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Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City
Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education

Contact: Maureen McKenna, Ext 74551

RESULTS OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Report:

To advise members of the main findings from the recent independent assessment of the City Policy Committee, undertaken as required by the Council's Standing Orders.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report;
- 2) Consider the action plan, to be led by the Lead Officer, Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities, 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

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Standing Orders require all Committees to undertake an effectiveness evaluation each year, and in year 3 of the Council an independent assessment. This report outlines the findings from the independent assessment which has been undertaken by the Executive Director of Education Services, Maureen McKenna, with the support of the lead officer for Committee related matters .
- 1.2 The scope of the review 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.
- 1.3 Individual surveys for each Committee were issued to all Committee Members, Conveners and Vice Conveners via officers within Strategic Policy and Planning.
- 1.4 Interviews were carried out with the Chair, two members of the Committee, the Lead Officer and the officer responsible for the workplan.

Committee Workplan and Reports

- 2.1 The Committee workplan is agreed at least annually and reviewed periodically. Items can also be added in-between meetings. Those interviewed felt that while this allowed the Committee to be responsive, it meant that the workplan changed regularly.
- 2.2 The terms of reference of the Committee included petitions which by their very nature are responsive and can be submitted at any time during the year. It would, therefore, not be possible to adhere rigidly to a workplan.

Operation of Pre-Agenda and Committee Meetings

- 2.3 The pre-agenda meetings take place approximately 10 days before the actual Committee meetings.
- 2.2 The pre-agenda meetings are attended by the Lead Officer, relevant officers and the Convener of the Committee. Agendas are agreed in advance and follow

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the workplan however as highlighted above there is a need for this to be flexible and responsive.

- 2.3 Committee meetings are well attended and there is effective use of substitutes to ensure appropriate political representation. The Convener is inclusive and encourages participation of all members. She is particularly effective at including members of the public when petitions are being presented.
- 2.4 Officer support at Committee is effective, with officers attending Committee meetings prepared and able to answer questions asked by elected members.
- 2.5 The breadth of the Terms of Reference means that the Lead Officer cannot always provide direct support to the Convenor.
- 2.6 The Committee is operating broadly in accordance with its terms of reference. The wide-ranging nature of the Terms of Reference mean that the agendas can be very varied and those interviewed reported that this can sometimes make them feel frustrated, although they recognise that this is due to the Terms of Reference rather than the chair or the officers. In particular, some papers will be presented to the Committee having already been presented elsewhere, for example to the Integrated Joint Board of the HSCP or the board of Glasgow Life.
- 2.7 The Convenor has taken the theme of Gambling Harm to try to improve consistency with the Committee. Those interviewed felt this was a positive development. They recognised that this met the wellbeing aspect of the Committee.
- 2.8 The co-opted members of the Committee allowed local communities to be represented.
- 2.9 Those interviewed commented that they did not feel that relationships with the third sector or participatory budgeting had been addressed within the Committee. They recognised fully the challenges of meeting the full Terms of Reference of the Committee.
- 2.10 Petitions being presented can take up almost all of the Committee's allotted time meaning other papers are not able to be given full attention.
- 2.11 Attendance at Committee meetings is very good and members actively engage. Those interviewed felt that there could be greater opportunities for policy development to take place.

Covid-19 Impact

- 2.12 The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted upon the operation of Committees, resulting in the meetings being conducted online via Microsoft Teams.
- 2.13 The online format has worked well and members have adjusted to using Teams. This has included There have been few technical difficulties.

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2.14 It is recognised that there are benefits in continuing with the online approach to enable members to have work-life balance, for example, it reduces the need for travel. However, in-person meetings can make it easier to include all members of the Committee.

3 Survey

3.1 As part of the assessment process, all members were offered the opportunity to respond to a survey.

3.2 Only five of the 15 committee members responded to the survey. An analysis of the responses is included as an appendix.

4 Action Plan

No.	Observation	Recommendation
1	The Terms of Reference are too broad.	The Terms of Reference should be reviewed to improve the coherence of the Committee. As part of this review, consideration should be given to ensuring that the Terms of Reference is manageable so that all aspects can be covered.
2	Petitions can take up the Committee's allotted time.	Consideration to be given to having Public Petitions heard at times outwith the Committee cycle.

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CITY POLICY COMMITTEES Membership:

15 members of the Council comprising:- SNP – 7 Labour – 6 Conservative – 1 Green – 1

Each Committee may appoint up to 4 people as nonvoting co-optees to bring access to external expertise, knowledge or experience, as necessary.

Convener: Member of the Administration

Quorum: 4

Meeting arrangements: 6 weekly.

General Terms of Reference for all City Policy Committees:

Each City Policy Committee has responsibility for discharging the following functions:

1. To examine on behalf of the Council various policies, strategies and plans in draft relating to functions within its Terms of Reference (whether provided directly by the Council, external organisations or partnerships) and report on these to the City Administration Committee. These policies can be Council policies, or City policies developed with Community Planning partners;
2. To undertake reviews of policies, revise or create new policies in relation to any matters falling within the specific Terms of Reference of the committee or as requested by the City Administration Committee and to submit these to the City Administration Committee for approval. These policies can be Council policies, or policies developed with Community Planning partners;
3. To review, develop and oversee the implementation of those Council Plan commitments and priorities assigned to it under the specific Terms of Reference to deliver the Council Plan;
4. To review the delivery of services in connection with the discharge of any Council function that falls within the committee's specific Terms of Reference, subject to any review ensuring that operations remain within the Budget set and agreed by Council or any additional funding allocated to that committee by the Council or the City Administration Committee;
5. To work on a cross cutting basis with other City Policy Committees, Conveners, services and ALEOs as appropriate; 6 To establish Working Groups as deemed appropriate, and for a time limited period, in order to take forward specific pieces of policy review or development which will then be reported back to the City Policy Committee, and then, if necessary, to the City Administration Committee; and
6. To take account of any implications of Brexit and the City Region Economic Strategy in making any recommendations or taking any decisions.

WELLBEING, EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNITY AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT CP COMMITTEE.

Terms of Reference

In addition to general Terms of Reference for all CP committees:

1. To address the work plan of the proposed Council Plan themes: A Well Governed City that Listens and Responds; and a Healthier City;

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2. To fulfil the functions of policy development (including consideration of equalities issues) as they relate to Council policies and services for wellbeing, empowerment, community and citizen engagement.

These functions include:

- Community Planning, including community justice;
 - Integrated Grant Fund;
 - financial inclusion;
 - community councils;
 - public processions;
 - public petitions;
 - relationships with the third sector;
 - community capacity building;
 - community empowerment;
 - participatory budgeting; • partnership engagement; and
 - culture, sport and leisure and their impact on wellbeing within the city;
3. To act as a sounding board for the Council's input to the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board; and
 4. To receive updates on culture, sport and leisure and their impact on wellbeing in the city and, in particular, on specific action from both Council and Glasgow Life officers on how the People Make Glasgow Communities programme is delivering community empowerment, capacity building and partnership engagement.

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Briefing to: Maureen McKenna – Executive Director of Education Services

Subject: Elected Members Survey – Review of Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee

Contact: Darren Keenan, Strategic Policy and Planning

Date: 30th September 2021

1.0 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 As part of this assessment a survey was distributed to all Elected Members of the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE). It invited them to provide their views on various aspects of the committee and allowed suggestions for any areas of improvement to be considered. The survey was carried out between the 6th and 27th August 15th 2021.
- 1.3 All 15 Elected Members were invited to complete the survey, of which 5 were returned; this represents a return rate of 33%.
- 1.4 The overall findings from the survey are mainly positive and are listed within this briefing, along with any additional limited written comments received. Please note that due to the small overall sample (15), and number of respondents (5), where appropriate whole numbers in brackets are listed along with percentages for information purposes.

2.0 Role of the WECCE Committee

- 2.1 All respondents (100%) agree that agendas cover items relevant to the Committee and that they understand the remit of the Committee. A majority (80% 4 respondents) also agree that the Committee fulfilled its Terms of Reference and that they were able to contribute to the development of the workplan. While 60% (3 respondents) agree that the Committee is effective in carrying out its remit.
- 2.2 However, views are more evenly split in terms of the Committee influencing decisions of the Council (40% agree and 40% disagree); and the Committee influencing the policies of the Council (40% agree and 40% disagree). One respondent (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed with each statement.

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2.3 Again, views were split in terms of the Committee helping to drive the improvement function in the Council and to deliver better outcomes, with 40% who agree and 40% who disagree with each statement. (Table 1)

Table 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to the WECCEE Committee?			
	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
The Committee fulfilled its Terms of Reference	80% (4)		20% (1)
The workplan of the Committee reflects its Terms of Reference	60% (3)		40% (2)
Agendas cover items relevant to the Committee	100% (5)		
I understand the remit of the Committee	100% (5)		
The Committee is effective in carrying out its remit	60% (3)		40% (2)
I am able to contribute to the development of the Committee workplan	80% (4)	20% (1)	
The Committee influences decisions of the Council	40% (2)	20% (1)	40% (2)
The Committee influences policies of the Council	40% (2)	20% (1)	40% (2)
The Committee helps to drive the improvement function in the Council	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)
The Committee helps the Council deliver better outcomes	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)

3.0 Committee Papers

3.1 The majority of respondents (80% 4 respondents) are generally satisfied with committee papers issued before meetings, in terms of the quality of the papers, time before Committee when papers are received, and what the papers are asking them to do.

3.2 However, they are slightly less satisfied (60% 3 respondents) with the clarity of information included, and the standard of minutes with regards to accuracy etc. (Table 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	80% (4)	20% (1)	
Time before Committee when papers are received	80% (4)		20% (1)

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Table 2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of Committee papers?			
	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Clarity of information included in Committee papers	60% (3)	20% (1)	20% (1)
What the papers are asking the Committee to actually do	80% (4)		20% (1)
Standard of minutes with regards to accuracy etc.	60% (3)	20% (1)	20% (1)

3.3 Some additional comments were provided in relation to Committee papers. These included:

- Huge variety of papers, with no standard format of reports
- Minutes are accurate in recording decisions – but do not record the substance of the debate, questioning and answers

4.0 Conduct at WECCE Meetings

4.1 Views on the conduct at WECCE were very positive, with almost all respondents agreeing with all statements listed below (Table 3).

Table 3: Below is a list of statements relating to the conduct at WECCE 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	100% (5)		
There is generally open and constructive discussion	100% (5)		
Officers are generally able to deal with questions that arise	100% (5)		
Where a question cannot be answered at Committee, a response is provided timeously	80% (4)		
Sufficient time is allocated to allow the Committee to manage its business	100% (5)		
The frequency of meetings allows the Committee to carry out its function	100% (5)		
Members attendance at Committees is satisfactory	100% (5)		
Officers attendance at Committees is satisfactory	100% (5)		
Members behave with respect in meetings	100% (5)		

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5.0 Skills and Experience

5.1 Almost all respondents (80% 4 respondents) feel that the WECCE Committee has the right mix of skills and experience to carry out its remit; while 20% (1 respondent) did not feel this way. (Table 4)

Table 4: Do you feel the membership of the WECCE Committee has the right mix of skills and experience to carry out its remit?		
	%	Number
Yes	80%	4
No	20	1
Don't Know		

6.0 Performance Improvement

6.1 In terms of performance improvement, 40% (2 respondents) agree the results from the last self-assessment were used to help improve WECCE Committee; while 20% (1 respondent) was undecided. A further 40% (2 respondents) provided no answer.