
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/050/23/IS
Contact Officer:	Iain Strachan	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Review of Committee Report Format		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Policy & Resources Committee to update the Council's corporate committee report template, following a recent review.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 21 June 2022, the Committee approved a revised Committee report format, and agreed that this would be subject to review after 12 months. That review has now been carried out. The review has only highlighted the need for two changes in the actual report template, in terms of how potential implications are identified. It has, however, been identified that the annotated template and associated guidance should also be updated, to assist officers. This includes reference to the new Council Plan and the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- 1.4 The adoption of a standard report format helps ensure a consistent "house style", 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.
- 1.5 The proposed report template is attached at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is an updated annotated version of the template, and contains specific guidance on each section in italics, the proposed changes being shown in tracking.
- 1.6 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 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the use of the updated committee report template set out at Appendix 1 of this report; and
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee notes that, subject to approval, the updated annotated version of the template, and associated guidance, will be rolled out to officers,

with training, ready for use from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023.

Iain Strachan
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 21 June 2022, the Committee approved a revised Committee report format, and agreed that this would be subject to review after 12 months. That review has now been carried out. The adoption of a standard report format helps ensure a consistent “house style”, 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. Additionally, it is a clear external indication of a professional and coordinated approach in Council reporting by all services.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The template report is attached at Appendix 1 and an updated annotated version, with proposed changes in each shown in tracking, is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The review has only highlighted the need for two changes in the actual report template, in terms of how potential implications are identified. In essence, report authors are often unclear whether to state that an implication which does not apply to a report, for example matters relating to Equalities or the Fairer Scotland Duty, should be stipulated at paragraph 5.1 of the template as “No” or “Not Applicable”. This confusion results in inconsistent reporting and a lack of clarity for Elected Members and the public. As such, it is proposed that the “Not Applicable” column in 5.1 of the template report is removed, so that such implications are either applicable or they are not. Linked to this, it would assist officers for the Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty and Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing implications to all be considered together at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.6, given their alignment and similar nature, when compared to the other identified implications.
- 4.2 It has also been identified that the annotated template and associated guidance need updated, to assist officers. In addition to reflecting the proposed changes around the Implications section, this updating is to include reference to the new Council Plan and Partnership Plan, adopted by the Council at its meeting on 20 April 2023, together with the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty is the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>) when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing, as set out in the Armed Forces Act 2021. Elected Members will receive a separate briefing on the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- 4.3 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 continue to 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, Local Review Body and the like.

- 4.4 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, Democratic, Digital & Customer 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.
- 4.5 Following consideration by Committee, the intention is to provide an updated guidance and training package for relevant officers over the next couple of months. The aim of the guidance and training would be to ensure consistency in adoption of the new template and that officers are being supported to confidently use this. Updated detailed guidance on report writing will also be made available to officers. The review of the 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.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the guidance and training will be co-ordinated through the Council’s Corporate Quality Improvement Group (CQIG).
- 4.7 It is proposed that the updated version of the template, together with the updated annotated version of the template, and associated guidance, will be rolled out to officers, with training, ready for use from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023. 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 going forward, and any proposed changes brought back to the Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

One off Costs

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

N/A					
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Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

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

5.4 Human Resources

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications arising directly from this report.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

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

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA 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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: It is a report which is solely seeking approval for a new form of committee report template, it is not considering the actual delivery of any Council services.

5.7 Children and Young People

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

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team have been consulted on this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.

Classification : Official



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

##

Classification : Official

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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5.2 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					

5.3 Legal/Risk

5.4 Human Resources

5.5 Strategic

5.6 Equalities, and Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(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.

5.7(c) 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.

5.7(d) Environmental/Sustainability

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

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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.

6.89 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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1

Classification : Official



AGENDA ITEM NO:

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 to 5 paragraphs should normally suffice, save in exceptional circumstances 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*

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 *• **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”.
- 2.2 *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.*

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 *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.*

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 *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.*

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

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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Insert an X in the relevant box.

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, with appropriate text included in paragraphs 5.2 – 5.5. Where applicable, the (i) Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/and Young People, (ii) Environmental & Sustainability and (iii) 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.

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Where answered “yes” or “no” to (i) Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children & Young People, (ii) Environmental & Sustainability and (iii) Data Protection, relevant assessments should be carried out and, where necessary, relevant impact assessments must be completed and referenced as a background paper, it being noted that there may be occasions where it is clear why there are no such implications and no actual assessment is needed. If such assessments are available on the website, the link should be provided.

When considering whether to answer “yes” or “no” to Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People, you should only answer “no” if that is the case for all three implications, and you should answer “yes” where that is the case for at least one of the three. You will have the opportunity to expand further at paragraph 5.6.

Not all reports will require all of the assessments at 5.6 - 5.8⁹ to be undertaken and so where these implications are assessed as “no” these paragraphs can be deleted, albeit as noted above it may still be appropriate to reference any assessment as a background paper. It is not a requirement to complete all implications where recommendations are factual e.g. procedural, performance or scrutiny reports. As such, performance reports will likely not need those paragraphs, and they can be assessed as “no” in the Implications box, and those paragraphs deleted. As noted above, however, paragraphs 5.2 - 5.5 should never be deleted.

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.

Officers should also consider the potential applicability of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, being the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. More detail can be found in the Report Writing Guidance and on Icon. If relevant, then suitable text should be inserted in paragraph 5.6.

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5.2 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					

5.3 Legal/Risk

Report authors should consider the following, where there might be relevant implications that Committee should be made aware of:-

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e.g. -- Entries in any relevant Risk Register (Corporate, Directorate and/or project specific, where applicable, albeit it would only be in exceptional cases that an actual Risk Register might be suitable for attaching to a report)

- 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, and how that is to be managed and the risk mitigated. If a risk assessment or risk register has been completed, this should be referenced as a background paper to the report. Consideration should also be given to the Committee Risk Register as reported with its CDIP, and to the further detail found in the Report Writing Guidance.

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. Legal Services should be consulted on this.

5.4 Human Resources

- e.g.
- Impact on existing staff
 - Identification of training requirements

5.5 Strategic

- e.g.
- LOIP Partnership Pla) objectives
 - Corporate Council Plan objectives

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

Example wording – “This report helps deliver Corporate Council Plan Theme 1 Outcome : People – Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education. “~~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.~~”

5.6 **Equalities, and Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People**

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

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

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

As noted above, authors should also consider the potential applicability of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, being the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. More detail can be found in the Report Writing Guidance and on Icon. If relevant, then suitable text should be inserted.

(a) Equalities

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqlA 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 EqlA is required. <i>Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.</i>

(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.

5.7(c) Children and Young People

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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.

<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.

5.78 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts, positive or negative, 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. It is likely that an SEA would only be needed for notable projects 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.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.

5.89 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.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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Classification : Official



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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 *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.*

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 *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.

