

# Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2023/2024



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## 1. Introduction from Convener

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the annual effectiveness report for the Staff Governance Committee (SGC). The annual effectiveness reports have been in place since 2018/19, following a recommendation made by CIPFA in their review of the Council's governance arrangements, namely that Committees review the extent to which they had operated within their Terms of Reference, through an annual report. The annual effectiveness report represents good practice in governance and also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance, enabling officers to identify if any changes are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference. The reports also allow Members to suggest that particular information be included in future years which they would find helpful and informative.
- 1.2 I would like to thank all Members and Trade Union Advisers on the Committee for their continued scrutiny of reports, their commitment to meetings and for contributing to ensuring that our meetings are conducted in a collaborative manner. I would also like to thank officers for their ongoing support to our meetings.
- 1.3 As with previous years, I am also delighted to see that the Committee has once more been unanimous in approving all the reports presented, and supportive of officer recommendations, as it demonstrates the ongoing positive working relationships between Members, Trade Union Advisers and officers which ensure that the Committee continues to operate in a very effective manner.



Councillor Neil Copland  
Convener – Staff Governance Committee

## 2. The Role of the Committee

### **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<sup>1</sup>); and
- 1.3 consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services on matters following a request by a trade union advisor provided always that the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services 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 monitor performance and compliance across all functions of the Council in respect of
  - i. Health and safety legislation
  - ii. Health, safety and wellbeing policies
  - iii. 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:

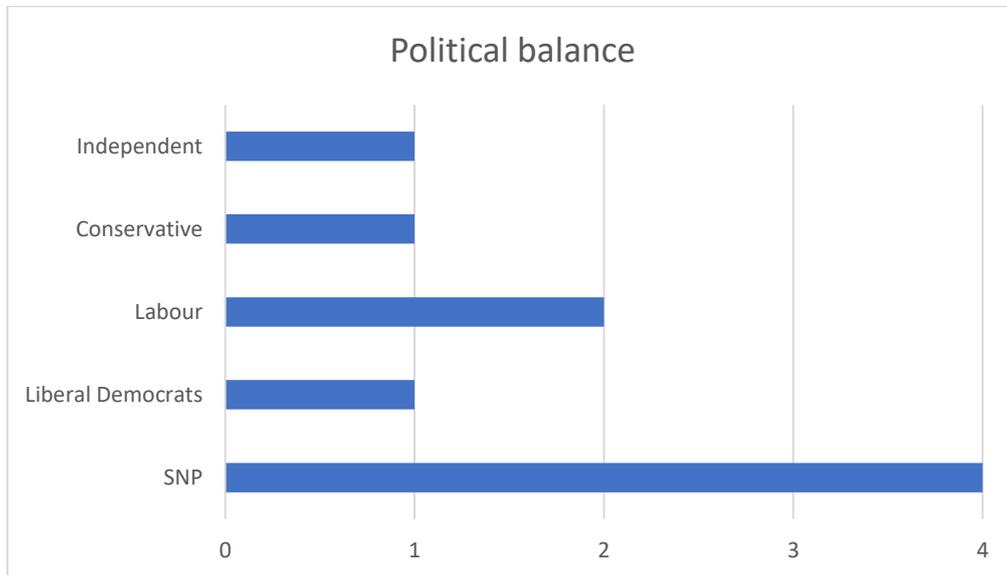
- Unison
- Unite
- GMB
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA); and
- VOICE

**Executive Lead: Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services**

### 3. Membership of the Committee during 2023/2024

3.1 The Staff Governance Committee has 9 members.

3.2 The Committee composition is presented below:-



3.3 The Committee also has Trade Union Advisers who attend the meeting, but are not members of the Committee. The Advisers can however ask questions and participate in any debate, but do not have the ability to move or second motions or amendments, nor to vote.

## 4. Membership Changes

- 4.1 Councillor Boulton replaced Councillor Crockett on the Committee from the January 2024 meeting. Following the decision of Council in February 2024 to reduce the number of Members on Committees from 13 to 9, Councillors Ali, Davidson, Fairfull, MacGregor and Massey all stepped down from the Committee, therefore were only Members for the November 2023 and January 2024 meetings of the Committee in terms of the recorded attendance in the table below. Councillor Clark joined the Committee from the April 2024 meeting.

## 5. Member Attendance

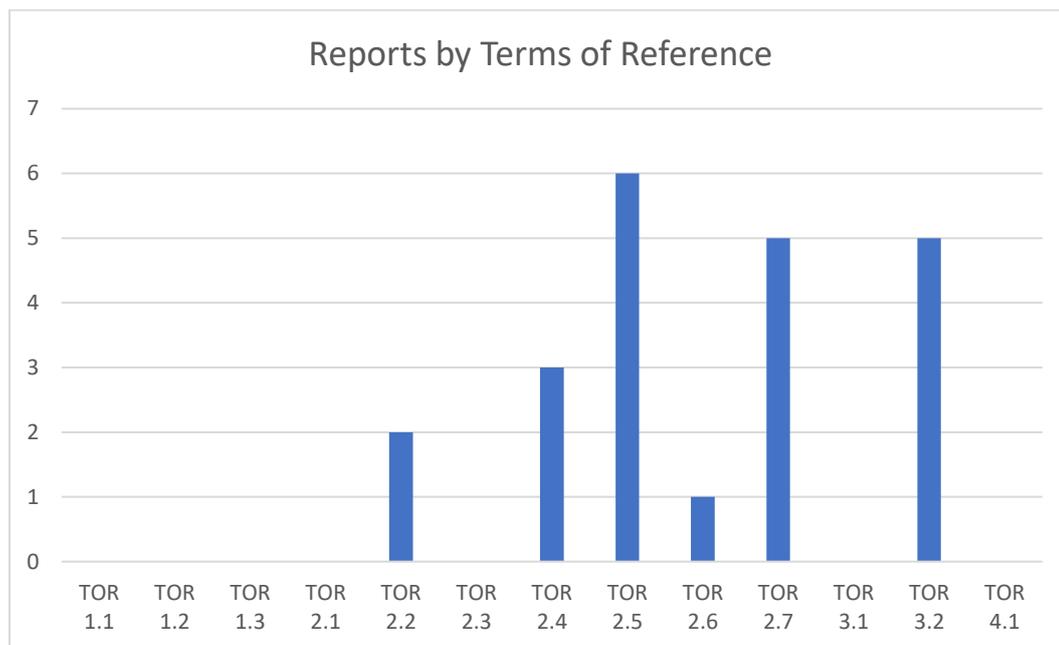
Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitutions
Councillor Neil Copland	5	5	
Councillor Gill Al-Samarai	5	4	1 – Councillor MacGregor
Councillor Nurul Hoque Ali	2	1	1 - Councillor Tissera
Councillor Marie Boulton	4	3	1 - Councillor Mrs Stewart
Councillor David Cameron	5	4	1 - Councillor Henrickson
Councillor Donna Clark	3	3	
Councillor Barney Crockett	1	0	
Councillor Derek Davidson	2	2	
Councillor Steve Delaney	5	4	1 - Councillor MacGregor
Councillor Lee Fairfull	2	2	
Councillor Sandra Macdonald	5	4	1 - Councillor Bonsell
Councillor Neil MacGregor	2	1	1 - Councillor Hutchison
Councillor Duncan Massey	2	2	
Councillor Ken McLeod	5	4	
Councillor Lynn Thomson	5	4	1 - Councillor Blake

## 6. Meeting Content

6.1 During the 2023/2024 reporting period (15 October 2023 to 15 October 2024), the Committee had five meetings and considered a total of 22 reports.

### 6.2 Terms of Reference

6.2.1 The following chart details how reports aligned to the Terms of Reference (set out at section 2 above) for the Committee.



6.2.2 During the course of 2023/2024 the Committee received reports mainly under TOR 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7 and 3.2. This is because the majority of the reports considered at Committee during the year were in relation to strategic workforce, training and development plans; staffing policies; and performance data in respect of mental health and wellbeing and health and safety.

6.2.3 No changes were made to the SGC Terms of Reference following the 2024 Scheme of Governance review. The Terms of Reference will continue to be monitored throughout the year, in preparation for the 2024 Scheme of Governance review. The Terms of Reference which have not been utilised this year will be considered to see if any changes are required.

6.2.4 While TOR 1.1 was not specifically utilised this year (seek to maintain good relationships and model a partnership approach between the Council and Trade Unions), there was ongoing consultation and collaboration with Trade Union colleagues in respect of a number of the reports, and therefore although not specifically listed, the ethos of this TOR can be evidenced. There were also no reports under TOR 1.3 “consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services on matters following a request by a Trade Union advisor provided always that the Chief

Officer – People and Citizen Services 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” which suggests that the ongoing close working between officers and Trade Union colleagues outwith the committee meetings is helping to resolve any matters raised.

- 6.2.5 For the second year, there has been no requirement during the reporting period to approve the Framework Agreement for Industrial Relations (the FAIR agreement); nor approve framework documentation in relation to workforce culture; (Terms of Reference 2.1 and 2.3 respectively) but both remain relevant Terms of Reference to be retained as they will likely be reported to future meetings. While TOR 2.3 “approve strategic training and development plans for the whole organisation” has not specifically been used for any of the reports to Committee, many of the reports have referenced existing training which is being provided to officers.
- 6.2.6 Finally, there were no changes made to the Corporate Health and Safety Policy this year which required Committee approval, therefore TOR 3.1 was not utilised. Similarly, no changes were required to the procedure for the Appeals Sub Committee, and so TOR 4.1 was not required.

## 7. Reports and Decisions

7.1 The following information relates to the committee reports and Notices of Motion presented to Committee throughout the reporting period, as well as the use of Standing Orders and engagement with members of the public.

	Total	Total Percentage of Reports
Confidential Reports	0	0
Exempt Reports	0	0
Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations	0	0
Number of reports approved unanimously	22	100%
Number of reports or service updates requested during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in business planner	2 service updates*	N/A
Number of reports delayed for further information	0	0
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour in terms of the Code of Conduct	0	0
Late reports received (i.e. reports not available for inspection at least 3 clear days before the meeting)	0	0
Number of referrals to Council under SO 34.1	0	0

\* The service updates were in relation to the Health and Safety Sub Group, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

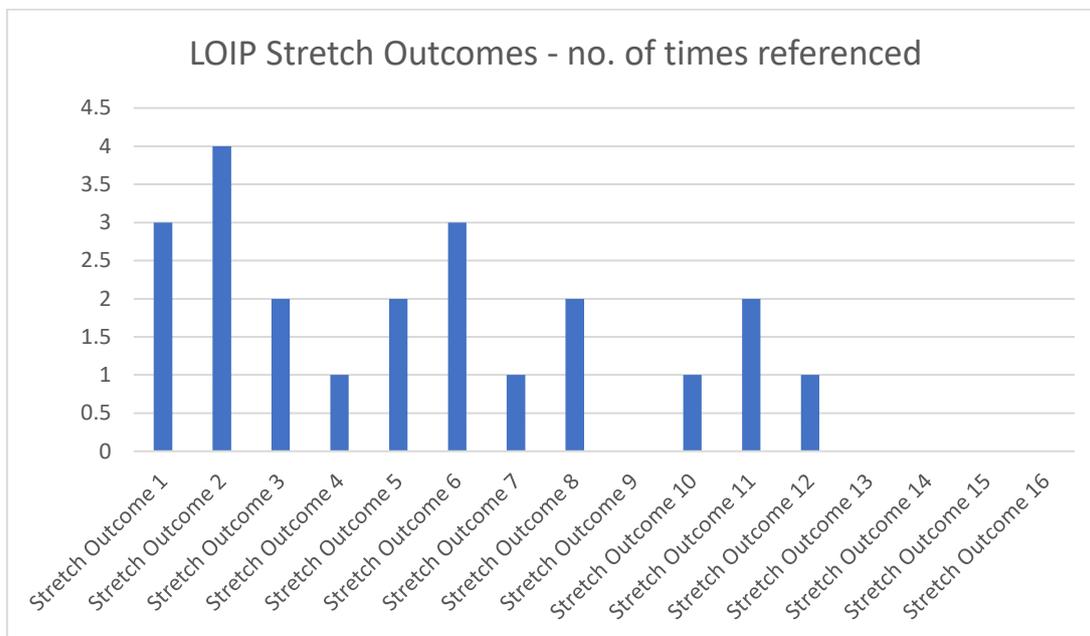
<b>Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public</b>	
Number of Notices of Motion to Committee	0
Number of times Standing Orders suspended	0
Specific Standing Orders suspended	Not applicable
Number of deputations requested	0
Number of deputations heard	Not applicable
Number of petitions considered	0

### 7.2 Appeals Sub Committee

7.2.1 The Appeals Sub Committee membership comprises up to 5 members of the Staff Governance Committee, who are selected from a pool, depending on availability. For the reporting period, 8 appeals were received, although 3 were withdrawn following mediation.

## 8. Reports with links to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

- 8.1 The following table details of the 22 reports how each report linked to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP Stretch Outcomes are appended to this report for reference at Appendix 1).



- 8.2 Reports to the Staff Governance Committee had links to a number of the stretch outcomes, particularly those relating to economy, wellbeing and positive destinations.
- 8.3 Many of the reports relate to initiatives which impact on the stretch outcomes which look to improve opportunities for supporting people into work, skilling and reskilling, and helping children and young people to reach their developmental milestones and have positive destinations. These include the Developing the Young Workforce and Employability Programmes reports.
- 8.4 Some reports considered by Committee this year have had no direct connection with specific LOIP stretch outcomes; these tend to be items such as the regular corporate health and safety report. Such reports do however have a general impact on the outcomes of the LOIP, for example, a healthy and safe workplace assists the overarching principles of the stretch outcomes within the LOIP by ensuring that resource is directed at the services required by the city. Mitigating the risk of financial penalties incurred through the Civil and Criminal Courts and from the Regulators allows available resource to be best used to ensure funding of the growth sectors of the local economy.
- 8.5 Due to the refresh of the LOIP in April 2024, the numbering and wording of some of the Stretch Outcomes was altered, therefore the reports listed under Stretch Outcome 11, in the table above, relate to the old Stretch Outcome 11 (Healthy life expectancy

[time lived in good health] is five years longer by 2026) as opposed to the new Stretch Outcome 11 (Reduce the rate of both alcohol related deaths and drug related deaths by 10% by 2026).

## 9. Training and Development

9.1 A sample of the training opportunities for Members relating to the Committee during the reporting period is as follows:-

- Training for Appeals Sub Committee members ahead of any employee appeals to be considered. Trade Unions were also invited to attend this training to enable them to have an understanding of the role of the Sub Committee.
- Health and Safety: training presentation for Members in respect of how to deal with entering premises where animals may be present
- Information circulated in relation to Winter wellbeing and Seasonal Affective Disorder

9.2 Further development opportunities will be considered for next year based on Committee business throughout the year, Executive Lead proposals, Member feedback, Elected Members' Personal Development plans and any training highlighted by subject matter experts on what may be required to assist them in performing their roles.

## 10. Code of Conduct Declarations and Transparency Statements

10.1 There were no declarations of interest made during the reporting period, however Members did make transparency statements on four occasions. Information in respect of declarations of interest and transparency statements is recorded to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

## 11. Civic Engagement

11.1 Due to the nature of the Staff Governance Committee business, there are fewer opportunities for civic engagement, however if appropriate, elements of civic engagement are introduced.

11.2 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 Trade Union colleagues to raise issues with Directors and the Chief Officer

People and Citizen Services as well as regular weekly meetings with Trade Unions and the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager/Employee Relations Casework Lead.

- 11.3 Extensive consultation has been undertaken throughout the year in preparation for a number of reports to the Committee. For example:-
- Intensive engagement at all levels throughout the organisation in relation to the Capability Framework indicators for each job family
  - Roadshows for frontline staff, comprising of information relating to the Employee Assistance Programme and Benefits services delivered by Vivup, as well as information relating to mental wellbeing
  - Engagement with stakeholders in the creation of the revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, namely the Equality Participation Network (supported by Grampian Regional Equality Council); the Tenants and Residents Group; and Parent Councils, as well as internal stakeholders such as the Equality Ambassadors Network; the Employee Equality Network Groups (age, disability, LGBT+, race and sex); the Public Sector Equalities Working Group; attendees at the Council's Black History Month event; and employees through an internal survey
  - Engagement prior to the production of the Zero Tolerance Update and Action Plan report
  - Engagement with Trade Union colleagues on a more formal way of gathering employee voice through consultation, leading to the development of the Consultation Protocol

## 12. Executive Lead to the Committee - Commentary

- 12.1 The Committee continues to work effectively and collaboratively, and I am pleased to note that all reports were approved or noted unanimously, as they were last year. This is in line with the aim that we have consensus in relation to the Committee's business, and much effort has been undertaken to ensure that there is proper consultation with Trade Unions, with consideration given to their views prior to items being discussed at the Committee, and follow up discussions on anything raised by them at Committee meetings.
- 12.2 Some of the key pieces of work presented to Committee this year were a variety of updated policies, including the Whistleblowing Policy; the Managing Performance Policy and the Managing Substance Misuse Policy. These were produced following consultation with and feedback from our Trade Union colleagues. We have also engaged with employees who have experienced violence and aggression, and following discussion with Trade Union colleagues, and consideration of a report at Committee, will be reporting back to Members on the Zero Tolerance Policy in 2025. Members also received updates on the extensive engagement with staff on a number of important issues throughout the year, through methods such as staff working groups, surveys and face to face discussions, as well as information provided through the intranet, Sharepoint and Viva Engage.

- 12.3 Officers presented the annual update in respect of 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 modern apprenticeships, foundation apprenticeships, guaranteed interview schemes internships such as Kickstart, traineeships and the ABZ Campus – Employment Pathways Work Experience Programme.
- 12.4 Given the nature of the Committee business will often be of interest to employees, it is vital that reports are open and transparent and I am pleased to note that again, all business this year was considered in public session, with no exempt reports presented.

## 13. The Year Ahead

- 13.1 There were no changes made to the SGC Terms of Reference as part of the Scheme of Governance Review in 2024, however 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. A report is also due to Council in February 2025 on the Committee structure.
- 13.2 The Committee will continue to receive any policies which are due for update or which require to be refreshed. Some of the policies due to Committee over 2024/25 include the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy; the Corporate Volunteering Policy; the Flexible Working Guidance and Policy; the Equality and Diversity Policy (if updates are required); Family Friendly Policies; and the Zero Tolerance Policy.
- 13.3 The Committee will also receive its regular reports on corporate health and safety data, as well as employee assistance, occupational health and sickness absence information. There will be an update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update.

## Appendix 1. Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcomes

<b>Economy</b>	
1.	20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026
2.	74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026
<b>People (Children &amp; Young People)</b>	
3.	95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026
4.	90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026
5.	By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026
6.	95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026
7.	83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026
8.	100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination
<b>People (Adults)</b>	
9.	10% fewer adults (over 18) charged with more than one offence by 2026
10.	Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026
11.	Reduce the rate of both alcohol related deaths and drug related deaths by 10% by 2026
12.	Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.
<b>Place</b>	
13.	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate
14.	Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026
15.	26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026
<b>Community Empowerment</b>	
16.	100% increase in the proportion of citizens who feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026

