

# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 5 August 2014

## Political management arrangements: annual review of working groups

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	

### Executive summary

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On 3 December 2013 the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee agreed that an annual review of the number and scope of working groups should be completed to enhance governance and corporate oversight.

The Committee also agreed that the appropriate director, in consultation with the Convener and Vice-Convener of the relevant committee would consider which groups could be rationalised as officer only groups or if their work could be undertaken by the policy development and review sub-committees.

An initial review and rationalisation has been undertaken and the number of working groups supporting the decision making bodies of the Council has been reduced from 43 to 28.

### Links

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Coalition pledges

Council outcomes

[CO25](#)

Single Outcome Agreement

## Political management arrangements: annual review of working groups

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 To agree the current status of Council working groups as set out in appendix 1; and
- 1.2 To note a review of the effectiveness of policy development and review sub-committees will be considered by Council in October 2014.

### Background

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- 2.1 On 24 October 2013, the Council agreed that the majority of issues currently being considered by working groups could be included in the work programmes of policy development and review sub-committees. In addition, Council confirmed that working groups should only be used where essential and be constituted appropriately to align with the issue under consideration.
- 2.2 Subsequently the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 3 December 2013, considered the number of working groups and a series of proposals to improve the governance arrangements surrounding them.
- 2.3 The Committee agreed that the membership and remit of working groups should be appointed by committee and the membership should be re-appointed annually. The Committee also required that an annual report should be submitted to the Committee, following the re-appointment of working groups by committees, on the number and scope of working groups to ensure that corporate oversight could be undertaken.
- 2.4 The Committee also agreed that the appropriate director, in consultation with the Convener and Vice-Convener of the relevant committee, would consider which groups could be rationalised as officer only groups or if their work could be undertaken by the policy development and review sub-committees.

### Main report

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- 3.1 Working Groups are now appointed annually by the relevant committee and the membership is re-appointed in the May/June meeting cycle in line with the practice undertaken for sub-committees. This provides a democratic legitimacy and allows each committee to monitor the number and relevance of all working groups in their area.

- 3.2 In December 2013 there were a total of 43 working groups in operation. Over the last six months, efforts were taken to reduce the number of these by subsuming their work into the policy development sub-committees, rationalising with other working groups and making some groups officer only. A number of working groups also completed their work programme and were dissolved.
- 3.3 An example of this included the Education, Children and Families Committee which subsumed the work of the Early Years, Estate Strategy and Rising Rolls and Strengthening Support for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties Working Groups into the work programme of the Committee's policy development and review sub-committee.
- 3.4 The Health, Social Care and Housing Committee utilised a different method and reduced its working groups by merging groups with similar areas of work into new groups with a wider remit. An example of this was the merging of the Co-operative Housing group and the Empty Homes Task Force to become Housing Pledges.
- 3.5 Both committees have reduced the number of working groups but ensured that key areas of work continue to be prioritised in an efficient, effective and joined up manner.
- 3.6 Many working groups that are established are now short term working groups with a documented and specific work programme. The outcome of the matters considered by the working group is then reported to committee directly or contributes to the content of a report to committee. An example is the Pay Day Loans Working Group which completed its work programme, reported to committee and the recommended next steps implemented.
- 3.7 The current status of working groups is as follows:

<b>Working Group Status</b>	<b>Number</b>
Retained	23
Completed work programme	7
Rationalised with other groups	4
Subsumed into PDR Sub-Committee	4
Officer only	3
New	5
To be confirmed	2
<b>Total working groups still operational</b>	<b>28</b>

- 3.8 The reduction from 43 to 28 operational working groups represents a significant streamlining in the governance arrangements that support the decision making committees of the Council. However, it is still recognised that working groups can be an appropriate vehicle to discuss, consult and engage on certain areas of Council business.
- 3.9 Each executive committee will continue to monitor its complement of working groups in the upcoming year and determine whether in each case they remain the most appropriate way to support the decision making bodies of the Council.
- 3.10 In addition, consultation is underway, in line with the review of political management arrangements, to assess the effectiveness of policy development and review sub-committees. The outcome and recommendations will be reported to Council in October 2014.

### **Measures of success**

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- 4.1 To operate an efficient streamlined system to effectively support the decision making bodies of the Council.

### **Financial impact**

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- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.
- 5.2 The streamlining of working groups results in a reduction in elected member and officer time in supporting and attending the groups.

### **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The reduction in working groups supports the decision by Council in October 2013 and Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2013 to only utilise working groups when necessary and to use policy development sub-committee instead. A robust system where committee appoints working groups annually and the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee performs monitoring role, supports good governance.

### **Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 There are no direct equalities impacts as a result of this report.

### **Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 There is no direct sustainability impact as a result of this report.

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 Engagement with service areas and committees was undertaken when each committee reviewed its working groups.

## Background reading/external references

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[Review of political management arrangements – Council 24 October 2013](#)

[Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 3 December 2014 minute](#)

[Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 3 December 2014 – report: Working Groups](#)

### Alastair D Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

Kirsty-Louise Campbell, Governance Manager

E-mail: [kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 3654

Gavin King, Committee Services Manager

E-mail: [gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 4239

## Links

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### Coalition pledges

**Council outcomes** CO25: The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives.

### Single Outcome Agreement

**Appendices** Appendix – working group status

Ref	Name of Group	Connected Committee	Status
1	Member / Officer Working Group on the Review of Grants to Third Parties	Communities and Neighbourhoods	Completed work
2	Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) Conveners	Communities and Neighbourhoods	TBC
3	Edinburgh Cultural Partnership	Culture and Sport	Retained
4	Meadowbank Working Group	Culture and Sport	Retained
5	Short Life WG - Council Owned Sport Facilities and Services	Culture and Sport	New
6	Festivals and Events Working Group	Culture and Sport	Retained
7	Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum	Education, Children and Families	Retained
8	Improving Community Access to Schools	Education, Children and Families	Retained
9	Strengthening Support for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties	Education, Children and Families	Subsumed into PDR Sub-Committee
10	Estate Strategy and Rising Rolls	Education, Children and Families	Subsumed into PDR Sub-Committee
11	Early Years	Education, Children and Families	Subsumed into PDR Sub-Committee
12	Consultative Committee with Parents	Education, Children and Families	Retained
13	Joint Officer/Member Group on Corporate Parenting of Looked After Children	Education, Children and Families	Retained
14	Castlebrae Working Group	Education, Children and Families	Completed work
15	Third Party Payments Working Group	Education, Children and Families	New
16	Pay Day Loans	Finance and Resources	Completed work
17	Elected Members ICT and Digital Sounding Board	Finance and Resources	Retained
18	Budget Sounding Board	Finance and Resources	Retained
19	Joint Consultative Group	Finance and Resources	Retained
20	Corporate, Health, Safety and Well Being	Finance and Resources	Retained
21	Edinburgh Affordable Homes	Health, Social Care and Housing	Combined with 21st Century Homes to become Edinburgh Affordable Housing
22	21st Century Homes	Health, Social Care and Housing	Combined with Edinburgh Affordable Homes to become Edinburgh Affordable Housing
23	Edinburgh Affordable Housing	Health, Social Care and Housing	Retained
24	Empty Homes Task Force	Health, Social Care and Housing	Merged into Housing Pledges
25	Edinburgh Homelessness Forum	Health, Social Care and Housing	Retained
26	Multi Storey Working Group	Health, Social Care and Housing	Officer only
27	Tenant Participation Working Group	Health, Social Care and Housing	Subsumed into PDR Sub-Committee
28	Co-operative Approaches to Housing Cross-Party Political Sounding Board	Health, Social Care and Housing	Merged into Housing Pledges
29	Housing Pledges	Health, Social Care and Housing	New
30	Welfare Reform	Health, Social Care and Housing	New
31	Health and Social Care Partnership	Health, Social Care and Housing	Retained
32	Civic Forum	Planning	Officer only
33	City Centre Vision Member Officer Group	Planning	TBC
34	Edinburgh Development Forum	Planning	Officer only
35	Regulatory Policy	Regulatory	Now one group
36	Licensing Policy Development: Member/Officer Working Group	Regulatory	Retained
37	Tram All Party Oversight Group	Transport and Environment	Retained
38	Tram Operations Group	Transport and Environment	Completed work
39	Active Travel Forum	Transport and Environment	Retained
40	Capital Prioritisation	Transport and Environment	Completed work
41	CEC Local Access Forum	Transport and Environment	Retained
42	Transport Forum	Transport and Environment	Retained
43	CEC Officer and Member Working Group on Carbon, Climate and Sustainability	Transport and Environment	Retained
44	Zero Waste Cross Party Group	Transport and Environment	Retained
45	Duddingston Village Traffic Working Group	Transport and Environment	Retained
46	Edinburgh Roadworks Ahead	Transport and Environment	Retained
47	Water of Leith Phase 2	Transport and Environment	Completed work
48	Leith programme Oversight Group	Transport and Environment	New
49	Leith Links Steering Group	Transport and Environment	Completed work