



Glasgow City Council

**Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public
Realm City Policy Committee**

Report by Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities

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**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND
PUBLIC REALM CITY POLICY COMMITTEE**

Purpose of Report:

To advise members of the main findings of the Independent Review of the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy Committee, undertaken as required by the Council's Standing Orders

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) consider the Action Plan to be led by the Director of City Development within Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability, in conjunction with the Convener and Vice Convener; and
- 3) refer the report to the Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Standing Orders require all committees to undertake an independent assessment in year 3 of a Council Administration.
- 1.2 This report outlines the findings from the independent review of the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm (NHPR) City Policy Committee, which was undertaken by Bernadette Monaghan, Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities.
- 1.3 The scope of the review, as recommended by the Head of Internal Audit, focused on sharing best practice and potential ways to enhance the working of committees across the Council, in the lead up to the next local government elections. The review is based on consideration of broad questions in relation to the following areas:
 - Is there a workplan in place that is agreed at least annually and reviewed periodically?
 - Have matters arising and suggestions from any previous surveys and self-assessment been acted upon?
 - Are agendas agreed in advance and do they follow the workplan?
 - How well does the Committee operate in accordance with the Terms of Reference?
 - Are papers and reports relevant, concise, accurate and accessible?
 - Do pre-agendas take place and how do they operate?
 - Do all members have an opportunity to participate; Do members actively engage?
 - Does the Committee's work dovetail with other Committees to avoid duplication, but also to ensure that important and relevant issues are appropriately passed on?
- 1.4 In addition, a survey was distributed to all Committee members, Conveners and Vice-conveners, via officers within Strategic Policy and Planning, inviting them to provide their views on various aspects of the Committee and propose suggestions for any areas of improvement to be considered.
- 1.5 The survey was carried out between 6 and 27 August 2021.
- 1.6 Six surveys were returned from a possible 15, representing a response rate of 40%.
- 1.7 The overall findings of the survey are mainly positive and are incorporated within the body of this report, along with any additional comments received.
- 1.8 The assessing officer met with the Lead Officer and Convener to identify areas of best practice as well as any concerns and potential areas for improvement. Given that the current Convener is relatively new, the assessing officer also met with the previous two Conveners.

1.9 The assessing officer also attended a meeting of the Committee on 17 August 2021 and reviewed minutes and papers of previous meetings over the course of the past year.

2. **Background**

2.1 All City Policy Committees have 15 Elected Members: 7 SNP, 6 Labour, 1 Conservative, 1 Green. Each committee can appoint up to 4 people as non-voting co-optees to bring in external expertise, knowledge and experience as necessary. Meetings are held every 6 weeks and the quorum is 4.

2.2 The role of City Policy Committees is to examine relevant policies, strategies and plans – either Council or City policies developed with Community Planning partners. The role also encompasses the following:

- reviewing policies
- revising or creating new ones
- overseeing implementation of those Council Plan commitments assigned to it specifically
- reviewing delivery of services
- working on a cross-cutting basis with other City Policy Committees, Conveners, services and ALEOs as appropriate
- establishing time limited working groups to take forward specific pieces of policy review and development and reporting back, or to the City Administration Committee if necessary
- taking account of any implications of Brexit and the City Region Economic Strategy in making any recommendations or taking any decisions

2.3 The NHPR City Policy Committee has within its Terms of Reference to address Council thematic priorities in relation to:

- A Thriving Economy
- Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhoods and
- A Vibrant City

3. **Remit of the Committee**

3.1 The Committee covers high profile areas of work that sit within Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS). The remit of the Committee is extensive and as set out in its Terms of Reference, is to fulfil the functions of policy development (including consideration of equalities issues) as they relate to Council policies and services on neighbourhoods, housing and public realm, but specifically excluding housing functions delegated to the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board. These functions include:

- planning and strategic and local housing policy
- regeneration and transport
- natural and built environment
- land and property management

- building control
- economic, business and social development initiatives
- derelict land
- city centre
- international links and
- partnership engagement

- 3.2 Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability was borne from the most recent Council Family Review that saw the merger of Development and Regeneration Services with Neighbourhoods and Sustainability, on 1 April 2021.
- 3.3 This merger provides opportunities to embed and align climate and sustainability approaches into all NRS strategic priorities, such as housing, planning, transport, infrastructure delivery and environmental service delivery.
- 3.4 As such, the remit of the NHPR City Policy Committee crosses over with that of the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction (ESCR) City Policy Committee and it is noted, for example, that the ESCR City Policy Committee discussed an update on the Glasgow Transport Strategy at its meeting on 8 October 2021. Reports by NRS are also routinely presented to the Contracts and Property Committee and the City Administration Committee. A petition in relation to public toilets was also heard by the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE) on 12 August 2021.
- 3.5 The forming of NRS provides a further opportunity to enhance the community and place-based approach of the Property and Land Strategy and to better co-ordinate engagement with communities, stakeholders and partner organisations, for example in relation to the People Make Glasgow Communities programme.
- 3.6 The NHPR City Policy Committee oversees the requirement for Local Development Plans, whilst progress with Locality Planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is reported to WECCE and to the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (GCPP) Strategic Partnership and Executive Group.
- 3.7 The Committee could consider a joint awareness-raising session on place-based approaches with WECCE, other relevant committees and community planning structures, particularly in the light of a new model of working for the city's 23 Area Partnerships, in which they will have oversight of locality plans and responsibility for ensuring that agreed local priorities are implemented. The principles for the new model, which will also include Ward-based Citizen's Panels as a component, were approved by the GCPP Strategic Partnership on 7 September 2021 and an implementation plan is due to be presented to the Strategic Partnership on 7 December 2021.
- 3.8 As mentioned above, homelessness functions are not included in the remit of the NHPR City Policy Committee. The Council has substantial legislative duties

to people affected by homelessness which are discharged through the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board.

- 3.9 The issue of homelessness has been discussed previously and perhaps could be discussed more fully with the HSCP and NRS in relation to the roles and responsibilities of all partners. It is noted that NRS are responsible for developing and updating Glasgow's Housing Strategy, the key themes of which are to increase the supply and improve the quality of housing available to citizens and to improve access to appropriate housing for all.

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The following sections provide a high level summary in relation to each thematic area covered by the assessment questions.
- 4.2 The overall findings of the review are positive. In general, the NHPR Committee has a clear purpose and all members are engaged and clearly understand the remit of the Committee.
- 4.3 Four members who responded to the survey agreed that the Committee fulfilled its Terms of Reference, is effective in carrying out its remit and that they could contribute to the development of the workplan.
- 4.4 Four respondents also agreed that the Committee influences Council policies and decisions, as well as driving the improvement function and helping to deliver better outcomes.

5. Committee Work plan and Reports

- 5.1 The Committee has an agreed work plan which is reviewed regularly.
- 5.2 Meeting agendas can be subject to change if items need to be brought before the Committee sooner rather than later, for example on the back of building regulations or in the light of Scottish Government legislation and planning.
- 5.3 Members are generally satisfied with the quality, clarity and recommendations of Committee papers that are issued before meetings.
- 5.4 One member who responded to the survey said they were dissatisfied with the time before the meeting when papers were received. This has been increased from 3 clear days to one week.

6. Operation of Pre-agenda and Committee Meetings

- 6.1 Meetings operate in an efficient and constructive manner.
- 6.2 The Committee benefits from good officer support, for example in relation to providing prompt answers to questions that arise at pre-agenda.

- 6.3 Two members who responded to the survey said they were dissatisfied with the accuracy of the minutes. However, minutes are accurate as they always record the decisions. Any committee member who thinks that minutes are inaccurate has the opportunity to have them corrected at the Council meeting when they are submitted for approval as a correct record.
- 6.4 The Committee has held away days previously which have been well attended and valuable. These have enabled members and officers to come together to focus on topical issues such as student accommodation and to discuss members expectations of the Committee, which in turn have been reflected in the workplan. It is intended to hold an away day in early 2022 to discuss the Tenant-Led Commission, which is referred to later in this report.

7. COVID-19 Impact

- 7.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the operation of committees, resulting in them being conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The online format has worked well for the NHPR City Policy Committee and members have adjusted well to using Teams. All meetings chaired by the current Convener have taken place online and all members have had the opportunity to contribute.

8. Areas of Good Practice

- 8.1 The NHPR City Policy Committee established a Tenant-Led Commission in response to a Council motion in December 2020, to address the rent crisis for many in the private rented sector. The Commission is unique in that it is tenant-led and inclusive of those with lived experience.
- 8.2 The Tenants Information Service has been engaged as a partner to set up the Commission and provide ongoing development support in relation to the active participation of local people and to empower them to identify their own solutions. This is a good example of community empowerment and participatory democracy in action which will lead to more effective policy development and ultimately, outcomes.
- 8.3 Of the 6 organisations that applied to join the formal board of the Commission, it is heartening to note that those supporting disabled people, students and those with experience of homelessness are represented.
- 8.4 The work of the Commission will inform the development of the next Glasgow Housing Strategy in 2022/23. It will also be relevant to the work of the GCPP Strategic Partnership and Executive Group and the Poverty Leadership Panel.

9. Survey Findings

- 9.1 The survey findings are set out in the following tables:

Table 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to the NHPR CPC Committee?

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
The Committee fulfilled its Terms of Reference	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
The workplan of the Committee reflects its Terms of Reference	83% (5)	17% (1)	
Agendas cover items relevant to the Committee	83% (5)	17% (1)	
I understand the remit of the Committee	100% (6)		
The Committee is effective in carrying out its remit	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
I am able to contribute to the development of the Committee workplan	67% (4)		33% (2)
The Committee influences decisions of the Council	67% (4)	33% (2)	
The Committee influences policies of the Council	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
The Committee helps to drive the improvement function in the Council	67% (4)		33% (2)
The Committee helps the Council deliver better outcomes	67% (2)		33% (2)

Table 2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of Committee papers?

	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Quality of the Committee Papers	83% (5)		17% (1)
Time before Committee when papers are received	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
Clarity of information included in Committee papers	83% (5)		17% (1)
What the papers are asking the Committee to actually do	83% (5)		17% (1)
Standard of minutes with regards to accuracy etc.	67% (4)		33% (2)

Table 3: Below is a list of statements relating to the conduct at NHPRCPC Committee meetings. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
The Chair enables all members to participate	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)

Table 3: Below is a list of statements relating to the conduct at NHPRCPC Committee meetings. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.			
	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
There is generally open and constructive discussion	83% (5)		17% (1)
Officers are generally able to deal with questions that arise	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
Where a question cannot be answered at Committee, a response is provided timeously	67% (4)	33% (2)	
Sufficient time is allocated to allow the Committee to manage its business	67% (4)		33% (2)
The frequency of meetings allows the Committee to carry out its function	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
Members attendance at Committees is satisfactory	50% (3)	50% (3)	
Officers attendance at Committees is satisfactory	83% (5)	17% (1)	
Members behave with respect in meetings	83% (5)	17% (1)	

Table 4: Do you feel the membership of the NHPRCPC Committee has the right mix of skills and experience to carry out its remit?		
	%	Number
Yes	83%	5
No	17%	1
Don't Know		

10. Action Plan

No	Observation	Recommendation
1	Local Development Plans, Locality Planning and community/place-based approaches	Consideration should be given to an awareness raising session on local community/place-based work that is currently being taken forward through NRS and Community Empowerment Services and opportunities for collaboration and joint working through the NHPR and WECCE committees as well as community planning structures.
2	Homelessness functions that fall out with the remit of the NHPR Committee	The issue of homelessness could be discussed more fully with the HSCP and

No	Observation	Recommendation
		NRS in relation to the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

11. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: None

Legal: None

Personnel: None

Procurement: None

Council Strategic Plan:

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? No significant impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: N/A

What are the potential climate impacts as a N/A

result of this proposal?

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No privacy or data protection impacts identified

10. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) consider the action plan to be led by the Director of City Development within Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability, in conjunction with the Convener and Vice Convener; and
- 3) refer the report to the Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee.