

## REPORT TO PROCEDURES COMMITTEE – JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup> 2018

### POLICY COMMITTEE REMITS

#### 1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and comment on the report;
- 1.2 Instruct the Acting Head of Legal and Governance to scope options for proposals for the future of the Business Services Committee;
- 1.3 Agree the proposal for Lifelong Learning and Leisure as set out in paragraph 2.5.4;
- 1.4 Note the use of technology for attendance at Committee meetings remotely.

#### 2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 At its meeting on 30 June 2016 Full Council agreed to support the recommendations of the Future Governance Working Group. It was agreed that there would be four policy committees: Business Services Committee, Communities Committee; Education and Children's Services Committee; and Infrastructure Services Committee, each with responsibility for the aligned service budgets. The membership of policy committees was agreed at 14 and a membership of 14 was agreed for the Audit Committee. Following the implementation of the Scheme of Governance on 27 January 2017 the Policy & Resources Committee was dis-established. Financial primacy now sits with Full Council.
- 2.2 A diagram showing the Scheme of Governance committee structure with respective remits is shown at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Now that the new committee structure has been in place for a year, it is appropriate to consider how this has operated and to highlight any issues.
- 2.4 **Volume of Business of Policy Committees**
  - 2.4.1 It was anticipated that with policy committees taking on responsibility for their own respective budgets that the volume of business would likely increase for most policy committees. The volume of business each policy committee has dealt with in the first year has been examined and is shown in Appendix 2. This shows the total number of meetings, total number of items dealt with in the year and a breakdown of number of items dealt with at each meeting. Items have been categorised into either “administrative” which includes approval of minutes, sederunt etc and “business” which includes substantive items of business dealt with in terms of the committee’s particular remit.

2.4.2 A summary showing the totals for the year for substantial business items for each of the four policy committees is set out in the table below.

<b>Policy Committee</b>	<b>No of Meetings since Jan 2017</b>	<b>Business Items as per remit</b>	<b>Average Business items as per remit per meeting</b>
Business Services Committee	5	28	5.6
Communities Committee	6	62	10.33
Education & Children's Services Committee	6	61	10.17
Infrastructure Services Committee	7	95	13.57

2.4.3 It is apparent that the Business Services Committee has dealt with much less council business than the other policy committees: since January 2017 it has received less than half of the volume of business than has been received by the other three policy committees. Infrastructure Services Committee has received the highest volume of business.

2.4.4 The information provided in this report is an overview of volume of business, and does not take account of the complexity of business items or length of time required to determine those items. However, it appears that there is a present imbalance and accordingly it is recommended that officers are instructed to scope out possible options to address this issue. Any changes to the Business Services Committee will ultimately impact on both services and other committees. A full scoping report will allow options to be brought forward, with the aim of ensuring recommendations allow the Council to manage its business in the most effective and efficient manner, making appropriate use of resource in terms of both committee and officer time.

## **2.5 Impact on Lifelong Learning and Leisure Service**

2.5.1 In agreeing the policy committee remits (as set out in Appendix 1), directorates and services are still predominantly aligned to one policy committee for reporting requirements at present, with Business Services reporting to the Business Services Committee and Infrastructure Services reporting to the Infrastructure Services Committee. The Health and Social Care Partnership report predominantly to the Integration Joint Board.

2.5.2 One Council service which has been negatively affected by the new Scheme of Governance is the Lifelong Learning and Leisure Service. This is presently situated in the Education and Children's Services directorate and has responsibility for delivering council services for Libraries, Sport, Culture, Museums and Visitor Attractions. In the Scheme of Governance, the allocation

of each of the “components” of Lifelong Learning and Leisure and the current allocation is currently as follows:

- (i) Education and Children’s Services Committee in respect of Libraries, Culture and Museums;
- (ii) Communities in respect of Leisure and Sport; and
- (iii) Infrastructure Services Committee in respect of Visitors Attractions.

2.5.3 The present reporting arrangements have impacted officers in the service significantly and very focussed feedback has been received from the Educations and Children’s Services Governance Service Champion and the Director. The Lifelong Learning and Leisure Service must report to three different policy committees which is very time consuming, difficult and inefficient. There has also been difficulty with projects which span more than one policy committee, for example community campus matters, with particular issues on clarity over the decisions that each committee can make. Similarly, the service’s performance reporting has to be reported to three separate committees. This creates a governance issue in that transparency and clarity are lost and accountability is opaque. There may also be a negative impact on service users, if unclear where the responsibility and accountability sits in decision making.

2.5.4 At the November 2017 Full Council meeting, a report on proposals to deliver Sport and Culture services (including Libraries) through a charitable trust, subject to clarification on non-domestic rates relief was considered. Council agreed that the policy committee which would have responsibility for management and scrutiny of any future trust would be the Communities Committee. Notwithstanding any new delivery model, it is recommended that the Committee consider the benefits of “regrouping” Libraries, Culture, Museums, Leisure, Sport and Visitor Attractions services to bring them under the remit of just one policy committee. Officers’ recommendation is that this would be best achieved by reallocating remits of Culture, Libraries, Museums and Visitor Attractions to the Communities Committee. Such a change would require an amendment to the Scheme of Governance, and would be brought with other proposed changes in the scheduled timetable (June and September Full Council meetings).

## 2.6 Use of technology for remote meeting attendance

2.6.1 The use of technology by committees has increased slightly since the introduction of the new Scheme of Governance. The new Standing Orders allow Members to attend meetings remotely with the agreement of the Chair. That includes full voting rights. There are no restrictions on the attendance of agenda setting or pre-meetings which call all be attended remotely.

2.6.2 In terms of remote participation by elected Members, at the meeting of Full Council on 28 September one member attended through the use of Skype by video link. The member was able to view the room and take part in the proceedings, and could be seen by colleagues through the video link. However, participated in the electronic voting system was not possible, had there been a vote. On three occasions the same Member participated at meetings of Banff and Buchan Area Committee through Skype. Similarly the Chair of a policy committee was able to attend an agenda setting meeting at Woodhill House via Skype.

- 2.6.3 The City Region Deal Joint Committee, whose membership consists of elected Members from Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Opportunity North East, recently held a special meeting at Woodhill House at which three Committee members from Aberdeen City Council took part via Skype through the Council's Surface Hub. The use of the Hub enable the Members to be present at the meeting via video link, in view of those Committee members present in the room. The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee is shortly due to hold its first meeting in Woodhill House and testing is ongoing to ensure that members can participate remotely.
- 2.7 The Head of Finance within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report. The report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

### **3. Scheme of Governance**

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider this item as Full Council appointed the Procedures Committee on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The established remit of the Committee is to consider proposed changes to Aberdeenshire Council's Scheme of Governance and to make recommendations about required amendments.

### **4. Implications and Risk**

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the recommendation in this report do not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level BSSR003 Future Governance. The Council needs to be assured that it has the best fit of decision making so as to make it an agile and efficient body and a governance structure that reflects and serves well the communities whose priorities it is here to deliver. The link is here to the [Directorate Risk Registers](#).

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**

Report prepared by:  
Geraldine Fraser, Acting Head of Legal and Governance  
11<sup>th</sup> January 2018

# FULL COUNCIL

Conflict between Committees  
Setting Area Committee Budget  
Appeals Committee  
Revenue budget with Quarterly  
Budget Monitoring  
Financial primacy

## COMMUNITIES

Adult Social Work Service  
Community Planning  
Housing  
IJB monitoring  
Leisure and Sport  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Scottish Police Authority

## INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Aberdeen City Region Deal  
Economic Development and Protective Services  
Planning and Building Standards  
Property and Facilities Management  
Roads, Landscape Services and Waste Management  
The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee  
Transportation  
Visitor Attractions

## BUSINESS SERVICE

Customer Communications and Improvement  
Finance  
HR&OD  
Emergency Planning  
Information and Communication Technology  
Legal & Governance  
Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982  
Licensing other than Liquor Licensing  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages  
Valuation and Electoral Registration

## EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children's Social Work Services  
Education  
HR for Teaching Staff  
Libraries, Culture and Museums

## AUDIT

External Audit  
Financial Management  
IJB scrutiny  
Internal Audit

**APPENDIX 2**

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEMS SINCE JANUARY**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS: 6**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS: 83**

**BREAKDOWN**

Type	Amount
Admin	22
Other Business	61

**WORKING**

MEETING	ITEMS	ALLOCATION	AMOUNT
16 <sup>th</sup> of February 2017	15	Admin	2
		Other Business	13
23 <sup>rd</sup> of March 2017	19	Admin	4
		Other Business	15
14 <sup>th</sup> of June 2017	14	Admin	6
		Other Business	8
31 <sup>st</sup> of August 2017	16	Admin	4
		Other Business	14
12 <sup>th</sup> of October 2017	9	Admin	3
		Other Business	6
7 <sup>th</sup> of December 2017	10	Admin	3
		Other Business	7

**INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEMS SINCE JANUARY**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS: 7**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS: 140**

**BREAKDOWN**

Type	Amount
Admin	45
Other Business	95

**WORKING**

MEETING	ITEMS	ALLOCATION	AMOUNT
2 <sup>nd</sup> of February 2017	18	Admin	4
		Other Business	14
3 <sup>rd</sup> of February 2017 (SPE)	3	Admin	2
		Other Business	1
16 <sup>th</sup> of March 2017	27	Admin	5
		Other Business	22
1 <sup>st</sup> of June 2017	24	Admin	11
		Other Business	13
24 <sup>th</sup> of August 2017	23	Admin	7
		Other Business	16
5 <sup>th</sup> of October 2017	15	Admin	8
		Other Business	7
30 <sup>th</sup> of November 2017	30	Admin	8
		Other Business	22

**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEMS SINCE JANUARY**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS: 6**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS: 84**

**BREAKDOWN**

Type	Amount
Admin	22
Other Business	62

**WORKING**

MEETING	ITEMS	ALLOCATION	AMOUNT
23 <sup>rd</sup> of February 2017	11	Admin	3
		Other Business	8
30 <sup>th</sup> of March 2017	15	Admin	3
		Other Business	12
15 <sup>th</sup> of June 2017	17	Admin	6
		Other Business	11
28 <sup>th</sup> of June 2017	5	Admin	2
		Other Business	3
7 <sup>th</sup> of September 2017	22	Admin	5
		Other Business	17
9 <sup>th</sup> of November 2017	14	Admin	3
		Other Business	11



**BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEMS SINCE JANUARY**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS: 5**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS: 51**

**BREAKDOWN**

Type	Amount
Admin	23
Other Business	28

**WORKING**

MEETING	ITEMS	ALLOCATION	AMOUNT
2 <sup>nd</sup> of March 2017	9	Admin	4
		Other Business	5
20 <sup>th</sup> of April 2017	11	Admin	4
		Other Business	7
22 <sup>nd</sup> of June 2017	11	Admin	6
		Other Business	5
14 <sup>th</sup> of September 2017	10	Admin	5
		Other Business	5
16 <sup>th</sup> of November 2017	10	Admin	4
		Other Business	6

