



Glasgow City Council

Report by Executive Director of Finance

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**OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
RESULTS OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT**

Purpose of Report

To advise members of the main findings from the recent independent assessment of the Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee, undertaken as required by the Council's Standing Orders.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report; and
- 2) Agree to the implementation of the action plan, to be led by the Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair

Ward No(s):

Citywide: X

Local member(s) advised: Yes No

consulted: Yes No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The council's Standing Orders require all committees to undertake an effectiveness evaluation each year, and an independent assessment in year three of the council.
- 1.2 This report outlines the findings from the independent assessment of the Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee (OPDSC) and covers the period August 2020 to June 2021. The assessment was undertaken by Martin Booth, Executive Director of Finance and Moira Carrigan, Head of Service Development, Financial Services. It follows two previous assessments carried out by the committee with officer support.
- 1.3 The scope of this assessment focussed 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. This included the following questions:
 - Is there a workplan agreed at least annually, and reviewed periodically?
 - Are agendas agreed in advance and do they follow the workplan?
 - 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 Individual surveys for each committee were issued to all committee members, Chairs and Vice Chairs during August 2021. Nine of the 15 elected members invited to complete the survey for OPDSC responded, a return rate of 60%
- 1.5 Officers met with both the Chair and Vice Chair of OPDSC to consider the results of the survey, reflect on the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the committee workplan and identify opportunities for improvement.
- 1.6 The period reported on is one of post-pandemic recovery. Following the assumption of emergency powers, policy and scrutiny committees did not meet with effect from 11th March 2020. City Administration Committee (CAC) then determined that OPDSC should meet from June but with tight guidelines on matters including focus of scrutiny on recovery, very short papers and on length of meetings. From February 2021, the committee received more extensive material and with reference to progress against the Council's Strategic Plan

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Overview of Survey Results

- 2.1.1 The overall findings from the survey are generally positive:

- All respondents agree that OPDSC fulfilled its ToR, that they understand the remit and that OPDSC helps the council deliver better outcomes.
- There is evidence of regular review of the workplan and all agree that the workplan reflects the ToR and that they can contribute to its development.
- A majority (7) agree that the committee is effective in carrying out its remit and that the committee helps drive the improvement function of the council.
- Just over half of respondents (5) agree the results from the last self-assessment carried out in 2020 were used to assist OPDSC.

2.1.2 With respect to other survey questions the following are of note:

- The most divergent responses are in respect of firstly whether OPDSC influences decisions of the Council (5 agree, 1 disagrees, 3 neither agree nor disagree) and secondly, influences the policies of the council (4 agree, 4 disagree, 1 neither agrees nor disagrees)
- Satisfaction levels are split regarding the time before Committee when papers are received (5 satisfied, 2 dissatisfied, 2 neither). One respondent commented that papers should be sent out a full week before Committee meets.
- Satisfaction levels are also split regarding the clarity of the information included in the papers (5 satisfied, 4 neither). One respondent commented that guidance and training should be provided to report authors to help with the way that statistics are included in reports.

2.1.3 The results of the survey are provided as Appendix 1.

2.2 Chair and Vice Chair Discussions

2.2.1 ToR

Although the survey respondents agree that committee fulfilled its ToR, the Chair and Vice Chair consider it important that scrutiny committees should regularly reflect on the scope of their ToR. The scrutiny role is one that should evolve and adapt, and they consider it appropriate for OPDSC to include a review of the ToR in the workplan.

2.2.2 Scrutiny Environment

The Chair and Vice Chair noted that, as indicated at 1.6, the committee adapted its approach to scrutiny during the year in question and continues to do so, reflecting the changing operating environment including the requirement, at least initially, to reduce demands on officers appearing before committee.

They commented that the return to fuller scrutiny had been beneficial including additional reports requested and provided on performance on aspects of customer contact. These reports were welcomed for the transparency they gave to challenges during the 12 months from March 2020 and how these had been addressed.

2.2.3 Co-ordination of the Scrutiny Role

OPDSC and Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (FASC) have been established by the council to scrutinise and monitor operational and financial performance of services and ALEOs. The Chairs of both committees have previously met to discuss synergies and opportunities. The Chair and Vice Chair of OPDSC consider that such discussions should continue to take place.

2.2.4 Timing of Committee Papers

No specific concerns were expressed regarding the length of time papers are published in advance of OPDSC given the inevitable practical issues involved.

There was discussion in relation to the short timescale between the pre agenda and committee itself which limits the ability of the Chair and Vice Chair to ensure reports being presented meet the needs of committee. This could be addressed through both parties gaining sight of reports prior to pre-agenda.

2.2.5 Presentation of Statistical Information

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair highlighted the benefits of adopting a consistent approach to the use and presentation of statistical, financial and numeric information in reports. It was also highlighted that statistics is a unique discipline which requires more expertise than the simple interpretation of numeric data.

2.2.6 Training

Training for OPDSC members was delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as a result of the last review carried out.

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair consider it important to ensure all members have the confidence to fulfil their scrutiny role and to use this to positively impact council policies and performance.

Training for members is usually available at the start of a new administration and/or when they join OPDSC. It is felt there is an opportunity to develop training materials beyond the 'broadcast' of information e.g. using training videos. This approach would have the benefit of ensuring training can be ongoing and more accessible.

2.3 Call-In Function

2.3.1 In line with the ToR, OPDSC fulfilled its call-in function when required to do so. This ensures that the City Administration Committee is accountable for the decisions and actions it takes and that it is delivering the corporate objectives the council has agreed.

2.4 Five recommendations have been made and these are outlined in the following Action Plan.

3. Action Plan

No.	Observation	Recommendation
1	The scrutiny role is one that should evolve and adapt, and it would be appropriate for OPDSC to include a review of the ToR in the workplan	OPDSC review the ToR on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant and consider whether the scope of the ToR is being covered to the satisfaction of the Committee
2	Co-ordination of the scrutiny role within the council could be enhanced	The chairs of FASC and OPDSC work together to co-ordinate workplans, and consider reports that impact both financial and operational matters
3	The short timescale between pre-agenda and committee limits the ability of the Chair and Vice Chair to ensure reports meet the needs of committee	Where possible the Chair and the Vice Chair are engaged with during the drafting stage to ensure reports will meet the scrutiny aims of the committee
4.	Address inconsistencies in how statistical, financial and numeric information is used and presented within reports	A council 'house style' is developed to ensure consistency in how officers present and report statistical, financial and numeric information to committee.
5.	It is important to ensure all members have the confidence to fulfil their scrutiny role	Alternative approaches to training are explored, notably alternatives to a 'broadcast' style.

4. Policy and Resource Implications

4.1 Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	None
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	None
<i>Procurement:</i>	None

Council Strategic Plan: Supports the Council Strategic Plan theme of: *A Well Governed City That Listens and Responds.*

4.2 Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 N/a

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? N/a

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

4.3 Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: None

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? None

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? None

4.4 Privacy and Data Protection Impacts: None

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report; and
- 2) Agree to the implementation of the action plan, to be led by the Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair

Appendix 1

Elected Members Survey Results

Review of Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee

1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to the OPDSC Committee?			
	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
The Committee fulfilled its Terms of Reference	100% (9)		
The workplan of the Committee reflects its Terms of Reference	100% (9)		
Agendas cover items relevant to the Committee	100% (9)		
I understand the remit of the Committee	100% (9)		
The Committee is effective in carrying out its remit	78% (7)	22% (2)	
I am able to contribute to the development of the Committee workplan	100% (9)		
The Committee influences decisions of the Council	56% (5)	33% (3)	11% (1)
The Committee influences policies of the Council	44% (4)	44% (4)	11% (1)
The Committee helps to drive the improvement function in the Council	78% (7)	22% (2)	
The Committee helps the Council deliver better outcomes	100% (9)		

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	89% (8)	11% (1)	
Time before Committee when papers are received	56% (5)	22% (2)	22% (2)
Clarity of information included in Committee papers	56% (5)	44% (4)	
What the papers are asking the Committee to actually do	77% (7)	22% (2)	
Standard of minutes with regards to accuracy etc.	66% (6)	33% (3)	

3: Below is a list of statements relating to the conduct at OPDSC 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	78% (7)	22% (2)	
There is generally open and constructive discussion	78% (7)	22% (2)	
Officers are generally able to deal with questions that arise	100% (9)		
Where a question cannot be answered at Committee, a response is provided timeously	78% (7)	22% (2)	
Sufficient time is allocated to allow the Committee to manage its business	89% (8)	11% (1)	
The frequency of meetings allows the Committee to carry out its function	89% (8)	11% (1)	
Members attendance at Committees is satisfactory	44% (4)	56% (5)	
Officers attendance at Committees is satisfactory	67% (6)	33% (3)	
Members behave with respect in meetings	88% (7)	13% (1)	

4: Do you feel the membership of the OPDSC Committee has the right mix of skills and experience to carry out its remit?

	%	Number
Yes	56%	5
No	11%	1
Don't Know	33%	3