

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

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| 19 June 2019 | Agenda Item 5 |
| <i>Draft 2018/19 Annual Report to Council</i> | |
| Report author: | Bob Pullen – Policy and Performance Officer |
| Recommendations That the Committee: (i) considers and agrees the draft Annual Report to Council (Appendix i). | |

1 Purpose of report and executive summary

1.1 This report is concerned with the Committee's 2018/19 Annual Report to Council.

2 Background

2.1.1 The Committee's Terms of Reference require it to report annually to Council on its work and to make recommendations for amended working methods where appropriate.

2 Discussion

3.1 The attached draft report to Council incorporates a draft Annual Report on the Committee's work for the 2018/19 Municipal Year. The Committee are invited to consider and agree the report for submission to Council.

4 Conclusion

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

(i) considers and agrees the draft Annual Report to Council (Appendix i).

5 Appendices and background papers

Appendix i: Policy Development and Review Committee – Annual Report 2018/19.

6 Officer contacts

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Policy Development and Review Committee Annual Report 2018/19

Swale Borough Council

Policy Development and Review Committee Annual Report 2018/19

1. The Committee was established five years ago and held its inaugural meeting on 28 May 2014.

2. The report covering the Committee's programme of work for the year sought to summarise its purpose as follows:

“to assist the Cabinet in developing or reviewing either new or existing policies, strategies or plans. Its workload is expected to be driven by the natural cycle of considering existing policies, strategies or plans of the council as they come up for review or providing advice to Cabinet on proposals for new council policy referred by Cabinet, Council or the Scrutiny Committee”.

3. The table at Appendix I summarises attendance at all of the Policy Development and Review Committee meetings during 2018/19. Members appointed to serve on the Committee for 2018/19 were:

- Councillor Andy Booth (Chairman)
- Councillor James Hunt (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Mike Baldock
- Councillor Cameron Beart
- Councillor Monique Bonney
- Councillor Tina Booth
- Councillor Lloyd Bowen
- Councillor Nicholas Hampshire
- Councillor Nigel Kay
- Councillor Roger Truelove
- Councillor Ted Wilcox.

4. A schedule of meetings and the policies, plans and strategies considered by the Committee during 2018/19 is at Appendix II. This also provides a summary of what the Committee considered.

5. From the outset, as agendas were compiled, and policies, plans and strategies were identified for the Committee's consideration, the relevant Cabinet Member and Lead Officer(s) were invited to attend the meetings. This worked well and the minutes show that, except for one or two occasions when they were unavailable, Cabinet Members attended all meetings to which they had been invited.

6. One aspect which continued throughout 2018/19, was that while the relevant Heads of Service were attending the meetings, they were being accompanied by relatively junior members of staff and that these staff were being given the opportunity to present reports. This continued to have several benefits:

- it enabled staff who can often bring a local rather than a corporate view of how a policy might work in practice to meet and discuss emerging policy with members other than the Cabinet;
- it provided staff with an opportunity to develop their presentation skills;
- non-executive members actually got to hear from officers who had led on the development of policies; and
- this all took place in a forum which was less adversarial than overview and scrutiny can sometimes be.

7. The Committee also agreed to a proposal made by Cabinet to try and ensure they had greater emphasis placed on PDRC making an input at a much earlier stage, particularly where brand new policies, plans or strategies are being developed. A note setting out this change of emphasis is at Appendix III.

8. A trawl of the Cabinet and Council agendas for the year shows that all major policies, plans, and strategies had been considered by the Committee prior to their approval. The exceptions were the Local Plan, which is in any case the preserve of the Local Plan Panel. This reinforces the need to maintain a robust register of policies and to liaise with Heads of Services regularly to ensure that the information held on the Policy Register is up to date.

Policy Development and Review Committee membership and attendance – 2018/19

| Name | Role | 18 Jul | 12 Sep | 6 Nov | 27 Nov | 16 Jan | 12 Feb |
|--|--|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Committee members | | | | | | | |
| Cllr Andy Booth | Chairman | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr James Hunt | Vice-Chairman | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr Mike Baldock | Committee member | √ | X | x | √ | X | x |
| Cllr Cameron Beart | Committee member | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Cllr Monique Bonney | Committee member | x | √ | x | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr Tina Booth | Committee Member | √ | √ | x | x | √ | √ |
| Cllr Lloyd Bowen | Committee Member | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr Nicholas Hampshire | Committee member | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | √ |
| Cllr Nigel Kay | Committee member | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr Roger Truelove | Committee member | √ | x | √ | X | √ | x |
| Cllr Ted Wilcox | Committee member | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Visiting members and *substitutes | | | | | | | |
| Cllr Andrew Bowles | Leader | | | | √ | | |
| Cllr Roger Clark | Member | | | √ | | | |
| Cllr Mike Cosgrove | Cabinet Member for Regeneration | | | √ | | | |
| Cllr Angela Harrison | Member | | | | | √ | |
| Cllr Mike Henderson | Member | √* | | | | | |
| Cllr Alan Horton | Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities | | √ | √ | | √ | √ |
| Cllr James Hall | Member | | | √* | | | |
| Cllr Gerry Lewin | Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning | √ | | | | | |
| Cllr Peter Marchington | Member | | √ | √* | √* | | |
| Cllr David Simmons | Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs | | | | √ | | √ |

| Name | Role | 18 Jul | 12 Sep | 6 Nov | 27 Nov | 16 Jan | 12 Feb |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Cllr Tony Winkless | Member | | √* | √ | | √ | |
| Swale Borough Council officers | | | | | | | |
| Katherine Bescoby | Democratic and Electoral Services Manager | | √ | | √ | | |
| Christopher Blandford | Economic Development Support Officer | | √ | | | | |
| Brooke Buttfield | Economy and Community Services Project Officer | | | | | | √ |
| Martyn Cassell | Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure | | | √ | | | √ |
| Steph Curtis | Economy and Community Services Manager | | | √ | | √ | √ |
| David Clifford | Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services | √ | | | √ | | |
| Della Fackrell | Resilience and Licensing Manager | √ | | | | | |
| Chris Hills | Licensing Officer | √ | | | | | |
| Charlotte Hudson | Head of Economy and Community Services | | | √ | | √ | |
| Kellie MacKenzie | Democratic Services Officer | | | | | √ | |
| Mike Marsh | Leisure and Technical Services Manager | | | √ | √ | | √ |
| Jo Millard | Senior Democratic Services Officer | √ | | √ | | | √ |
| Lyn Newton | Economy and Community Services Manager | | √ | | | | |
| Bob Pullen | Policy and Performance Officer | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Roxanne Sheppard | Housing Options Manager | | | | | √ | |
| Graeme Tuff | Greenspaces Manager | | | | √ | | √ |
| Rebecca Walker | Strategic Housing and Health Manager | | | | | √ | |

Policies considered by the Policy Development and Review Committee during 2018/19

| Date considered | Policy title | Summary of Committee considerations |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--|
| 18 July 2018 | Gambling Policy | <p>The Gambling Act 2005 requires the Council as licensing authority to prepare and publish a Statement of Principles for Gambling Act policy. The Council had previously published a Statement of Principles in January 2016 and this was due for renewal by January 2019. The Committee were invited to consider and comment of the draft, which had been based on a model template recommended by the Gambling Commission.</p> <p>The Committee considered issues around enforcement of the policy, gambling by those underage or with mental health problems, self-exclusion, proximity of betting shops to schools and density of betting shops.</p> <p>The policy was amended in response to the Committee's comments and adopted by Council on 14 November 2018 following further consideration by the Licensing Committee on 2 October 2018.</p> |
| 18 July 2018 | Corporate Plan 2019-2022 | <p>The Committee considered a discussion paper on the new Corporate Plan covering the period 2019-2022. The Committee considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more explicit reference to rural areas; • infrastructure improvements; • better communication with residents and parish and town councils; • greater emphasis on environmental issues including recycling; • better assistance for voluntary sector to assist those with mental health conditions; • promotion of local employment opportunities; • planning for an aging population; and • financial self-sufficiency. |

| Date considered | Policy title | Summary of Committee considerations |
|-------------------|--|---|
| | | <p>The Deputy Cabinet Member welcomed the Committee's comments and indicated they would be fed into further iterations of the draft. The draft plan was considered by the Committee again on 27 November 2018 before being adopted by Council on 20 February 2019.</p> |
| 12 September 2018 | Swale Cycling and Walking Policy Framework | <p>The Committee considered the draft Swale Cycling and Walking Strategy which would form part of the Visitor Economy Strategy. The draft strategy was out for public consultation when the Committee considered it.</p> <p>The Committee considered the draft and made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for funding including Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy monies; • mapping of dedicated cycle and walking routes; • national audit of routes; and • promoting walking and cycling to schools. <p>The draft strategy was updated to take on board comments received from the Committee and the public consultation and adopted by Cabinet on 12 December 2018.</p> |
| 6 November 2018 | Public Space CCTV Strategy for Swale | <p>The Committee considered a briefing note on Public Space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Swale. This set out Cabinet's initial thinking in respect of a proposed strategy and the Committee were invited to give their early thoughts in the process of the strategy's development.</p> <p>The Committee considered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnerships arrangements with Medway Council; • compliance with regulations; • quality of footage and effectiveness of system; • costs of operating and maintaining system; |

| Date considered | Policy title | Summary of Committee considerations |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private property and business premises monitoring; • use of smart phones for recording footage; • lack of funding from Kent Police; • recently decommissioned cameras; • options for how monitoring could be carried out in future; and • technological advancement and the use of Town Centre WiFi. <p>Cabinet took the Committees comments into account in drawing up the Public Space CCTV Strategy which was considered again by the Committee on 16 January 2019.</p> |
| 6 November 2018 | Beach Huts provision | <p>The Committee considered a discussion paper which had been produced to focus work towards the development of a policy on beach huts provision in Swale.</p> <p>The Committee considered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the enhancing effect beach huts had on the seafront; • further provision of beach huts; • ancillary services such as toilets where necessary if more beach huts were built; • consideration of new areas for siting (e.g. Sheerness); • commercial and business use as well as leisure; and • clarifying sub-letting rules. <p>Cabinet will take the Committee's comments into consideration in drawing up a beach huts policy.</p> |
| 27 November 2018 | Updated Tree Policy | <p>The Committee considered a discussion paper which had been produced to focus work towards the development of a policy on maintenance of trees owned by the Council.</p> |

| Date considered | Policy title | Summary of Committee considerations |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | <p>The Committee considered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for more comprehensive information provided on the Council's website for the public; • better signposting to how the public can inform the Council of problems with trees; • frequency of inspections; • trees interfering with TV signals; • replanting two trees for every one that had been felled; and • ancient hedgerows. <p>Cabinet considered the Committee's comments and a further draft of the policy was considered by the Committee on 12 February 2019.</p> |
| 16 January 2019 | Homelessness Strategy | <p>The Committee were invited to consider an overview report on the work that was commissioned to develop a housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy for Swale.</p> <p>The Committee considered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further explore reasons why people have become homeless; • Swale should consider developing its own social housing and not outsource to third parties; • lack of bungalows being built; • need to address the two-month a year homelessness issue caused by the ten-month occupancy rule on holiday camps and the problem it creates every year for the Council's Housing Options team; • ensure that social housing properties were not sub-let; • include provision for those leaving prison; • sign-posting to additional means of support; |

| Date considered | Policy title | Summary of Committee considerations |
|------------------|---|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role of the Housing Needs Assessment in relation to the new strategy; and • need for a more holistic approach to reducing homelessness. <p>Cabinet took account of the Committee's comments before publishing the draft strategy for consultation in April 2019.</p> |
| 12 February 2019 | Swale Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment | <p>The Committee considered the 2017/18 Swale Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment in the context of setting the priorities for the 2019/20 Community Safety Plan.</p> <p>The Committee considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeding back on incidents reported; • community triggers; • community engagement; • multi-agency risk assessment conferences; • organised crime groups and Kent Police Gang Liaison Officers; • reducing crime in tourist areas during the holiday season; • increased night time visitors to Sittingbourne once the regeneration scheme is complete; • alley gates in Sheerness; and • integrated offender management and the positive work undertaken by prisoners in the Borough as part of their rehabilitation. <p>The Cabinet Member and officers indicated that the Committee's comments would be fed into the development of the 2019/20 Community Safety Plan which was a document that the Community Partnership would be approving as a multi-agency body rather than the Council itself.</p> |

New focus for Policy Development and Review Committee (agreed by PDRC on 18/07/18)

1. The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek the views of the Policy Development and Review Committee (PDRC) in refocussing its work to bring further value to Council in developing new policies.
2. The focus of PDRC since it was established four years ago has been to provide an input to the review of existing policies, plans and strategies or the development of new ones.
3. Typically, PDRC has considered policies, plans and strategies during the latter stages of development or review, although there have been some exceptions. However, it is envisaged that going forward there should be more emphasis placed on PDRC making an input at a much earlier stage, particularly where brand new policies, plans or strategies are being developed. The stages at which PDRC involvement in a policy's development or review could be sought by the Cabinet Member include one or more of the following:

| Stage | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Conceptual | The reason for introducing a new policy has been identified and several possible solutions may have been identified, but the policy is still in an embryonic stage with no firm decisions taken on the way forward. |
| Pre-consultation | A policy has been developed, but it needs to be tested through public consultation before it is adopted. |
| Pre-Cabinet decision | A policy has been subjected to public consultation and amended to e.g. remove proposals which would have adverse consequences. |

4. Any such refocussing would also place greater emphasis on the Committee acting in an advisory role, with the value of the Committee's input being in ideas coming forward through discussion with the Cabinet Member(s) and Lead Officer(s) rather than formal recommendations (n.b. any recommendations the Committee currently make do **not** result in a formal response from Cabinet). A new template and guidance for Council Committee reports has been developed to ensure that points made by PDRC will be captured and incorporated into reports to Cabinet so that the role and input of PDRC is clearly shown in the decision-making process.
5. Informal Cabinet will consider a standing item on their agenda every two months listing all of the policies, plans and strategies, whether new or due for renewal, which are 'in the pipeline'. Not all of these will be items which are expected to come to PDRC for review (e.g. inward-facing policies which apply only to the Council or its staff such as Human Resources, Health and Safety or ICT). But any outward-facing policy, plan or strategy which will have a bearing on either residents, businesses, visitors to Swale or the Borough itself will be expected to come before PDRC.

6. At what stage a policy, plan or strategy might come before the PDRC will vary depending on its state of development. Some might come before PDRC up to once, twice or three times as in the following examples:

| Name | Type | New/revised ? | Cabinet Member/Service area | Stage of development | PDRC meeting date |
|---|----------|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Unauthorised grazing of horses on council open spaces | Policy | New | Cllrs Lewin and Simmons; Planning Enforcement and Commission and Customer Contact | (i) Conceptual; (ii) Pre-consultation; (iii) Pre-Cabinet decision | 12/09/18; 27/11/18; 12/02/19. |
| Homelessness and Housing Strategy | Strategy | Revision to existing policy to reflect changes in national legislation | Cllr Horton; Resident Services | (i) Pre-consultation; (ii) Pre-Cabinet decision | 16/01/19; 12/02/19 |
| Housing Allocations Policy | Policy | Minor changes to existing policy | Cllr Horton; Resident Services | (i) Pre-Cabinet decision | 12/02/19 |

7. It is hoped that the above proposals will result in PDRC having the opportunity, particularly for policies etc. which are in the very early stages of their development, to shape the Council's policies, plans and strategies for the better.

Cllr Andy Booth, Chairman PDRC
Cllr James Hunt, Vice-Chairman PDRC