



Meeting	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	9 May 2024
Location	Via Video Conference
Title of Paper	Evaluation of Committee Effectiveness
Presented By	Eleanor Gaw, SPA Governance and External Relations Lead
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) with an overview of findings from the 2023-24 Committee Effectiveness process, and assurance on the effectiveness of their contribution to the Authority's governance arrangements.

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 Committee Effectiveness evaluations provide evidence that the Authority, supported by its Committees, has satisfactorily met its responsibilities for the governance of policing during the course of the year.

2 COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION PROCESS 2023/24

- 2.1 There is no specific Scottish Government (SG) direction on how public bodies should undertake such effectiveness reviews. The Authority undertakes these reviews annually and considers each year what priority areas of focus are, and how the process can be enhanced and improved ahead of implementation.
- 2.2 The approach for 2023/24 focused on -
 - Reports and briefings for committees.
 - How well committees are monitoring progress, following through in questioning, and in seeking evidencing of impact in key areas of their remit; and
 - How committees are addressing key themes including exploring organisational culture, capacity and capability.

In addition, members were invited to offer feedback on performance in the three areas of focus in the 2022/3 process, to track any improvement. These were:

- Transparency.
 - Executive support.
 - Business co-ordination.
- 2.3 Members completed comprehensive self-assessment questionnaires for each committee they attend. The survey was anonymous to encourage openness in response. Questions focused on the agreed priority areas of interest, as well as the overall functioning of the committee.
 - 2.4 Briefings on findings are provided for each committee to outline findings for the committee on what is working well, improvements, or where any elements of the committee's operation may require updating or further consideration.

3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 3.1 A summary of responses is included in Appendix A.
- 3.2 There were 30 responses in total, from a possible 34 (a response rate of 88%). Overall findings were very positive. All Members reported that committees operated effectively during the year, and the trajectory is 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 highlighted by Members during 2023/24 include:
- All Members agreed that there was improvement in the three areas of focus from the 2022-23 effectiveness review: the work of each committee is appropriately transparent; corporate support for committees has improved: and there is improved coordination and awareness of work across committees and the board.
 - All Members considered that committee Members have the right balance of experience, knowledge, and skill to fulfil their role on each committee.
 - All Members are confident in providing appropriate challenge, agreeing a position and decision making.
 - Minutes are accurate and appropriate, and committees are advised and confident about when it is necessary to consider items in private session.
 - All Members agreed or strongly agreed that committee remits remain relevant, manageable, and fit for purpose. However, some challenge in the scope and scale of the Policing Performance Committee's remit was referenced.
 - Committee development days and "deep dive" discussions on specific issues were referenced as of considerable benefit.
 - All Members agreed that the work of committees ensure visibility on matters of public interest and reflect strategic priorities.
 - All Members agreed briefing notes have improved and make use of briefings. All considered that it is important that these continue to be provided for Members and for the public on issues of significant public interest.
 - Improvements in the quality of papers were noted – all but one respondent considered that reports to committee are improving - and further suggestions for ongoing improvement were highlighted.

- All but two responses indicated that the committee's work has reflected the focus on organizational culture; and all but one respondent indicated that the committee's work reflects the focus on capacity and capability.

3.5 Areas identified for development or further exploration include:

- The need for ongoing monitoring and improvement in the appropriateness and accessibility of committee reports. There was very positive feedback from many members on the improvement in committee papers. However, further scope for improvement in clarity and appropriateness was highlighted, reflecting that this is a work in progress.
- Some slippage against agreed timelines for some pieces of work, with scope to be more realistic in setting timelines, and to strengthen the Committee's ability to track related progress.
- 2 responses from 30 (6.6%) did not agree that equality, human rights and community impacts are increasingly reflected in reports to committee.
- Ensuring briefing notes cover key risks, the governance journey, strategic context, issues and any gaps in control. 2 of 30 responses indicated that this was not always fully covered.

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. Officers will consider the findings of each committee effectiveness survey to support the delivery of any related improvements in conjunction with Committee Chairs and Members. The overall findings will inform the accountability report of the annual report and accounts (ARA) and the Governance Review process 2024-25.

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 equality implications associated with this report. The committee effectiveness review supports the Authority's commitment to ensuring its business is accessible as possible, and that reporting on how equalities issues are identified and addressed is mainstreamed into its governance processes.

12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 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.

Appendix 1

Annual committee effectiveness review 2023-24

Questionnaire Statements and Responses

30 responses were received out of a possible 34 – a response rate of 88%. Members were asked to confirm if they strongly agreed; agreed; disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statements.

#	Questionnaire Statements	Of 30 responses			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Reflections on 2022-23 areas of focus for improvement				
1.1	The work of the committee is appropriately transparent	100% strongly agree or agree			
1.2	Corporate support for the committee has improved over the course of the year	100% strongly agree or agree			
1.3	Overall, co-ordination and awareness of work across the committees and the board has improved.	100% strongly agree or agree			
2	Reports to Committee				
2.1	The quality of committee papers allows members to perform their roles effectively.	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			

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#	Questionnaire Statements	Of 30 responses			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.2	Overall, reports are clear and easy to understand, and suitable for a non-executive audience	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			
2.3	Papers make clear what the committee is being asked to do.	100% strongly agree or agree			
2.4	Equality, human rights or community impacts are increasingly reflected in reports to the committee	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			
2.5	Overall, the quality of committee papers is improving	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			
Committee briefings					
3.1	I regularly read the briefing material provided for committee meetings	100% strongly agree or agree			
3.2	Overall, briefings offer the right amount, type and level of information	100% strongly agree or agree			
3.3	Management fully briefs the committee on key risks, the governance journey, strategic context, issues and any gaps in control.	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			
3.4	It is important that staff continue to provide supplementary briefings for committee meetings.	100% strongly agree or agree			
3.5	It is important that staff continue to provide briefings for members on topics of importance or high public/ stakeholder interest.	100% strongly agree or agree			

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#	Questionnaire Statements	Of 30 responses			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.5	Overall, briefing notes are helpful and have improved	100% strongly agree or agree			
4.	Organisational priorities and tracking progress				
4.1	The committee ensures visibility on matters of significant public interest	100% strongly agree or agree			
4.2	Work plans reflect key strategic priorities	100% strongly agree or agree			
4.3	The committee's work has reflected issues around capacity and capability	96.7% strongly agree or agree (29 responses) / 3.3 % disagree (1 response)			
4.4	The committee's work has reflected issues around organizational culture.	93.4% strongly agree or agree (28 responses) / 6.6 % disagree (2 responses)			
4.5	The committee has processes in place to allow members to track progress of ongoing work	96.7% strongly agree or agree (29 responses) / 3.3 % disagree (1 response)			
4.6	Committees follow up on reports to seek evidence of implementation and impact	96.7% strongly agree or agree (29 responses) / 3.3 % disagree (1 response)			

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#	Questionnaire Statements	Of 30 responses			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.7	Decisions and action log actions are tracked and implemented in line with the timescale set out.	87% strongly agree or agree (26 responses)/ 13% disagree (4 responses)			
5	The role of members and overall operation of the committee				
5.1	Members are confident in agreeing a position on specific issues and in decision making	100% strongly agree or agree			
5.2	Members provide genuine challenge, as well as seek clarification and / or reassurance.	100% strongly agree or agree			
5.3	Committee members have the right balance of experience, knowledge and skill to fulfil the committee's role.	100% strongly agree or agree			
5.4	The committee is advised and confident about when to consider items in private session	100 % strongly agree or agree			
5.5	Minutes of meetings are accurate, clear and contain an appropriate level of detail.	100% strongly agree or agree			
5.6	The committee's remit remains relevant, manageable and fit for purpose	100 % strongly agree or agree			

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#	Questionnaire Statements	Of 30 responses			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	Delivery against terms of Reference				
6.1	Has the committee fully discharged its responsibilities in line with its terms of reference? (Y/N)	Yes – 30 (100%)		No – 0	

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