



Meeting	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	22 June 2023
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Evaluation of Committee Effectiveness
Presented By	John McNellis SPA Head of Finance, Audit & Risk
Recommendation to Members	For Consultation
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

This report provides detail of the annual review of SPA committee effectiveness for 2022/23.

The paper is presented in line with the corporate governance framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and committee terms of reference and is submitted for consultation.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the end of each financial year, as part of the preparation of the annual report and accounts, each Committee evaluates how it has discharged its responsibilities based on its terms of reference and work-plan.
- 1.2. The resulting Committee Effectiveness evaluations provide evidence that the Authority, supported by its Committees, has satisfactorily met its responsibilities for the governance of policing.

2 COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION PROCESS 2022/23

- 2.1 There is no specific Scottish Government (SG) direction on how public bodies should undertake such effectiveness reviews.
- 2.2 The approach for 2022/23 expanded and enhanced the cyclical review process, to include particular focus on 3 areas of priority interest, in addition to overall assessment of the functioning of each committee. These priority areas of interest were –
 - Transparency;
 - The understanding and expectations of corporate staff and members; and
 - Business Coordination.
- 2.3 Self-assessment questionnaires ensured focus on these priority areas of interest, as well as the overall functioning of the committee. Facilitated discussions for each committee allowed members to consider the committee's operations, provide feedback on what is working well, and identify any areas for improvement or where any elements of the committee's operation may require updating or further consideration.

3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 3.1 A summary of findings was presented to Members at an SPA Seminar 4 April 2023.
- 3.2 Overall findings were positive, with members reporting that all committees operated effectively during the year, and the trajectory was one of continuing improvement.

- 3.3 All members confirmed that each committee they participate in had **fully discharged its responsibilities in line with its terms of reference.**
- 3.4 Improvements and strengths of operation highlighted by members during 2022/23 include:
- The overall operation of committees is improving.
 - Committee members have the right balance of experience, knowledge and skill to fulfil their role on each committee.
 - Members are confident in providing appropriate challenge, agreeing a position and decision making.
 - Support for committees is improving, minutes are accurate and appropriate, and there is appropriate time to consider relevant business.
 - Committee members understand how their work connects with that of other committees.
 - Agenda planning meetings, the use of pre-committee co-ordination discussions, and consideration of committee performance following committee meetings, has assisted in strengthening committee operations.
 - The quality of briefings has improved. Additional practical suggestions were offered for further improvement or to support greater consistency and relevance.
 - Improvements in the quality of papers were noted.
 - Transparency was identified as an issue and addressed in year. Initially, only 6 of 7 committees agreed that their operations actively support transparency. Action was taken to address this, and the Legal Committee met in public for the first time in March 2023. This approach is now mainstreamed into business as usual, and the Legal Committee has since confirmed its agreement that its operations now actively support transparency.
- 3.5 Areas identified for development or update include:
- The need for ongoing monitoring and improvement in the appropriateness and accessibility of committee reports was noted.
 - A number of suggestions for updates and improvements to Committee Terms of Reference have been captured, to be included in the Annual Governance Review and presented to members for approval Q3 2023/24.

4 NEXT STEPS

The effectiveness review is part of the Authority's control framework which aids continuous improvement and reflection, and the annual governance review. It will inform the accountability report of the annual report and accounts (ARA).

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

6 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are/ are no legal implications in this report.

8 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper as it is important that assurance can be provided that each committee has satisfactorily met its responsibilities for the governance of policing through the application of its governance principles, and that the overall governance framework is working effectively.

9 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are/ are no social implications in this report.

10 COMMUNITY IMPACT

10.1 There are community implications in this report. The committee effectiveness review supports the Authority's Governance Principles, including its commitment to implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability; and being clear about, and having a strong focus on, our purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users.

11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the overall Authority's committee effectiveness review for 2022/23. This provides assurance that all committees have fulfilled their terms of reference over the course of the year and are operating effectively.