

Policy Development Groups Working Arrangements

Introduction and Purpose

Policy Development Groups (PDGs) are an integral part of the Council's decision making process and were introduced in 2011 following a request from the Mayor to ensure inclusivity in decision-making. The purpose of PDGs is to enable early discussions on developing policy in key areas. This report will help members and officers understand how PDGs operate and what PDGs are responsible for.

Operational guidance

1. PDGs are not decision making bodies and do not have the authority to make decisions.
2. PDGs are not responsible for approving reports before a decision is made.
3. PDGs will have a crucial role in assisting in the development of policy within the Council. Whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Board terms of reference will continue to include a role in developing policy, its primary focus will be on holding the Mayor to account and undertaking its statutory functions.
4. Members who sit on PDGs and the Overview and Scrutiny Board are not prohibited from scrutinising issues that they have discussed at PDGs.
5. PDGs enable issues to be discussed informally before they are fully developed in order to assist officers when preparing reports on which decisions will ultimately be made by the Mayor or the Council.
6. Although PDGs are not decision making bodies they are part of the decision making process and will usually consider issues before they are put on the Forward Plan.
7. It is not necessary for all issues to go through a PDG before a final decision is made on it.
8. Each PDG will have a nominated chair. The agendas for the PDGs will be set by the chair, in consultation with the Mayor, Executive Leads and the Executive Director, ensuring a focus on those issues of critical importance to the Council moving forward.
9. It is up to each PDG whether members of the public and the press are invited to attend their meetings on specific issues and taking into account of advice from the Monitoring Officer.
10. PDGs will be supported by the Corporate Support Team and the Governance Support Team alongside their role of working with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that policy is developed in such a way that contributes towards the good governance of the Council.
11. Following presentation of an issue all members of the PDG (councillors and officers) will be provided the opportunity to ask questions of the person presenting. Following this all members will be invited to provide their opinions on the issue to the rest of the PDG where they wish to do so.
12. Following the above it is at the discretion of the Chair whether he/she asks for a vote on the recommendations arising from the discussions.