

Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2020/2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the third annual effectiveness report for the Staff Governance Committee. The continuation of the reports demonstrates the Council's aim of ongoing good governance to CIPFA, who will return next year for a review following the Council previously being awarded the Mark of Excellence in Governance accreditation. The annual effectiveness report also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance and enables officers to identify if any changes are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference.
- 1.2 There were no changes made to the Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference as part of the 2021 Scheme of Governance review, as it was considered that the amendments made in 2020 to provide greater clarity had been sufficient, however the SGC Terms of Reference will be considered again during next year's review to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- 1.3 The annual report continues to be a mechanism for the Committee to support the Council's improvement journey by demonstrating the ways that the business of the Committee contributes to the Council Delivery Plan. It provides Members with the opportunity to reflect on the business over the past year and to look to the Committee's focus for the year ahead.
- 1.4 We are all back together now following the disruption of a couple of our meetings last year as a result of COVID-19, and I would like to thank Members, Trade Union Advisers and officers for their forbearance over that time. In the short time that we have been back together, the Committee has unanimously approved some very important pieces of work – for example the revised Managing Discipline, Managing Grievances, and Dignity and Respect at Work policies – all of which will have positive benefits for staff. I am also pleased that the Committee has been unanimous in all its decisions this year bar one, as it demonstrates the ongoing positive working relationships between Members, Trade Union Advisers and officers which ensure that the Committee continues to operate effectively.



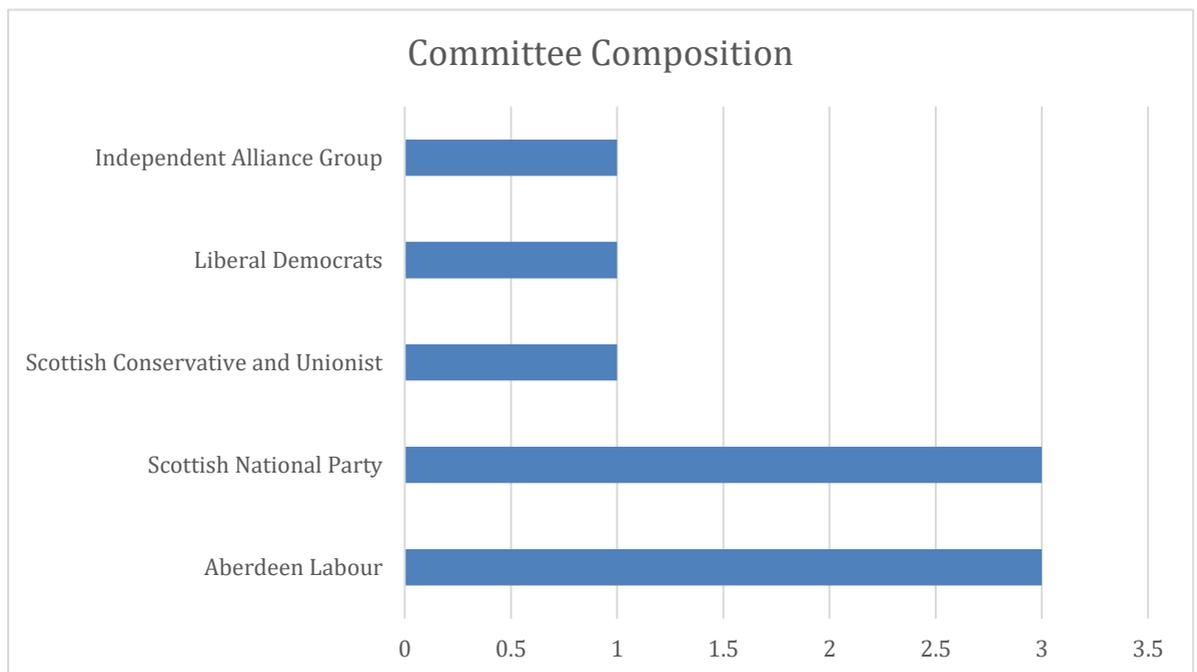
Councillor Yvonne Allan
Convener, Staff Governance Committee

2. THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Staff Governance Committee acts as a consultative forum for discussion between management, elected members and trade unions, on matters relating to staff in the pursuit of a workplace culture that reflect the requirements of a 21st Century public sector organisation.
- 2.2 Through partnership working the committee supports the Council becoming an employer of choice by promoting positive values, behaviours, training and recruitment and ways of working.
- 2.3 The Committee also acts as safety committee within s2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and keeps under review measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees. The committee provides a channel of communication, co-operation and involvement between the Council and trade union representatives on all relevant health and safety matters.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE DURING 2020/2021

- 3.1 The Staff Governance Committee has nine members and the composition is presented below. The Committee also has Trade Union Advisers – two from each recognised Trade Union, who sit on the Committee but are not voting members.



4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 4.1 Councillor Graham stepped down from the Committee following the April 2021 meeting and was replaced by Councillor Duncan. Councillor Hutchison also stepped down from the Committee following the April 2021 meeting and was replaced by Councillor Al-Samarai. In relation to the Trade Union advisers, Leslie Tarr, UNISON, replaced Kenny Luke as of September 2020 and Liam Knox, UNITE, and Thomas Whyte, SSTA, both stepped down as advisers to the Committee during the reporting period. Replacements for Mr Knox and Mr Whyte are awaited.

5. MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitutions	Nominated Substitute
Councillors				
Yvonne Allan	5	5		
Gillian Al-Samarai	2	2		
David Cameron	5	5		
Neil Copland	5	5		
Steve Delaney	5	3	2	Ian Yuill Martin Greig
Sarah Duncan	2	1	1	John Wheeler
Gordon Graham	3	3		
Ryan Houghton	5	5		
Michael Hutchison	5	5		
Sandra Macdonald	5	5		
John Reynolds	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 24 reports. The June 2020 meeting of the Committee was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decision of Council to cancel all committee meetings until August 2020 with business critical reports being considered by the Urgent Business Committee. The November 2020 meeting was cancelled as there was only one report scheduled to be considered at that meeting.

6.2 Terms of Reference

Of the 24 reports received the following table details how the reports aligned to the Terms of Reference for the Committee. Please note that one of the 24 items did not have Terms of Reference attached as it was a referral from the City Growth and Resources Committee and therefore did not have a covering report.

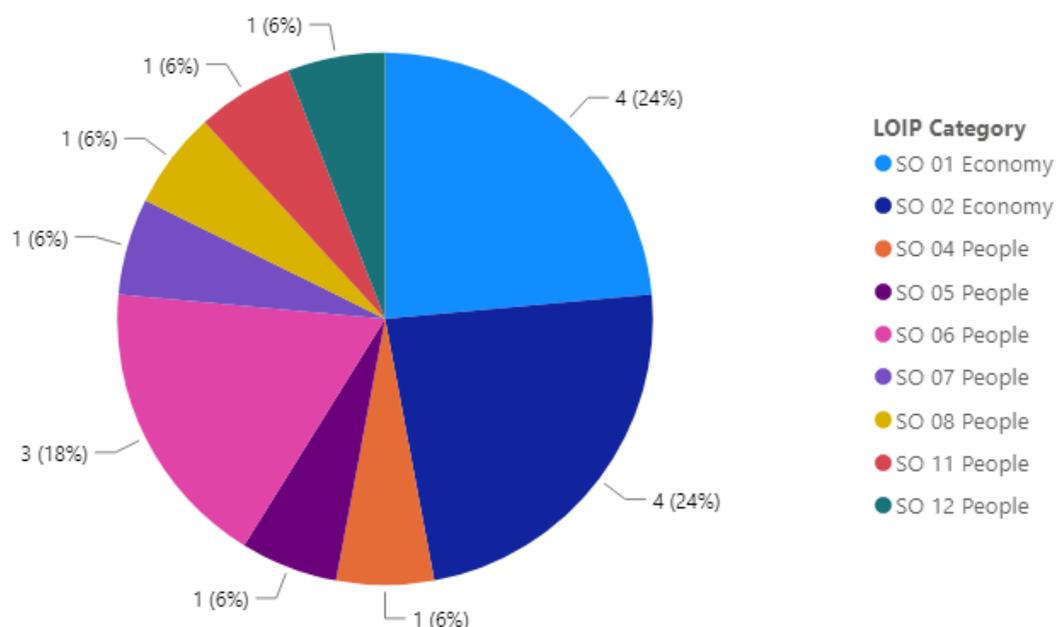
Terms of Reference	Count of Terms of Reference
Purpose	1
General Delegations to Committee 8.4	1
General Delegations to Committee 8.5	1
Remit 1.2	1
Remit 2.1	1
Remit 2.2	3
Remit 2.3	1
Remit 2.5	3
Remit 2.6	2
Remit 2.7	3
Remit 3.1	1
Remit 3.3	6

- 6.3** During the course of 2020/2021 the Staff Governance Committee received reports under the majority of its Terms of Reference. This would indicate that the Committee has discharged its role throughout the course of the reporting period.
- 6.4** While there have been no reports under Remit 1.1 and 1.3 specifically (seek to maintain good relationships and model a partnership approach between the Council and trade unions / consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development on matters following a request by a trade union advisor) however the operation of this Committee enables all reports to be considered via a partnership approach and allows for the resolution of matters of common interest through debate and discussion at meetings and at officer / Trade Union meetings outwith the Committee meetings. Therefore while those Terms of Reference have not specifically been listed on reports, most reports to the Staff Governance Committee could be said to fall into the categories.
- 6.5** There was also no report under Remit 6.1 as there was no requirement to review the Appeals Sub Committee Procedure during this year.

6.6 Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The following table details of the 24 reports how many had a link to the stretch outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The stretch outcomes in place at the time of the reporting period are included at Appendix 2 for reference.

Reports with links to the LOIP



6.7 Reports and Committee Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Committee's consideration of the 24 reports presented to it throughout the year.

Reports	Total
Number which were Exempt/Confidential	None
Number of reports where the Committee has amended officer recommendations	None – all officer recommendations were approved.
Number of reports approved unanimously	All reports were approved unanimously. The only division at SGC in the reporting period was in relation to the referral from City Growth and Resources Committee on the £500 bonus payment to health and social care staff.

Reports	Total
Number of reports requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in business planner	None
Number of Service Updates requested	None – on occasion further information was requested from officers in relation to detail included in reports, however this was circulated by email to Members and Trade Union Advisers after the meeting.
Number of decisions delayed for further information	None
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour and the ethical values of Public Life	None
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)	None
Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees in terms of Standing Order 34.1	None

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

Number of notices of motion	None
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended and the specific Standing Orders suspended	None
Standing order number (ref)	N/A
Number of deputations or other indicators of interface with the public, i.e. engagement and social media.	There were no requests for deputation during the reporting period.

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 No SGC specific training was identified as being required in the 2020/2021 reporting period. Training will however be provided following the Statutory Council meeting in May 2022, as well as training on any specific matters if requested by Members and Trade Union Advisers.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 No 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 Due to the nature of the Staff Governance Committee business, there are fewer opportunities for civic engagement, however if appropriate, elements of civic engagement would be introduced.
- 9.2 The Consultation Protocol allows for a minimum period of 2 weeks for Trade Union consultation. Throughout the reporting period this 2 week period has been applied as the formal consultation period, however informal consultation and engagement with the Unions has proved to be extremely advantageous in terms of early interventions and formulating policy. There are weekly Director /Union Engagement meetings, allowing Union reps to raise issues with Directors and the Chief Officer People and Organisational Development as well as regular weekly meetings with Trade Unions and the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager.

10. OFFICER SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

Officer	Anticipated Attendance	Attendances
Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development	5	5
Chief Officer - Governance	5	5

11. EXECUTIVE LEAD’S COMMENTS

- 11.1 The Committee continues to work effectively and collaboratively, and I am pleased to note that all business bar one item was approved or noted unanimously. This is in line with the aim that there be consensus in relation to the Committee’s business, and much effort has been undertaken to ensure that there is proper consultation with Trade Unions and consideration given to their views prior to items being discussed at the Committee.
- 11.2 Following the disruption felt by the Committee cycle due to the pandemic, committee considered a report which detailed the extensive work undertaken by officers in supporting the health and wellbeing of staff during a difficult year.
- 11.3 This year, Members have also received reports on key areas of Council business including the revised Managing Discipline, Managing Grievances, and Dignity and Respect at Work policies. The approval of these policies followed a great deal of collaboration between officers and Trade Unions and I would like to thank our Trade Union colleagues for their input. Committee also approved the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy, another highly important document.
- 11.4 The Committee has also received reports this year which have provided an update on workforce capacity developments across the organisation over the last twelve months. The temporary movement of staff scheme developed during the Covid-19

pandemic was a huge piece of work which had a significant impact on our ability as an organisation to meet the workforce demands of the pandemic, while also allowing us to capture and build on this flexible approach for the future.

- 11.5 A further report was presented in relation to the results of the Future of Work Survey and approval given for the action plan which set out ten particular areas of action which are being taken from the survey results.
- 11.6 Staff Governance Committee Members were presented with, and approved, a report setting out the proposed approach to equality, diversity and inclusion for the Council as an employer. A detailed action plan contained within the report set out the proposed approach and plan for implementation which includes continued engagement and involvement from employees and protected groups. This report signals our ongoing commitment to addressing any areas of potential inequality or occupational segregation at work as well as the value we place on diversity and inclusion in the workplace as a key to our success as an organisation.
- 11.7 Members have also heard about the progress made with developing our young workforce, specifically around initiatives in place to support care experienced young people in the city, including an apprenticeship programme, Young Employee Network and a guaranteed interview commitment. These initiatives follow our achievement of the Investors in Young People Gold Standard Award in March 2020.
- 11.8 Committee received updates on the re.cr.uit scheme following its introduction in January 2021 with the latest report presented to the September 2021 meeting setting out how the new approach works in practice and outlining changes and improvements which had been made as a result of the initial learning cycle undertaken from January to March 2021.
- 11.9 The Committee also receives regular reports on sickness absence, occupational health, employee assistance scheme and health and safety statistics to allow Members to discharge their role in relation to keeping under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.
- 11.10 In order to maintain transparency and openness, particularly as the Committee business often relates to matters which may be relevant and of interest to employees, there is a focus on ensuring that the number of exempt reports is kept to a minimum and I am pleased to note that all business this year was considered in public session.

12. TRADE UNION COMMENTS

- 12.1 As with previous reports, Trade Union Advisers to the Committee were asked for their feedback as to how they felt the Committee had operated over the reporting period.
- 12.2 **Carole Thorpe, EIS** - I have found the Committee has functioned well under these very difficult circumstances and the clerk has been totally organised and thankfully kept us all up to date and with everything we need. I also feel that, as Trade Unions, we can use the support of the Committee effectively when we are developing policies which are comprehensive and fair to the benefit of our members. It is always good to see the Councillors asking the questions we have discussed or picking up anything we may have missed during discussions etc. I have definitely felt the elected members really care about the well-being of ACC staff.

- 12.3 Ron Constable, EIS** - I think that the Staff Governance Committee is an extremely useful forum for TUs to comment. The EIS welcome the input from elected members and the resulting debate that ensues. The Convener chairs the meeting fairly and effectively and is always open to issues raised by the members. The EIS value this opportunity to work effectively with the authority.
- 12.4 David Willis, GMB** - GMB are happy that the partnership working of the Committee has continued to be effective, whilst meetings have been virtual/ hybrid, in ensuring best practice and modernising employment practices for staff.
- 12.5 Les Tarr, UNISON** - UNISON have no issues with the running and activity of the Committee.

13. NEXT YEAR'S FOCUS

- 13.1** Due to a number of Trade Union Advisers stepping down from their roles, there are a few vacancies currently both in the substantive representatives and their named substitutes. It is hoped that these vacancies can be filled to ensure that there is the full quota of Advisers to the Committee.
- 13.2** Although there were no changes made to the SGC Terms of Reference in 2021, in accordance with the usual practice of an annual review of the Scheme of Governance, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed and officers will reflect on whether any areas require further refinement moving forward to ensure the continued efficient operation of the Committee.
- 13.3** Areas of focus from the Business Planner – The Committee will continue to receive any policies which are due for update or which require to be refreshed to bring them into line with the Guiding Principles. A report will also be presented in line with the annual review of the Mental Health Action Plan. It is expected that there will be a follow up report on the test of change in respect of the increase in distribution of Naloxone, to provide lessons learned and any future actions to be taken. The Committee will continue to receive regular updates on health and safety matters. An important piece of work due to be presented to Committee next year is the Workforce Strategy which will outline the vision and key undertakings for the organisation in relation to workforce over the next 5 years There will also be an update on progress against our workforce plan which was approved by committee in 2019.

Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference

PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

To act as a consultative forum for discussion between management, elected members and trade unions, on matters relating to staff in the pursuit of a workplace culture that reflect the requirements of a 21st Century public sector organisation.

Through partnership working the committee will support the Council becoming an employer of choice by promoting positive values, behaviours, training and recruitment and ways of working.

The Committee also acts as safety committee within s2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and keeps under review measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees. The committee provides a channel of communication, co-operation and involvement between the Council and trade union representatives on all relevant health and safety matters.

REMIT OF COMMITTEE

1.	Partnership Approach Arrangements
	The Committee will:-
1.1	seek to maintain good relationships and model a partnership approach between the Council and trade unions;
1.2	provide a decision making forum, for the resolution of staffing matters that cannot be resolved through normal processes including but not restricted to conditions of service (except teachers); and
1.3	consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development on matters following a request by a trade union advisor provided always that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development is satisfied that the matter is appropriate and relevant to the remit of the Committee and that it raises no question of individual employee issues.
2.	Strategic Workforce Plans and Policies
	The Committee will:-
2.1	approve the Framework Agreement for Industrial Relations (the FAIR agreement);
2.2	approve strategic workforce plans which reflect the requirements of a 21st Century Council in terms of staff, skills and attributes;
2.3	approve framework documentation in relation to workforce culture;
2.4	approve strategic training and development plans for the whole organisation;
2.5	approve all staff policies, these being policies where the predominant factor affects the expected behaviour and actions of staff;
2.6	monitor equality in employment and ensure that the Council, as an employer, complies with its statutory equal pay and other equality responsibilities; and
2.7	receive people performance data to enable the monitoring of the wellbeing of our staff including but not limited to absence data.

3.	Health, Safety & Wellbeing of Staff	
	The Committee will:-	
3.1	approve health, safety and wellbeing policies	
3.2	approve the Corporate Health and Safety Annual Audit Plan	
3.3	monitor performance and compliance across all functions of the Council in respect of	
	3.3.1	Health and safety legislation
	3.3.2	Health, safety and wellbeing policies
	3.3.3	Health and safety recommendations, including those from external inspection bodies
4.	Employment Appeals and Disputes	
	The Committee will:-	
4.1	approve the procedure for the Appeals Sub Committee.	
	MEMBERSHIP	
	Elected members Local trades union representatives as advisers – two named advisers from each of the following trades unions: Unison Unite GMB Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA); and VOICE	

Appendix 2 – LOIP Stretch Outcomes (as at time of reporting period)

Economy

1. 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.
2. 90% of working people in Living Wage employment by 2026.

People

3. 95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026.
4. 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026.
5. 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.
6. 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.
7. Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.
8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.
9. 25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction each year by 2026.
10. 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year of receiving a community or custodial sentence by 2026.
11. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.
12. Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026.

Place

13. No one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026.
14. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.
15. 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026

