

# Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday 31 March 2022

## Review of Effectiveness of Scrutiny of the Transport and Environment Committee – Self-Evaluation and Lessons Learnt

### 1. Recommendations

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The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the outputs from self-evaluation workshop undertaken by the Transport and Environment Committee members on 9 February 2022 to assess current political management arrangements, committee effectiveness and lessons learnt from this Council term.
- 1.2 Note the outputs from the self-evaluation workshop will be used to inform the design of political management arrangement proposals and support provided to elected members around the local government election 2022 and following council term.

**Richard Carr**

Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

Contact: Hayley Barnett, Corporate Governance Manager

Legal and Assurance Division, Corporate Services Directorate

E-mail: [Hayley.barnett@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Hayley.barnett@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 3996

# Report

## Review of Effectiveness of Scrutiny of the Transport and Environment Committee – Self-Evaluation and Lessons Learnt

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides a summary of a self-evaluation workshop undertaken by Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) members on 9 February 2022 to assess current political management arrangements (PMAs), committee effectiveness and lessons learnt from this Council term.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 As part of the Council's preparations for the May 2022 Local Government election, the Corporate Governance Team is conducting a review of the Council's PMAs. A key part of this review is the evaluation of current arrangements. Facilitated self-evaluation sessions by committee members was scheduled with all executive committees before the election and used to inform the design of proposed post-election PMAs and the support provided to councillors for the 2022-2027 term.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 All TEC members were invited to attend a workshop on 9 February 2022. The workshop evaluated current PMAs relevant to the TEC followed by an evaluation of effectiveness in key areas of responsibility.

#### Political Management Arrangement Assessment

- 4.2 Workshop attendees evaluated six key PMA areas against the scoring criteria set out in figure 1.1 below. The six key areas were: terms of reference, remit and purpose of committee; balance of reporting; number of reports and time spent on each report/meeting frequency; composition of committee and number of committee members; ALEOs, and training.

Figure 1.1 – Scoring Criteria	
5	PMAs work well in this area and there is no need for change.
4	PMAs are working well but there are small changes that could be made to improve effectiveness.

3	PMA's are sufficient but there is improvement required.
2	PMA's provide some value but significant improvement is required.
1	PMA's are not effective in their purpose/there is a need for complete redesign.

4.3 Terms of Reference (TORs), Remit and Purpose of Committee - the score agreed by members in this section was **1 - 3**.

4.4 Elected members were asked the following questions:

4.4.1 Are the Committee's TORs appropriate?

4.4.2 Is there anything that you think should sit elsewhere/currently sits elsewhere and would work well as part of the Committee's remit?

4.4.3 Are you clear on the overall purpose of the Committee?

4.5 Points made during discussion included:

4.5.1 The Committee remit is too large and could potentially be divided into strategic policy and operational services with a similar relationship to /between Planning Committee and DM Sub.

4.5.2 A strategic direction for the Committee could be set at the beginning of the new Council term to allow more cohesive decision making.

4.5.3 Ongoing training for members to provide local/national context and policy awareness.

4.6 Balance of Reporting - the score agreed by members in this section was **4**.

4.7 Elected members were asked the following questions:

4.7.1 Are you happy with the balance of reporting?

4.7.2 Is there anything that you'd like to see more/less dedicated reports on?

4.8 Points made during discussion included:

4.8.1 The Committee has a large remit but it's the significant status of the reports considered that creates the workload issue.

4.8.2 Reports stemming from motions could contain information on officer capacity to deliver recommendations – similar to financial implications.

4.8.3 A pre-check stage for competency of motions where there is a technical ask.

4.9 Number of reports and time spent on each report/meeting frequency - the score agreed by members in this section was **2**.

4.10 Elected members were asked the following questions:

4.10.1 Do you feel the committee spends an appropriate amount of time on each report?

4.10.2 Is an 8 weekly meeting cycle appropriate?

- 4.11 Points made during discussion included:
  - 4.11.1 Standard 8-week frequency doesn't work in reality given the volume of business under the TEC remit; special meetings were necessary.
  - 4.11.2 Can be difficult to keep the debate focused, amendments to ToRs or Standing Orders or clerking support to support this would be welcomed.
  - 4.11.3 The chair (including any future additional sub-committee) could be shared between the Convener and Vice-Convener to allow more practical support.
- 4.12 Composition of Committee and Number of Committee Members - the score agreed by members in this section was **5**.
- 4.13 Elected members were asked the following question:
  - 4.13.1 Does the composition of the committee aid good scrutiny and allow it to fulfil its purpose?
- 4.14 Points made during discussion included:
  - 4.14.1 Eleven members was appropriate for decision-making and reflected the political balance of the Council.
- 4.15 ALEOs – the score agreed by members in this section was **no score allocated**.
- 4.16 Elected members were asked:
  - 4.16.1 Assess the Committee's ALEOs role in regard to assurance, scrutiny and support of service delivery.
- 4.17 Points made during discussion included:
  - 4.17.1 Issue of conflicts of interest with members on both the ALEO Board and parent Committee.
  - 4.17.2 ALEO Chief Executives attending Committee provided helpful context when discussing service implications.
- 4.18 Training – the score agreed by members in this section was **3**.
- 4.19 Elected members were asked:
  - 4.19.1 Would you benefit from specific training or briefing to assist your work on this committee?
  - 4.19.2 How would this best be delivered?
- 4.20 Points made during discussion included:
  - 4.20.1 The views of children and young people should be enshrined in all our decision-making.
  - 4.20.2 Mandatory ongoing committee specific training was supported to ensure focused debate and appropriate Council questions.

## **Conclusion**

- 4.21 Attendees raised extensive feedback throughout the workshop which was noted by officers leading on the preparations for Council 2022. Outputs would inform the design of PMA options, guidance and training.
- 4.22 Members concluded that the committee remit was too large, meetings could be more focused and that changes to PMAs should be considered to help facilitate this.
- 4.23 Members specifically noted that the Committee would benefit from policy specific training throughout the term, and a shared strategic direction of the Committee agreed at the start of the next Council term.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Equivalent self-evaluation workshops will be held with all executive committees. The outputs from these sessions alongside findings from an elected member survey and exit interviews with those members standing down will inform the design of PMA proposals, guidance and training for elected members following the 2022 election.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Political management arrangements and elected member training during this period will be contained within existing revenue budgets.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The outputs of this session will be shared with TEC Committee members in advance of consideration at the final Committee.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Review of the Effectiveness of Scrutiny of Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee - implementation of findings](#) – Governance Risk and Best Value Committee, 9 November 2021

## **9. Appendices**

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