

Council Annual Effectiveness Report 2020/21



Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3 - 4
2. The role of the Council	5
3. Membership of the Council during 2020/2021	5
4. Membership changes	5
5. Member Attendance	6 - 7
6. Meeting Content	7 - 9
7. Training Requirements	10
8. Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest	10
9. Civic Engagement	10
10. Officer support to the Council	10 - 11
11. Executive Lead's Comments	11
12. Next year's focus	11 - 12
13. Combined Committee Data	12
Appendix 1 – Council Terms of Reference	13 - 14

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the third 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. As a result, 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 an effective 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 Operating Model and contributes to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, whilst also providing the opportunity to reflect on the business of the Council during 2020/21 and to look to the future.
- 1.3 Throughout 2020/21, 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 progression of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. As the Council's Armed Forces Champion, I was very pleased to see that we had successfully achieved Gold accreditation for the Council's Armed Forces Covenant through the Defence and Employer Recognition Scheme.
- 1.4 This is the last annual report of the current Council term ahead of the local government election in May 2022. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the difficulties the Council has faced since March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this, of course, extends to the whole city and across the world. I would like to, again, pay tribute to all staff across the organisation who have been involved in the Council's response to the pandemic and who continue to serve the city so well in the face of adversity.
- 1.5 It is worth repeating what I said in last year's annual report at this juncture. 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, and I am honoured to have served as Lord Provost during the current Council term.



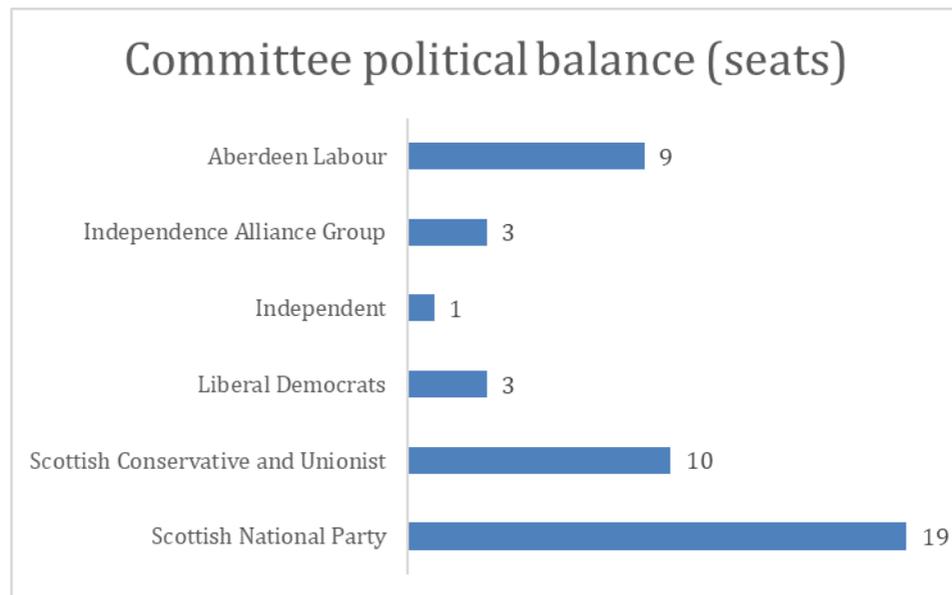
Councillor Barney Crockett
Lord Provost

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 2021, are appended to the report.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL DURING 2020/2021

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



4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 4.1 There were no membership changes during 2020/21.

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	5	5
Councillor Delaney	5	5
Councillor Donnelly	5	3
Councillor Jackie Dunbar	5	4
Councillor Lesley Dunbar	5	5
Councillor Duncan	5	5
Councillor Graham	5	5
Councillor Grant	5	5
Councillor Greig	5	5
Councillor Henrickson	5	5
Councillor Houghton	5	5
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 MacKenzie	5	5
Councillor McLellan	5	5
Councillor McRae	5	5
Councillor Malik	5	5
Councillor Mason	5	5
Councillor Mennie	5	5
Councillor Alex Nicoll	5	5
Councillor Audrey Nicoll	5	5
Councillor Noble	5	5
Councillor Radley	5	5
Councillor Reynolds	5	5

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances
Councillor Sellar	5	5
Councillor Townson	5	5
Councillor Wheeler	5	5
Councillor Yuill	5	5

6. MEETING CONTENT

6.1 During the 2020/21 reporting period (1 May 2020 to 31 October 2021), the Council had 5 meetings and considered a total of 22 reports.

6.2 Terms of Reference

Of the 22 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 accordance with Introduction 6 within the Terms of Reference document - in accordance with Standing Order 47.7, 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	4
3	1
5	3
6	3
7	2
11	1
13	1
14	1
15	2
17	1
18	1
21	4
Introduction 6	4

6.3 During the course of 2020/21, the Council received reports under thirteen of the twenty-two 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; and to consider any matter which the Council has previously considered and agreed to receive a further report.

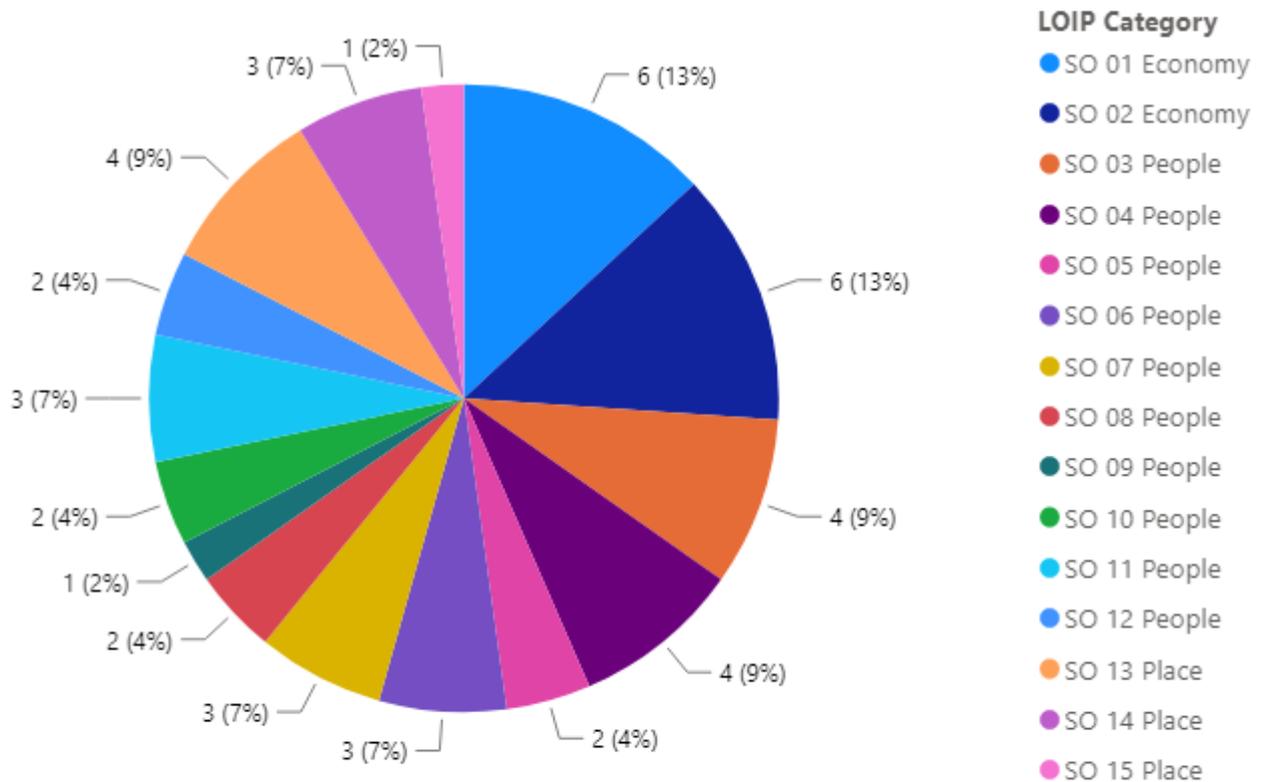
6.4 Of the nine sections of the Terms of Reference where there were no reports, no reports were required during 2020/21 - for example no working groups needed to be established and no members were required to be elected to the Licensing

Board. 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 Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The following table details of the 22 reports how many had a link to the stretch outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Reports with links to the LOIP



6.6 Reports and Council Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Council's consideration of the 22 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	6	27%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	14	64%
Number of reports or service updates requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	2	9%
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	2	
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%

6.7 Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public

Number of notices of motion	14
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 Council Leader

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 Training opportunities for elected members in financial year 2020/21 were limited due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, however some training sessions specific to the various committees did take place and details of these are contained within their annual reports.
- 7.2 In April 2021, responsibility for the training of elected members transferred from Customer Experience to People and Organisational Development.
- 7.3 More generally, training sessions for all elected members on topics such as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Councillors' Code of Conduct have been delivered during 2020/21.
- 7.4 Induction training covering a wide variety of topics was delivered to Councillor Radley upon her election in November 2020.
- 7.5 In addition, preparations are under way with regard to induction training for Councillors following the local government election in May 2022.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 23 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 are at the heart of the 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 good examples of civic engagement in the course of business submitted to Council in 2020/21, for example in relation to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Accreditation Award, and the Council's Climate Change Plan.
- 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	

Officer	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitute Attendances
Director of Resources	5	5	
Director of Commissioning	2	2	
Chief Officer - Finance	5	5	
Chief Officer - Governance	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, 2020 and 2021, and officers will report back to Full Council in 2022 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 10 March 2021, 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 27% of reports with Council officer recommendations were amended, compared to the average for committees of 8%. 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 or confidential. 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 February 2022, 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 Also in February 2022, a report will be submitted on the development of an Aberdeen Energy Transition and Climate Change Routemap to meet our ambition to be a Net Zero city.
- 12.3 During the 2021/22 annual reporting period, 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. The outcome focused approach will be set out in the budget report and associated delivery plan due to come before Full Council in March 2022.

- 12.4 On 5 May 2022, the local government elections will be held. The Statutory Council meeting is due to take place on 18 May 2022 when a wide range of reports will be presented regarding the Council's governance arrangements, with decisions sought to elect a Lord Provost as well as other positions. It will be for the new Council to determine its political priorities and for officers to progress those priorities.

13.COMBINED COMMITTEE DATA

Total number of reports for Committees during the reporting period	456	
	Total	Percentage
Number of exempt/confidential reports	25	5%
Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations	36	8%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	417	91%
Number of reports or service updates requested by Members during consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	35	8%
Number of reports 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	N/A
Number of late reports received by the Committee	3	0.7%
Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees, in terms of Standing Order 34.1	0	N/A
Number of notices of motion	14	N/A
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended	0	N/A
Number of deputations or other indicators of interface with the public, i.e. engagement and social media	0	N/A
Number of petitions considered	0	N/A

Council Terms of Reference
Approved by Council on 3 March 2021

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

The Council 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, including the approval of commissioning intentions and service standards.
3. The approval of the capital programme.
4. The borrowing of money as provided for in s56(6)(d) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
5. 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.
6. The approval of the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy.
7. The appointment of committees, including external members, and the number and allocation of committee places, 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 election of members to the Licensing Board.
9. The review of polling districts and polling places.
10. The administration of trusts in respect of which the Council is sole trustee or the only trustees are elected members and/or officers of the Council, such administration to include the exercise of all trustee powers in terms of legislation, common law and trust deeds.
11. The approval of the Local Development Plan.
12. The approval of an Administration's political priorities.
13. The consideration of the Council's Delivery Plan.
14. The consideration of its annual report of its effectiveness and each committee's annual report of its effectiveness.
15. 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.
16. The establishment of the Appointment Panel in accordance with the Standing Orders for Council, Committees and Sub Committees.
17. The approval of the Council's Scheme of Governance.
18. The approval of the Council/Committee Diary.
19. The approval of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils.

20. The establishment of Working Groups.
21. To consider any matter which the Council has previously considered and agreed to receive a further report.
22. To consider Monitoring Officer reports under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Executive Lead: Chief Executive

