

REPORT TO PROCEDURES COMMITTEE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

COMMITTEE REPORT TEMPLATE - UPDATE

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to note recent updates to the Committee Report Template and consider changes to Section 1 of the template.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the updates to the Committee Report Template; and**
- 2.2 Consider whether Section 1 of the template (Reason for Report/Summary) requires to be reviewed or replaced.**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24th May 2019 the Committee noted the new Committee Report Template which had been developed following extensive consultation with both Members and Officers, as well as benchmarking with other authorities.
- 3.2 This report provides an update on some minor changes which have been made to the template since its introduction and seeks comment from the Committee following feedback regarding the Reason for Report/Summary section of the template.
- 3.3 The Head of Legal and People will consider any feedback from the Committee and assess what changes are required to the Committee Report Template as a result. This will then be subject to consultation across the Directorates before implementation.

Discussion

- 4.1 Clear reports are essential to good governance and ensure that elected members have the information necessary to enable them to make good decisions. It is important that Council reports clearly set out the purpose for the report, the officer's recommendations, material considerations and any implications of making the decision, including any impacts of not making a decision.
- 4.2 The Committee Report Template is developed by the Governance team within Legal and People who provide support to report authors and monitor all reports. The template is updated from time to time to take account of changing

circumstances and was last subject to a full review in 2019. Since then the feedback on the template has been generally positive, and only minor updates have been required such as:

- 4.2.1 Reminder added to template to highlight Accessibility Standards to be met.
- 4.2.2 Amendments to Section 5 (Council Priorities, Implications and Risk) to clarify duties in relation to Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing and Climate Change and Sustainability.
- 4.2.3 Amendments to Section 5 to reflect the introduction of the new integrated impact assessment.
- 4.3 Officers have however received feedback in relation to Section 1 of the report (Reason for Report/Summary). Section 1 was introduced as part of the most recent review in order to provide a concise paragraph to detail what the report is about. However recent feedback suggests that this is not achieving the desired aim of giving the reader an immediate understanding of the purpose of the report and what decision is being asked of the Committee.
- 4.4 Officers have looked at report styles from other local authorities and the report style used by COSLA for its Policy Boards. It is noted that most other local authorities have an executive summary at the start of the report, which is not dissimilar to the current Section 1. However current guidance to report authors suggests a concise statement in that section whereas there could be benefit in providing a more expansive summary to give Members greater understanding of what the report covers.
- 4.5 Consideration could also be given to a style similar to the COSLA report template, which includes an Executive Summary at the start of the report. The Summary incorporates both the reason for the report and the recommendations, to provide clarity on the decision the Committee is being asked to take. In order to provide a full picture of the report before the Committee it may be helpful to amalgamate the Purpose element from Section 3 with the Summary.
- 4.6 Accordingly the options being considered by officers are:-
 - Option 1** Update report writing guidance to expand on the Reason for Report/Summary at Section 1 and provide a more comprehensive summary of the report.
 - Option 2** Combine the Reason for Report/Summary and Recommendations into one Summary/Recommendations Section.
 - Option 3** Combine the Reason for Report/Summary, Recommendations and Purpose into one Executive Summary Section.

Examples of what each option may look like form Appendix 1 to this report.

- 4.7 Officers maintain responsibility for operational documents and formal Council/Committee approval of the Committee Report Template is not required. Therefore, following consideration by this Committee, the intention would be for the Head of Legal and People to consider and finalise any changes to the template through discussion with Governance Service Champions. The Guidance on Report Writing will then be updated and any changes communicated to all services. A Briefing Note would also be issued to Elected Members to inform them of the introduction of any changes and when they can expect to see these happen.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 The report helps deliver all six Strategic Priorities by ensuring the underlying key principle of “right people, right place, right time”.
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			X
Staffing	X		
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 5.3 An integrated impact assessment is not required because the purpose of the report is to seek comments on potential alterations to the Committee Report Template.
- 5.4 There are staffing implications arising from the work that may be involved in rolling out changes to the report template. At present it is considered that these can be met from existing resources within the proposed timescales, however this will be kept under review.
- 5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP002 Changes in government policy, legislation and

Regulation; and ACORP004 Business and organizational change (including: ensuring governance structures support change; and, managing the pace of change).

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section R of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters arising from the Scheme of Governance.

RITCHIE JOHNSON DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES

Report prepared by Ruth O'Hare, Acting Legal Service Manager (Governance)
Date 24 August 2021

List of Appendices –
Appendix 1 – Options for consideration

APPENDIX 1

OPTION 1

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 The Committee Report Template was last updated in May 2019. This report asks the Committee to note recent updates to the Committee Report Template and consider changes to Section 1 of the template. Recent feedback suggests that this is not achieving the desired aim of giving the reader an immediate understanding of the purpose of the report and what decision is being asked of the Committee. The report therefore includes options for alternatives to Section 1 at Appendix 1 of the report and seeks comment from the Committee prior to officers considering any changes to the template for implementation.

OPTION 2

1 Summary/Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee Report Template was last updated in May 2019. This report asks the Committee to note recent updates to the Committee Report Template and consider changes to Section 1 of the template. Recent feedback suggests that this is not achieving the desired aim of giving the reader an immediate understanding of the purpose of the report and what decision is being asked of the Committee. The report therefore includes options for alternatives to Section 1 at Appendix 1 of the report and seeks comment from the Committee prior to officers considering any changes to the template for implementation.
- 1.2 The Committee is recommended to:-
- 1.2.1 Note the updates to the Committee Report Template; and
 - 1.2.2 Consider whether Section 1 of the template (Reason for Report/Summary) requires to be reviewed or replaced.

2 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24th May 2019 the Committee noted the new Committee Report Template which had been developed following extensive consultation with both Members and Officers, as well as benchmarking with other authorities.

OPTION 3

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 24th May 2019 the Committee noted the new Committee Report Template which had been developed following extensive consultation with both Members and Officers, as well as benchmarking with other authorities. This report provides an update on some minor changes which have been made to the template since its introduction and seeks comment from the Committee following feedback regarding the Reason for Report/Summary section of the template. Recent feedback suggests that this is not achieving the desired aim of giving the reader an immediate understanding of the purpose of the report and what decision is being asked of the Committee. Alternative options for consideration by the Committee therefore form Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 The Committee is recommended to:-
- 1.2.1 Note the updates to the Committee Report Template; and
 - 1.2.2 Consider whether Section 1 of the template (Reason for Report/Summary) requires to be reviewed or replaced.

2 Decision Making Route

- 2.1 The Committee last considered the Committee Report Template on 24th May 2019. The Head of Legal and People will consider any further feedback from the Committee and assess what changes are required to the Committee Report Template as a result. This will then be subject to consultation across the Directorates before implementation.