
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	21 June 2022
Report By:	Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance	Report No:	LS/053/22
Contact Officer:	Iain Strachan	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Review of Committee Report Format		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to seek approval from the Policy & Resources on proposed changes to the Council's corporate committee report template.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current pro forma, standardised report was formally approved by the Council in 2006, with various revisals over the years, to ensure a consistent "house style" and is to be used on all occasions for reports to the Council and its Committees. This approach to Council reporting aids decision making and ensures consistency in content and presentation of detail in report preparation. The reports which are submitted to the Council and its Committees for consideration form the foundation of the Council's decision making process.
- 2.2 The implications section of the standard report style, in particular, requires to be updated to reflect a number of significant legislative developments. The proposed update is set out in the revised report template attached at appendix 1. Appendix 2 is an annotated version of the template, and contains specific guidance on each section in italics.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that, subject to Committee approval, training and guidance will be provided to officers and the revised report format will be used by officers and presented to Committees from the start of the 2022/23 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2022.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 The Policy & Resources Committee approves the revised committee report template set out at Appendix 1 of this report, subject to a review in 12 months' time; and
- 3.2 The Policy & Resources Committee notes that, subject to approval, the revised committee report template will be rolled out to officers, with guidance and training, ready for use from the start of the 2022/23 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2022.

Alan Puckrin
Interim Director, Finance and Corporate Governance

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The guiding principle in writing committee reports is that a clear explanation should be given of the background to the proposal with full details of its implications, including details of any responses to the consultations which are carried out.
- 4.2 In May 2006, a pro forma, standardised report was formally approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure a consistent "house style" and is to be used on all occasions for reports to the Council and its Committees. This coordinated approach to Council reporting aids decision making and ensures consistency in content and the presentation of detail in report preparation. Additionally, it is a clear external indication of a professional and coordinated approach in Council reporting by all services.

5.0 REVISED COMMITTEE REPORT FORMAT

- 5.1 As stated above, the existing template was introduced in 2006 and has been reviewed and updated regularly to take into account any learning from its use and any significant legislative developments. The existing template is well understood and used by officers and elected members, however, there is a recognition that it requires to be revised in order to ensure that information is presented in as accessible and concise a way as possible. Further, it is good practice to continually review the information the Council uses to make decisions in order to ensure that decision making is as rigorous and robust as possible.
- 5.2 It is recognised that good quality reports are essential for good governance, providing elected members with the right information to enable them to make good decisions, ensuring the public can understand what business the Council is considering and increased openness and transparency of decision making.
- 5.3 The essential components of a committee report are considered to include a clear purpose, officer recommendations, material considerations and the implications of making the decision, including any impacts of not making a decision.
- 5.4 A proposed revised template report is attached at Appendix 1 and an annotated version is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration. Officers' work on this was carried out during 2021, but paused as it was felt appropriate to wait until after the May 2022 elections for an updated template report to be brought before the Committee.
- 5.5 The main changes proposed are:
 - a. An "at a glance" table has been inserted at paragraph 6.1 to show the risks and implications applicable to any recommendation;
 - b. The Implications section has been amended to include:
 - Incorporation of risk management considerations under a new Legal/Risk section;
 - Strategic implications – there is now a requirement to identify the strategic targets and objectives the report addresses;
 - There is further focus on Equality and Fairer Scotland assessments;
 - Children and Young People – there is specific reference to considering whether a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Assessment is required in terms of the subject matter being considered;
 - Environmental and Sustainability – there is now a requirement, where relevant and applicable, to consider environmental/climate change impacts and strategic environmental assessments.
 - c. The repopulation implication has been removed – this is now part of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and so is covered in the new Strategic implications section.

- 5.6 It is recognised that the implications section has been expanded, with the justification for that being that there is a duty under various pieces of legislation to assess the impact of Council policies and practices and to underline the importance of having due regard to its duties before and at the time a policy or practice is being considered.
- 5.7 It is proposed that the Finance, Legal/Risk, Human Resources and Strategic implications must be provided in all reports. Further details and assessments in terms of paragraphs 6.5-6.8 of the template report will be provided only where relevant. It should be noted that not all reports will require all assessments set out at paragraphs 6.6-6.9 of the template report to be undertaken. It is not a requirement where recommendations are factual e.g. procedural, performance or scrutiny reports.
- 5.8 The use of the proposed template for meetings outwith the Committee structure – e.g. CMT reports or reports to other groups at which elected members will consider the report will also be required. It is noted that the template does not apply to the Council's quasi-judicial and regulatory functions – for example the Licensing Board, Planning Board and Local Review Body and the like.
- 5.9 It will also be necessary to review all templates which will be placed on the Council's website to ensure that they are in compliance with accessibility regulations.
- 5.10 It continues to be the responsibility of individual services to draft and consult upon their reports, to ensure that reports include all relevant information which is clearly expressed to enable informed decision-making by Elected Members and to submit the reports in the corporate format to the Committee Section of Legal and Democratic Services within the appropriate Committee timescales. It is the responsibility of individual services to ensure that the reports are correct and typographically accurate. Any advice on the use of the corporate format or any questions arising can be sought from or directed to the Committee Section.

6.0 GUIDANCE AND TRAINING

- 6.1 Following consideration by Committee, the intention is to provide a suitable guidance and training package for relevant officers over the next couple of months. The aim of the guidance and training would be ensure consistency in adoption of the new template and that officers are being supported to confidently use this.
- 6.2 More detailed guidance on report writing will also be made available to officers. The introduction of the new template will be an opportunity to remind report writers to use appropriate writing styles – i.e. ensuring reports are drafted clearly, concisely, using plain English and avoiding jargon and abbreviations.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that the guidance and training will be co-ordinated through the Council's Corporate Quality Improvement Group (CQIG).
- 6.4 It is proposed that the revised committee report template will be used by officers and presented to Committees from the start of the 2022/23 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2022. This will allow for sufficient time for training and awareness raising. Use of the new template and feedback from officers and elected members will be monitored over the first year of the revised template's use, and any minor adjustments and refinements will be made as necessary. It is, however, proposed that the template be the subject of a further review in 12 months' time, with an update report brought back to the Committee at that time.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

The costs of implementing the revised committee report template are minimal and will be contained within existing budgets.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.2 Legal

Implementation of the revised committee report template assists the Council to comply with various statutory obligations.

7.3 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

7.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO

7.5 **Repopulation**

Not applicable.

8.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report and provided input into the revised committee report template.

9.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None.



AGENDA ITEM NO:

Report To:

Date:

Report By:

Report No:

Contact Officer:

Contact No:

Subject:

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1

##

4.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4.1

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial			
Legal/Risk			
Human Resources			
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)			
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			
Environmental & Sustainability			
Data Protection			

6.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.3 Legal/Risk

6.4 Human Resources

6.5 Strategic

6.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

6.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

6.8 Environmental/Sustainability

List any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

6.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1

Report To:	<i>Relevant Committee Meeting</i>	Date:	<i>Date of Meeting</i>
Report By:	<i>Relevant Director/Head of Service</i>	Report No:	<i>Unique Identifier</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Report Author</i>	Contact No:	<i>Report Author No.</i>
Subject:	<i>Report Title</i>		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting *Tick any that apply*
- 1.2 *Add a very brief summary of what you are asking the Committee to do and why. This section must be concise - **3 paragraphs maximum - and the summary should not be repeated in the main body of the report.***
- 1.3 *The summary section is necessary for officers and Elected Members to identify those reports which are the most important and require the most attention.*
- 1.4 *This section should be written as clearly and simply as possible to ensure that the Elected Members who are taking the decision(s), as well as the public who will have access to the report, have a full understanding of what the Committee are being asked to decide upon, why it is being asked to make decisions and the significant factors and anticipated outcomes and implications of taking such decisions.*
- e.g. previous committee decision*
 - change in legislation*
 - business plan – agreed project/action*
 - agreed routine monitoring report*

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 *• **Decision** - Reaching a conclusion after the consideration of options and implications.*
*• **For Information/Noting***
Recommended wording to be used is either “agree”, “approve” or “note”.
- 3.2 *The function of recommendations is for officers to advise Elected Members as to the best course of action. The wording of recommendations is important as they will form the basis to the minute after the meeting so must not be ambiguous or vague. Everything here should be covered in the report or appendices – nothing new should be introduced in the recommendations. If reference is made to the report, specify the relevant paragraph or appendix. Each recommendation should have a separate paragraph number.*

4.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4.1 *This is the main body of the report ensuring that sufficient information is there for Elected Members to make the decision:*

- *Include relevant, concise, background information;*
- *Include the broader context of relevant Council policies, priorities and previous Committee decisions that has informed the recommendations;*
- *Any previous reports referred to should be clearly specified with the name of the relevant Committee, its meeting date and its reference number.*
- *Avoid repetition, jargon and acronyms;*
- *Use a new paragraph for each point.*

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 *This section should show the options and reasons for the preferred recommendations. An options appraisal may be provided. Include arguments for and against the recommendations and details of any alternative options considered and why they are not recommended. If there are no options to be considered, explain why.*

5.2 *A section showing Conclusions is not compulsory but may be used where a number of options have been considered in a complex report.*

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial			
Legal/Risk			
Human Resources			
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)			
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			
Environmental & Sustainability			
Data Protection			

Insert an X in the relevant box. Where answered "yes" to Financial, Legal/Risk, Human Resources and Strategic, further details should be provided of the impact in the relevant paragraph below.

Where answered "yes" or "no" to Equalities, Children & Young People, Environmental & Sustainability and Data Protection, relevant assessments should be carried out and where necessary, relevant impact assessments must be completed and referenced as a background paper. If available on the website, the link should be provided.

Not all reports will require all of the assessments at 6.6-6.9 to be undertaken and so where these implications are assessed as "N/A" these paragraphs can be deleted. It is not a requirement to complete all implications where recommendations are factual e.g. procedural, performance or scrutiny reports.

The implications of the proposals must be shown by report writers in the report and in all cases, must include Financial, Legal, Risk, Human Resources and Strategic. Where applicable, the Equalities, Children and Young People, Environmental and Data Protection implications must be considered and the relevant sections completed accordingly. Implications must be considered proactively and corporately in advance with relevant officers and recorded within the report with adequate reasoning.

Any assessments should already have been developed as part of the development of the proposal – especially if it is significant.

It is important to have due regard **before** and **at the time** that a particular function/policy/procedure/strategy is being considered, and of exercising the duty with an open mind.

There is a duty under various pieces of legislation to assess the impact of our policies and practices.

6.2 Finance

The source of any funding attached to the proposals in the report must be identified. Include all capital and revenue implications arising out of the report proposals. All affected budget codes should be identified with details of budget requirements and virements etc. being shown.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.3 Legal/Risk

- e.g. - Risk Register (Corporate, Directorate and/or project specific, where applicable)
- Completion of a risk assessment with plans in place to mitigate any risks identified
 - Likelihood of legal challenge
 - Legislative relevance

Risk Management – refer to any significant risks identified in the report, including in relation to the recommended option. If a risk assessment or risk register has been completed, this should be referenced as a background paper to the report.

There also needs to be a considered review of risk in the event that the recommendation is not agreed by Committee.

Legal – Any potential legal implications arising from the report should be considered and outline any legal advice provided.

6.4 Human Resources

e.g.

- Impact on existing staff*
- Identification of training requirements*

6.5 Strategic

e.g.

- LOIP objectives*
- Corporate Plan objectives*

Highlight how the proposed action/recommendation contributes to the targets and priorities in the Council's Corporate Policy Framework. List the LOIP/Corporate Plan priorities the report relates to.

Example wording – “This report helps deliver Corporate Plan Organisational Priority 9 – to deliver services that are responsive to community needs and underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources.”

6.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

The Council must have due regard 3 elements of the general equality duty, which are:

- eliminating discrimination;*
- advancing equality of opportunity;*
- fostering good relations.*

The corporate EqIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires an EqIA, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqlA is required.

NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqlA is required. *Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.*

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.

NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

6.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

Where this implication is applicable, the CRWIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires a CRWIA, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

6.8 Environmental/Sustainability

List any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

e.g. Net Zero Strategy.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a systematic and effective process for ensuring that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and strategies.

If the subject matter of the report requires an assessment, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

6.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

Where applicable, the corporate DPIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires a DPIA, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 *Include details of consultations carried out (as appropriate). Significant issues identified in consultations should be addressed in the relevant sections of the report, as required.*

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 *Provide a list of documents used to write the report. Such documents may include:*

- *Risk Assessment/Risk Register*
- *Equalities Impact Assessment*
- *Data Protection Impact Assessment*
- *Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment*
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment.*

Please see the guidance for more information about what should be included. If no relevant documents have been used, please insert “None” for clarity.