period, Councillor Graham replaced Councillor Duncan as a Member and simultaneously adopted the role of Vice-Convener from Councillor Lesley Dunbar who remains a member of the committee. Councillors Allard, Henrickson and MacGregor joined the Committee in place of Councillors Al-Samarai, Cameron and Townson.

## 5. MEMBER ATTENDANCE

| Member           | Total Anticipated Attendances | Total Attendances | Substitutions | Nominated Substitute |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Dell Henrickson  | 1                             | 1                 |               |                      |
| Gordon Graham    | 1                             | 1                 |               |                      |
| Christian Allard | 2                             | 1                 | 1             | Gordon Townson       |
| Neil MacGregor   | 2                             | 1                 | 1             | David Cameron        |
| Jennifer Stewart | 5                             | 5                 |               |                      |
| John Wheeler     | 5                             | 4                 | 1             | Ross Grant           |
| Lesley Dunbar    | 5                             | 5                 |               |                      |
| Martin Greig     | 5                             | 5                 |               |                      |
| Ryan Houghton    | 5                             | 5                 |               |                      |

## 6. MEETING CONTENT

6.1 During the 2020/2021 reporting period (1 May 2020 to 31 October 2021), the Committee had 5 meetings and considered a total of 40 reports.

### 6.2 Terms of Reference

Of the 40 reports received, the following table details how the reports aligned to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

#### Terms of Reference

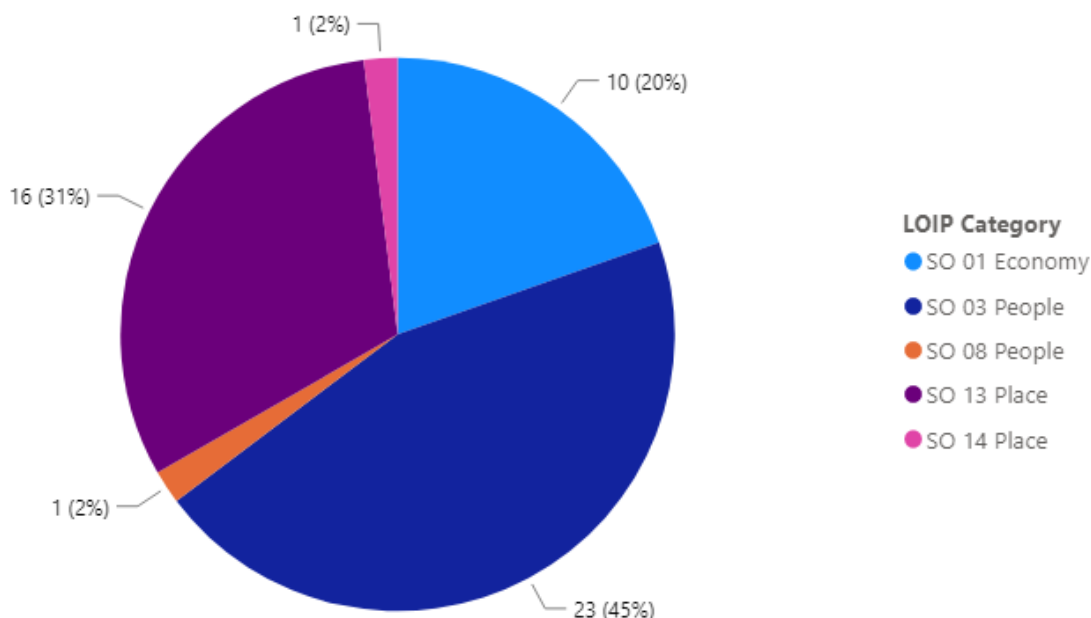
| Terms of Reference                  | Count of Terms of Reference |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| General Delegations To Committees 8 | 1                           |
| Purpose of Committee 1.2            | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.1              | 5                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.1.1            | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.1.3            | 2                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.2              | 5                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.3              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.4              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 1.5              | 2                           |
| Remit of Committee 2.1              | 4                           |
| Remit of Committee 2.3              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 2.4              | 2                           |
| Remit of Committee 2.5              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 3.1              | 3                           |
| Remit of Committee 3.2              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 4.1              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 4.2              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 4.3              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 5.1              | 1                           |
| Remit of Committee 5.5              | 2                           |
| Remit of Committee 5.6              | 6                           |
| Remit of Committee 5.7              | 5                           |

- 6.3 During the course of 2020/2021 the Public Protection Committee received reports under all of its Terms of Reference. This would indicate that the Committee has discharged its role throughout the course of the reporting period and received a broad range of assurance and explanation.
- 6.4 Most of the reports considered related to provision of assurance or service delivery which enhanced the Committee’s understanding of methods used to achieve assurance and effectiveness.
- 6.5 There have been no areas where reports were not received.
- 6.6 The majority of reports have fallen under Child and Adult Protection, whilst appropriate levels of scrutiny reports of Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service were also received.

**6.7 Local Outcome Improvement Plan**

The following table details how the reports had a link to the themes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. A report may cover cross over themes.

Reports with links to the LOIP



## 6.8 Reports and Committee Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Committee's consideration of the 40 reports presented to it throughout the year.

| Reports  | Total |
|--|-------|
| Number which were Exempt/Confidential  | 0     |
| Number of reports where the Committee has amended officer recommendations  | 20    |
| Number of reports approved unanimously   | 35    |
| Number of reports requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner                     | 8     |
| Number of Service Updates requested  | 0     |
| Number of decisions 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 (i.e. reports not available for inspection by members of the public at least three clear days before a meeting) | 0     |
| Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees in terms of Standing Order 33.1  | 0     |

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

One notice of motion was considered by the committee during the reporting period, no Standing Orders required to be suspended and no deputations or petitions were received.

## 7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 No Public Protection Committee specific training was delivered during 2020/21, however other relevant training made available to members during the year included training on the Councillors' Code of Conduct. There was also an increased input to all regarding the use of digital technology. These training opportunities were designed to help members carry out their roles at committee meetings.

## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 No declarations of interest were made by Councillors during the reporting period.

## 9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 Civic engagement is at the forefront of much of the business of the committee, particularly in respect of reports from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Council working in partnership with them.
- 9.2 Council specific examples include the report to the last meeting of the committee on Water Safety and the Council's involvement with the Aberdeen Water Safety Group which was established in 2017. The aim of the group is to develop a collective and consistent approach to water safety in Aberdeen, and its purpose is to save lives through education and promotion of water safety. The group has representatives from the emergency services, Sport Aberdeen, Water Safety Scotland and other national charities. The committee commended the work undertaken by the Aberdeen Water Safety Group and looked forward to exploring future opportunities for working in partnership and promoting their activities.

## 10. OFFICER SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

| Officer                    | Total Anticipated Attendances | Total Attendances | Substitutions |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Chief Officer - Governance | 5                             | 5                 |               |

## 11. EXECUTIVE LEAD'S COMMENTS

- 11.1 In 2020 the Council achieved the CIPFA Mark of Excellence in Good Governance. As part of our work to achieve this, the Council adopted the CIPFA recommended practice, that each Committee should annually review its effectiveness, including its information reporting needs, to help ensure that each Committee was following its Terms of Reference; operating effectively; and would assist in identifying any training needs or improvements to the Council's decision-making structures.



- 11.2 Much of the attention of the Council and our partners Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has seen refocus and priority alignment to managing and dealing with the impact of the pandemic. During the pandemic period, none of the Committee's business required to be managed by the Urgent Business Committee.
- 11.3 It should be noted that whilst 50% of reports submitted to the Committee had modifications to the recommendations, these were to additionally record the Committee's appreciation of the successful delivery of the topic, or to reinforce assurance.
- 11.4 The Committee carried out much of its business using MS Teams technology and whilst this enabled full member participation, it further allowed all elected members the opportunity to observe meetings which has undoubtedly been beneficial in

## 12 NEXT YEAR'S FOCUS

- 12.1 On 3 March 2021, Council approved the existing Committee Terms of Reference and a further review will be reported to Council in February 2022. Throughout the next reporting year, we will review the Terms of Reference in line with the business submitted to the Committee and reflect on whether any areas require refinement moving forward to ensure the efficient operation of the Committee. This will consider activities during the pandemic.
- 12.2 During the course of 2021/22, the Accounts Commission published a Best Value Assurance Report in respect of Aberdeen City Council. It commented that members robustly challenge and scrutinise management with a clear focus on the communities and citizens they represent, in respect of governance, process and matters presented for decision. As the Council and the city builds back from the impact of the pandemic, it will be important for the committee to continue to build on the momentum and recognition gained since its formation in 2018. This particularly prevalent in some of those areas of service delivery which often deal with the hidden impact of the pandemic.
- 12.3 Looking ahead to the committee's business planner for 2022, it is pleasing to see that the committee has already established a sound cycle of regular reporting across the spans of its terms of reference. This will undoubtedly be complemented by additional items of business as matters arise during the course of the new year.

**Public Protection Committee Terms of Reference  
Approved by Council on 3 March 2021**

## **PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

### **PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE**

To receive assurance on the statutory regulatory duties placed on the Council for:

- Child Protection;
- Adult Protection;
- Consumer Protection and Environmental Health;
- Civil Contingency responsibilities for local resilience and prevention; and
- Building control.

To undertake the Council's duties in relation to the Police and Fire and Rescue Services under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

### **REMIT OF COMMITTEE**

#### **1. Child and Adult Protection**

The Committee will receive assurance from the Child and Adult Protection Committees on:

- 1.1** the impact and effectiveness of child and adult support and protection improvement initiatives, including:
  - 1.1.1** delivery of national initiatives and local implications;
  - 1.1.2** learning from significant case reviews;
  - 1.1.3** quality assurance;
  - 1.1.4** training and development; and
  - 1.1.5** local evidence based initiatives;
- 1.2** effective working across child and adult protection; and
- 1.3** statistics relating to the Child Protection Register and the Vulnerable People's Database, whilst noting that it has no remit to challenge entries.

The Committee will also:

- 1.4** receive assurance on the outcome of Council's duty to deliver an effective justice service as determined by statutory inspections;
- 1.5** receive assurance on the Council's compliance with statutory duties in respect of child poverty; and
- 1.6** consider the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report

#### **2. Local Resilience**

The Committee will:

- 2.1 monitor compliance with the Council's duties relating to resilience and local emergencies; this includes reviewing staffing arrangements and systems for incident management;
- 2.2 monitor compliance with the Council's duties relating to the provision of a city mortuary, and its adequacy for supporting the needs of mass fatalities;
- 2.3 receive assurance that services are maintaining and reviewing Business Continuity Plans in accordance with the priorities allocated to them;
- 2.4 receive relevant local, regional and national lessons learnt reports and recommendations in respect of emergency planning matters and monitor their implementation; and
- 2.5 monitor the Council's response to the National CONTEST strategy and associated plans relating to Counter Terrorism.

### 3. Protective Services

The Committee will:

- 3.1 receive assurance in respect of the Council's performance in relation to Trading Standards, Environmental Health (including the Public Mortuary) and Scientific Services;
- 3.2 receive external inspection and audit reports relating to the above services listed at 3.1; and
- 3.3 receive a summary of findings from statutory sampling and analysis work carried out by or on behalf of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards services to ensure compliance with required standards.

### 4. Building Control

The Committee will consider reports on:

- 4.1 major incidents and fatal accident inquiries and any resulting impact and responsibilities placed on the Council;
- 4.2 activity by Building Standards in relation to public safety and dangerous buildings; and
- 4.3 activity by Building Standards in relation to public safety for unauthorised building work and the unauthorised occupation of buildings.

### 5. Police and Fire and Rescue Service

In respect of the Council's responsibilities under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 in relation to the Scottish Police Authority, the Police Service of Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Committee will:

- 5.1 contribute to and comment on the Strategic Police Plan and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan when consulted by the relevant national authority;
- 5.2 respond to consultation by the Chief Constable on the designation of a local commander and by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the designation of a local senior officer;
- 5.3 be involved in the setting of priorities and objectives both for the policing of Aberdeen and for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the undertaking of its functions in Aberdeen;
- 5.4 specify policing measures the Council wishes the local commander to include in a Local Police Plan;
- 5.5 approve a Local Police Plan submitted by the local commander and approve a Local Fire and Rescue Plan (including a revised plan) submitted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;

- 5.6 receive reports on service provision and delivery in Aberdeen and provide feedback to the local commander and the local senior officer;
- 5.7 consider reports, statistical information and other information about the policing of Aberdeen and the undertaking of the Fire and Rescue function in Aberdeen provided in response to the Council's reasonable requests;
- 5.8 agree, with the local commander, modifications to an approved Local Police Plan at any time; and
- 5.9 liaise with the local commander and local senior officer with regard to the undertaking by them of the community planning duties of the Chief Constable and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

**Executive Lead: Chief Officer - Governance**

