

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

Report Title	ANNUAL REPORT
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Purpose of report	To present on an annual basis the items and reports considered by PDG and to gauge its impact on Council business, and its effectiveness.
Council priorities	All
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	None
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	None
Equalities Impact Screening	None
Human Rights	None
Transformational Government	None
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	Previous PDG Agendas and Reports
Recommendations	THAT PDG NOTES THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL ON 21 NOVEMBER 2017.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the process of improving the effectiveness of scrutiny at the Council, a report has been prepared setting out the issues and reports that PDG has considered in 2016/17. This can also be used to gauge PDG's impact on Council business, and its effectiveness.
- 1.2 This report will be presented to Council on 21 November 2017. In this future years this annual report will be aligned with other annual reports.

2.0 ISSUES AND REPORTS CONSIDERED

1 JUNE 2016

The Effectiveness of Scrutiny at the Council

- 2.1 The Leader attended the meeting.
- 2.2 There had been some frustration amongst PDG members and according to the minutes of the previous meeting, "scrutiny was toothless, positive recommendations were seldom made, and were not acted upon when they were made".
- 2.3 The Leader stressed the important role PDG had in holding the Cabinet to account and in taking an overview of policy development in line with the Council's priorities. He made some suggestions that would provide PDG with a greater level of involvement – and these were accepted:
- The Chair to have a single point of contact from the Corporate Leadership Team – and that contact to be the Director of Resources.
 - The Labour Group's Scrutiny Lead Member to meet with the Chair and the Director of Resources to move things forward.
 - PDG Members to bring forward, at an agreed frequency, potential items and issues for policy development and scrutiny; and those agreed to be worked up into proposals for inclusion in the work programme along with timescales and the resources that would be required.
 - The Leader and Chief Executive to meet with the Chair to informally discuss the work programme.
- 2.4 The single point of contact has been set up and regular discussions on the work programme, and briefing meetings are held. This has helped to scope the work programme and prepare for PDG meetings.
- 2.5 The Labour Group's Scrutiny Lead Member met with the Chair and the Director of Resources to move things forward. As a consequence, a single document was developed that sets out PDG's role and purpose, and gives clarity to call-in arrangements (Appendix 1) and a process for scoping and prioritising reviews was developed (Appendix 2).
- 2.6 Whilst the number of items considered by PDG is not the sole measure of success it is pleasing to note that the number of items considered by PDG has risen, with 16 items being considered in the four meetings (including the June 2017 meeting) since the new arrangements have been put in place, compared to 12 for the previous four meetings. The process for scoping and prioritising reviews has been used once (small grants review). Members also added to the work programme, items on ICT security and the balance of the local economy.

- 2.7 The leader and Chief Executive has met with the PDG Chair.

Waste Services Recycling Performance and Targets Update

- 2.8 The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members highlighting how recycling performance was measured, comparisons with other local authorities in Leicestershire and issues that affect recycling levels. He also set out the next steps to move towards 50% recycling by 2020.

28 SEPTEMBER 2016

Parking Strategy Update

- 2.9 PDG received a presentation on the Daft Parking Strategy from officers and the Council's consultants White Young Green. The Head of Community Services informed Members this was the Council's first Parking Strategy and that it related to the whole of the District. Comments made by PDG were reported to Cabinet when it considered the Parking Strategy.

Implications for HS2 for the District

- 2.10 The Head of Planning and Regeneration reported that expert consultants, SLC Rail, had been engaged to provide advice and assistance in narrowing down the Council's options. He highlighted the proposed strategy which included both proactive and reactive elements, as well as the Council's role regarding business focus and public protection.
- 2.11 The report was endorsed for consideration by Cabinet.

Update on New Build Council Homes Programme

- 2.12 PDG received an update on progress with the Council's housing new build programme in respect of potential schemes at Linford Crescent, Verdon Crescent and Cropston Drive in Coalville; and Smedley Close and Staley Avenue in Ashby. Comments on the report were considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Director of Housing.

11 JANUARY 2017

Local Policing Update

- 2.13 The Local Policing Unit Commander gave an update to Members on matters including current resources and demand, crime rates, strategic priorities and performance.

HS2 – Presentation from SLC Rail.

- 2.14 PDG received a presentation from SLC Rail, which had been engaged by the Council to provide technical and other know-how to guide the Council and assist in narrowing down options and priorities. The presentation set out the current position for Phase 2 of HS2 and the next steps available to the Council.

Draft General Fund Revenue Budget Proposals and Capital Programmes 2017/18

- 2.15 PDG was invited to scrutinise the General Fund and Capital Programme proposals and provide any comments for Cabinet to take into account when it agreed final recommendations.

Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals for 2017/18

- 2.16 PDG was invited to scrutinise the Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals and provide any comments for Cabinet to take into account when it agreed final recommendations.

ICT Services Update

- 2.17 The Audit and Governance Committee had raised a concern on the arrangements the Council had or was putting in place for the security of its systems and data. In particular there was a concern if these arrangements involved the use of 'cloud technology'. The matter had been referred to PDG for consideration. The ICT Manager explained that the Council was embarking on a modernisation of its ICT arrangements and this included improving the security of its systems and data by moving its servers and infrastructure away from the main Council offices, into a managed secure private data centre. He set out the benefits this would bring and explained that a procurement exercise was being run and a contract would be awarded following consideration by Cabinet.

8 MARCH 2017

Review of Small Grants

- 2.18 PDG received a Topic Suggestion Form to help scope the review of small grants and agreed to consider annually a report setting out the small grants awarded throughout the year, and to invite a manageable number of grant recipients to future meetings to discuss how the grant had been spent.

Review of Housing Policies

- 2.19 The Head of Housing presented the report explaining that policies were periodically reviewed and updated to provide officers with a framework for delegated decision making when delivering services. He presented policies on: anti-social behaviour, tenancy, compensation and the homeless duty. PDG's comments were considered by Cabinet when approving the policies.

Draft Safer North West Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2017-20

- 2.20 The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members, highlighting the three themes for 2017-20 of the Safer North West Community Safety Partnership. The Stronger and Safer Communities Team Manager went through the three proposed priority areas for the action plan from the strategic assessment and the Community Safety Team Leader presented the draft Safer North West ASB Action Plan. PDG commented on and noted the strategy and associated plans.

How Leicestershire's Roads, Pavements and Verges could be managed in the future – LCC Consultation

- 2.21 The Council had received a consultation document from the County Council on its Highway Maintenance Policy and Strategy. Due to highway matters being a regular cause for residents' comments, PDG was asked to comment on the consultation document and inform the Council's response.

3.0 SUMMARY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 PDG has discussed and scrutinised a number of very important items to the Council. As a matter of course, PDG's comments are appended to Cabinet reports and referred to at Cabinet.
- 3.2 Members are referring more items to PDG and are using the scoping document to scope the more difficult or resource-intensive proposed items.
- 3.3 The Work Programme will continue to be updated to include more items making up the Council's Policy and Budget Framework including: the Council Delivery Plan, the End of Year Report, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and quarterly performance reports.
- 3.4 In order to allow this, an amendment to increase the scheduled number of PDG meetings from four to six is being proposed. In line with the current Constitution, additional meetings can still be arranged if required.