Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 4 December 2018

Committee Reporting – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

Item number	8.6
Report number	
Wards	All

Executive summary

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 27 November 2018 considered a report which set out options developed by a short-life officer working group to improve the standard of committee reporting, including revised template options and a supporting workplan.

The report has been referred to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee for a decision.

Terms of Referral

Committee Reporting – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

Terms of referral

1.1 The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 27 November 2018 considered a report which set out options developed by a short-life officer working group to improve the standard of committee reporting, including revised template options and a supporting workplan.

1.2 The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee agreed to refer the report to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, with the following feedback:

- Members of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee considered that Options 1 and 2 had the most merit.

- Clear guidance should be provided to officers on completing equalities and sustainability impact assessments.

- It was important that the report author name should be on page 1 of the report.

- There should be a requirement to consider best value in the Financial Implications section.

- The Measures of Success section should be retained.

For Decision/Action

2.1 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee is asked to consider options 1, 2 and 3 and agree a preferred option.

Background reading / external references

[Webcast of Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee – 27 November 2018](#)

Laurence Rockey
Head of Strategy and Communications

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Links

Appendices	Appendix 1 – Committee Reporting – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday, 27 November 2018

Committee Reporting

Item number	
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	N/A
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

Options developed by a short-life officer working group to improve the standard of committee reporting are detailed. This includes revised template options and a supporting workplan.

Report

Committee Reporting

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Committee considers options 1, 2 and 3 and refers a recommended option to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

2. Background

2.1 The current report template was introduced as part of the Council's Governance Review in September 2012. This was designed to reflect and take advantage of modern business practices, including the Council's recent move to electronic circulation of meeting papers.

2.2 Further incremental changes have been made to the template in the intervening period to reflect Audit Scotland recommendations, changes to legislation and service area guidance. This has included the addition of the Financial Impact and Risk, Policy, Compliance and Governance Sections.

3. Main report

3.1 Feedback has been received from officers and elected members that the existing report template needs refreshing in order to better support committee decision making and facilitate transparency.

3.2 A short-life working group consisting of officers from Strategy and Communications was formed to assist with the development of a new reporting template and supporting measures. The group was given the brief of simplifying and modernising the template whilst retaining strong internal controls. Ensuring that any solution considered the needs of all elected members and remained accessible to members of the public was of key importance.

3.3 Engagement sessions with elected members and business support staff took place in October 2019. Feedback on existing and draft options was provided by attendees and has been incorporated into final proposed versions (appendix 1-3).

3.4 The following features are contained in proposed options:

All options

3.5 All options presented include embedded writing guidance. This guidance is designed to increase visibility and will be combined with the implementation of a

committee management system later this year. (see section 3.12.5). A more comprehensive guidance document will be refreshed and retained.

3.6   All text and content has been made compliant with Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) accessibility guidelines.

3.7   The authorising officer and report contact information has been moved to the front page. This improves ease of reference and makes full meeting papers more navigable for those using screen reading software in combination with electronic bookmarks.

Option 1 (appendix 1)

3.8   Option 1 is a streamlined version of the existing template. This pulls out and highlights key sections.

   3.8.1   Recommendations have been moved to the front page and swapped with Executive Summary.

   3.8.2   Sections on Risk, Policy and Governance Impact; Equalities and Sustainability have been merged into a new Stakeholder/Community Impact Section.

   3.8.3   Measures of Success has been replaced by Next Steps.

   3.8.4   All other sections have been retained.

   3.8.5   Guidance requires authors to minimise Main Report section contents to a maximum of two pages.

Option 2 (appendix 2)

3.9   Option 2 is significantly shorter than other versions and focuses on providing key information to assist decision makers while utilising appendices to present additional material.

   3.9.1   Recommendations have been moved to the front page in place of the Executive Summary.

   3.9.2   Background and Background Reading sections have been merged.

   3.9.3   A new Next Steps section has been added.

   3.9.4   Main Report has been replaced by Supporting Information. Guidance requires authors to minimise this section to a maximum of two pages.

   3.9.5   Any additional information to that in Supporting Information should be included as an appendix under this option. This includes financial considerations, stakeholder/community impacts, statistics and analysis. This will give flexibility.

Option 3 (appendix 3)

3.10   This option mirrors the existing template most closely. All sections remain the same.

3.11 Financial Impact has been renamed Affordability and Value for Money.

Supporting Activities

3.12 Activities will be carried out to support the implementation of a new template as follows:

3.12.1 In addition to the embedded guidance, the separate report writing guidance document will be refreshed with input from service areas.

3.12.2 An officer e-learning module for report writing will be developed to reflect the new template and practices.

3.12.3 There will be communication of the new template and practices through internal newsletters, briefings and the orb intranet site. Drop-in help sessions will be established for report authors and service area 'report champions' will be identified.

3.12.4 The effectiveness of the new process will be reviewed by Strategy and Communications on a rolling-basis.

3.12.5 A committee management system including report management tools will be rolled out during 2019. This is expected to create overall efficiencies in the reporting process whilst allowing for a more structured management of report writing. Report authors will be required to gain authority to access the report writing system. This can be issued on completion of report writing training or e-learning. Report writing guidance can also be displayed more prominently by requiring authors to open a new template with embedded guidance within the software package.

4. Measures of success

4.1 An effective report template and work programme will better support the decision-making process for elected members whilst ensuring that reports remain accessible to members of the public.

5. Financial impact

5.1 All activities described in this report and presented options are contained within existing budgets. Reduction in report sizes is expected to provide increased capacity for directorates.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 An effective committee reporting process embeds internal controls and facilitates healthy governance and the achievement of best value through quality decision making, accountability and transparency.

7. Equalities impact

7.1 Proposed options have been developed to ensure that the report template meets key RNIB guidelines for accessibility and readability.

8. Sustainability impact

8.1 The current paperless reporting process continues to support sustainable outcomes and a relative reduction in carbon footprint. The introduction of a committee management system and related report workflow tools will be utilised to further reduce the paper circulation of meeting papers whilst still meeting statutory and accessibility requirements.

9. Consultation and engagement

9.1 Workshop sessions and one-to-one briefings were made available to all members of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee and Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

9.2 Individual service areas were engaged through a workshop for executive officers. Feedback was also provided individually by those unable to attend.

9.3 Analysis of report templates of 12 other local authorities, Cosla and the UK Civil Service was undertaken.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 [City of Edinburgh Council – 20 September 2012 – Review of Political Management Arrangements](#)

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Option 1 - Streamlined

Appendix 2 – Option 2 – Super Streamlined

Appendix 3 – Option 3 – Existing Structure

Committee name

Time, day, date

Name of report

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1.   Recommendations

1.1   Recommendations should be clear, concise and focussed.

1.2   Recommendations asking the committee to note information should be limited to instances where this has been requested or is of vital importance to the committee.

Director's name

Director's job title

Contact: Name, job title

E-mail: e-mail address | Tel: 0131 123 4567

Name of report

2.   Executive Summary

2.1   The Executive Summary should summarise the contents of the report and reason for submission in one paragraph.

3.   Background

3.1   The background section should contain the essential information needed to understand the reason for the report. Keep the information succinct. If detailed background is required, this should be listed in appendices.

4.   Main report

4.1   This section should be no longer than two pages. Any additional detail should be included as appendices. Elected members have to read a large volume of reports in a short amount of time. Include only the information requested or required to support the recommendations or options. Good writing advice is contained within the report writing guidance document.

5.   Next Steps

4.1   This section should outline the next steps that will be taken following the Committee report.

6.   Financial impact

6.1   Have you considered the following:

6.1.1   Business Case

6.1.2   Budget provision

6.1.3   Refer to any revenue or capital costs associated with the report

6.1.4   State what these costs are and give the financial year(s) in which the costs will be incurred

6.1.5   Income/Savings

6.1.6   External funding

6.1.7   A comparison of the financing options that have been considered

6.1.8   Any financial risks.

6.2   For Procurement reports the following should be detailed:

6.2.1   The detail and justification of quality/cost split

6.2.2   Pricing or pricing range whether possible.

6.2.3   Additional information as detailed in the report guidance document.

7.   Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1   Have you consulted or engaged with the community in creating this report/proposal? What is the impact on the community and does it meet any of the Council's priorities?

7.2   This section should provide any health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.

7.3   You should clearly identify any impacts relating to carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development, as well as the steps taken (or planned) to mitigate any adverse impacts.

8.   Background reading/external references

8.1   A background paper is a document relating to the subject matter of the report that either contained information on which the report was based on or was relied upon by the author in preparing the report. Private documents should not be listed in this section. Documents listed are required by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to be made available to the public on request. If possible this should be a link to a copy of the document online.

8.2   You should also reference relevant previous Council reports and minutes by linking to Council Papers Online.

9.   Appendices

Committee name

Time, day, date

Name of report

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

1.1 Recommendations should be clear, concise and focussed.

1.2 Recommendations asking the committee to note information should be limited to instances where this has been requested or is of vital importance to the committee.

Director's name

Director's job title

- Contact: Name, job title

- E-mail: e-mail address | Tel: 0131 123 4567

EDINBVRGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Report

Name of report

2.   Background

2.1   The background section should contain the essential information needed to understand the reason for the report. Keep the information succinct. If detailed background is required, this should be listed in appendices.

2.2   Background papers should also be included in this section. These are documents relating to the subject matter of the report that either contained information on which the report was based on or was relied upon by the author in preparing the report. Private documents should not be listed in this section. Documents listed are required by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to be made available to the public on request. If possible, this should be a link to a copy of the document online.

2.3   You should also reference previous Council reports and minutes on the issue by linking to Council Papers Online.

3.   Next Steps

3.1   This section should outline the next steps that will be taken following the Committee report.

4.   Supporting Information

4.1   This section should be no longer than two pages. Any additional detail should be included as appendices. Elected members have to read a large volume of reports in a short amount of time. Include only the information requested or required to support the recommendations or options. Good writing advice is contained within the report writing guidance document.

5.   Appendices

The following information can be included as appendices:

Committee - Date

- Financial Considerations
- Stakeholder/Community Impact – community engagement, equalities impact, sustainability impact
- Statistics and Analysis

Appendix 1 – Financial Considerations

This section should generally include:

- Business Case
- Budget provision
- Refer to any revenue or capital costs associated with the report
- State what these costs are and give the financial year(s) in which the costs will be incurred
- Income/Savings
- External funding
- A comparison of the financing options that have been considered
- Any financial risks.

Not all of these considerations will be relevant for every report but they provide guidelines on what should be considering to ensure a report has the required information included.

For Procurement reports the following should be detailed:

- The detail and justification of quality/cost split
- Pricing or pricing range whether possible.
- Additional information as detailed in the report guidance document.

Appendix 2 – Stakeholder/Community Impact

Have you consulted or engaged with the community in creating this report/proposal? What is the impact on the community and does it meet any of the Council's priorities?

This section should provide any health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.

You should clearly identify any impacts relating to carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development, as well as the steps taken (or planned) to mitigate any adverse impacts.

Appendix 3 – Statistics and Analysis

Statistics, tables, figures and analysis should be included in this section.

For accessibility purposes descriptions should be included as standard text beside each inclusion.

Committee name

Time, day, date

Name of report

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should summarise the contents of the report and reason for submission in one paragraph.

Director's name

Director's job title

Contact: Name, job title

E-mail: e-mail address | Tel: 0131 123 4567

Name of report

1. Recommendations

1.1 Recommendations should be clear, concise and focussed.

1.2 Recommendations asking the committee to note information should be limited to instances where this has been requested or is of vital importance to the committee.

2. Background

2.1 The background section should contain the essential information needed to understand the reason for the report. Keep the information succinct. If detailed background is required, this should be listed in appendices.

3. Main report

3.1 This section should be no longer than two pages. Any additional detail should be included as appendices. Elected members have to read a large volume of reports in a short amount of time. Include only the information requested or required to support the recommendations or options. Good writing advice is contained within the report writing guidance document.

4. Measures of Success

4.1 This section should identify how the proposed actions in the report will be measured or assessed. This ensures that an outcome or performance improvement is identified at the outset and can be effectively scrutinised.

5. Affordability and Value for Money

5.1 Have you considered the following:

5.1.1 Business Case

5.1.2 Budget provision

     5.1.3   Refer to any revenue or capital costs associated with the report

     5.1.4   State what these costs are and give the financial year(s) in which the costs will be incurred

     5.1.5   Income/Savings

     5.1.6   External funding

     5.1.7   A comparison of the financing options that have been considered

     5.1.8   Any financial risks.

5.2   For Procurement reports the following should be detailed:

     5.2.1   The detail and justification of quality/cost split

     5.2.2   Pricing or pricing range whether possible.

     5.2.3   Additional information as detailed in the report guidance document.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance Impact

6.1   This section should provide any health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.

7. Equalities impact

7.1   All reports to Council Committees should contain summary information on the relationship of its contents, analysis or recommendations of the report with

     7.1.1   The three Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED) general duties.

     7.1.2   The ten key areas of rights as identified in the ERIA guidance.

8. Sustainability impact

8.1   You should clearly identify any impacts relating to carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development, as well as the steps taken (or planned) to mitigate any adverse impacts.

9. Consultation and engagement

9.1   This section should highlight who you have consulted or engaged with on the subject of the report. This may involve referring to any consultation period or that specific partners have been consulted with. If a formal consultation exercise with citizens or partners is necessary it should be undertaken to adhere with the Council's Consultation Framework (Consulting Edinburgh)

10.   Background reading/external references

10.1   A background paper is a document relating to the subject matter of the report that either contained information on which the report was based on or was relied upon by the author in preparing the report. Private documents should not be listed in this section. Documents listed are required by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to be made available to the public on request. If possible this should be a link to a copy of the document online.

10.2   You should also reference relevant previous Council reports and minutes by linking to Council Papers Online.

11.   Appendices