

AGENDA ITEM 9

REPORT NO 304/22

ANGUS COUNCIL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

REVIEW OF INFORMATION REPORTS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report provides details of the review of Information reports in accordance with the decision of the Council in December 2021. The interim arrangements that were put in place with regard to Information Reports was aimed at ensuring the Council could manage the committee business and reduce the number of reports coming before members.

The Council is asked to:

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (i) Note the contents of the report; and
- (ii) Determine if the current practice continues; or
- (iii) that Information Reports now be submitted to the respective committees

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes to the achievement of our priority that the council is efficient and effective as detailed in our Council Plan for 2022 – 2027.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the special meeting of Angus Council on 3 April 2020 a range of interim arrangements were approved in relation to decision making, including the establishment of a Special Arrangements Committee and a Special Education Committee, with only time critical or necessary business considered at these meetings.

At the time it was acknowledged that during the period when these special arrangements were in place and as far as was operationally possible in light of impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, members were still provided information on Council services that would normally be provided by way of an "Information Report" and that this information was publicly available.

These reports were posted on the Document Centre to allow elected members to access the reports. The reports were also published on the Council's website. Elected members were, as always, free to raise any issues in the Information Reports with the relevant Director or Chief Executive/ Deputy Chief Executive, as the case may be.

These arrangements have continued in order that the Council can manage the committee business and reduce the number of reports coming before members.

Reference is also made to the Council meeting on 16 December 2021, when it was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the interim arrangements in relation to the provision of Information Reports as detailed in the report;
- (ii) to approve that these interim arrangements would remain in place in the short term with a further review of the arrangements taking place after the summer recess; and
- (iv) that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with officers, provide elected members with guidance and or a definition in terms of the content of Information Reports.

In keeping with (iii) above the Director of Legal and Democratic Services provided all elected members with the following definition of an “Information Report”:-

“Information reports are reports to elected members on matters which are to be brought to their attention, that don’t require a decision to be made by elected members but are simply to note.”

Officers have conducted a review with the following points to note:-

During the period from April 2020 to June 2022, 25 Information Reports were produced on a variety of subject matters, these are available at:

https://www.angus.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/committees/agendas_reports_and_minutes

In determining whether the current practice should continue, it is important that members are aware that producing Information Reports which require to go to Council or Committee are more resource-intensive than posting the Reports on the Document Centre and publishing them on the Council’s website. Information Reports, by their very status, do not require a decision to be taken.

Members will be aware from various officer reports of the significant resource pressures the Council is facing and the importance of focussing officer resources on those matters that are critical to the implementation of the Council’s key strategies and priorities and compliance with its statutory obligations.

It is also important, that in these very challenging times, elected members’ decision making is directed towards policy matters and the scrutiny of the performance of the Council across services. Accordingly, officers are not making a recommendation to re-introduce the submission of Information Reports to Committees, as in terms of paragraph 2 above, this would not, in officer’s opinion, contribute to the achievement of our priority that the council is efficient and effective as detailed in our Council Plan for 2022 – 2027.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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