

Appendix 1: Feedback from PDAG survey and other consultations

- 1.1 Question 1 asked respondents to define the function of a PDAG in their own words. There were reoccurring themes among the given answers, with ‘the ability of backbench members to advise and influence cabinet members’ appearing most frequently. ‘The use of PDAGs to keep backbenchers informed as to the activities of the council in that portfolio’ followed as the second most frequent.
- 1.2 The second question was then adapted for a Councillor version and Officer version. Both were asked to rank the functions of a PDAG from one to five in the order of significance. These functions are derived from discussions with members and officers, as well as from the Constitution.

A mean average was taken of the scores to identify which aspects were most commonly ranked high, see table 1 & 2 and figure 1 & 2 below. The function of ‘allowing councillors to influence and advise decision makers’ was ranked the top in both samples.

Table 1: Ranking the Functions of PDAGs. Mean Average scores from Councillors	Mean average ranking
Allows councillors to influence and advise decision makers	3.5
Keeping backbenchers informed as to what is happening within the council	2.9
Allows councillors to represent their ward to decisions makers	2.6
Engage back benchers in debate	2.6
Allows backbenchers to engage with officers	2.1

Table 2: Ranking the Functions of PDAGs. Mean Average scores from Officers	Mean average ranking
Allowing members to advise on and influence policy & Projects	3.6
Allowing officers to gage the political response to a decision or activity	2.9
Allowing members to feedback ward specific concerns to officers & decision makers	2.8
Keeping members informed of what is going on in the council	2.6
Allowing members and officers to engage with one another	2.3

Figure 1: Mean Average rank among Councillors

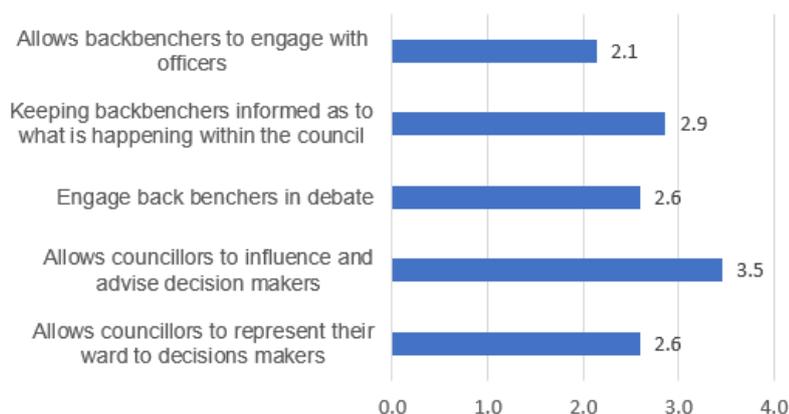
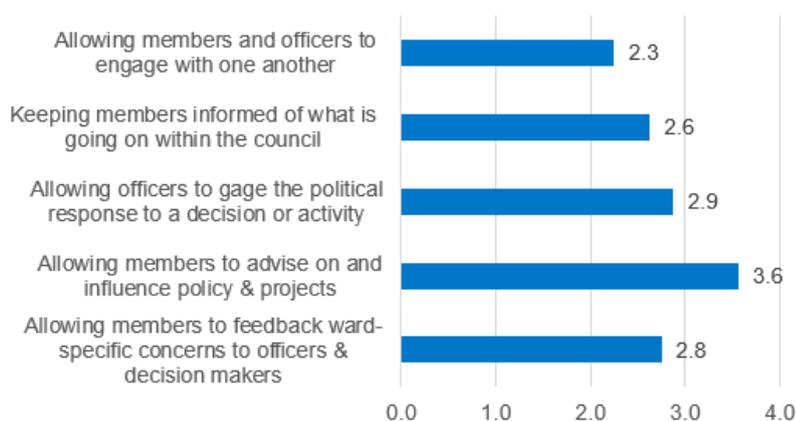


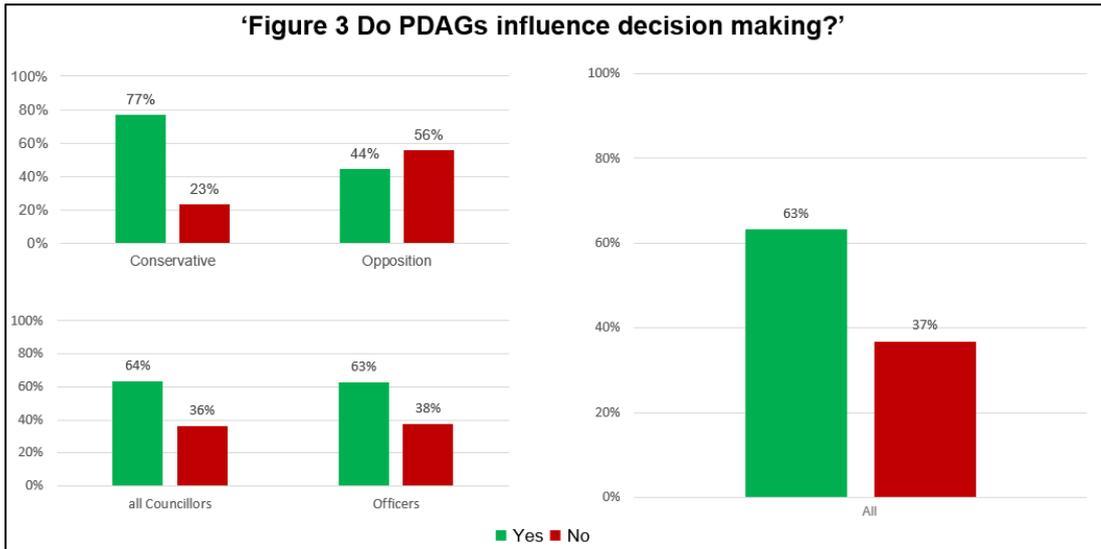
Figure 2: Mean average ranking among Officers



1.3 The later questions were the same for both Councillors and Officers and are shown in the tables and graphs below. Several of the sections allowed for comments to be made and these have been summarised below each table.

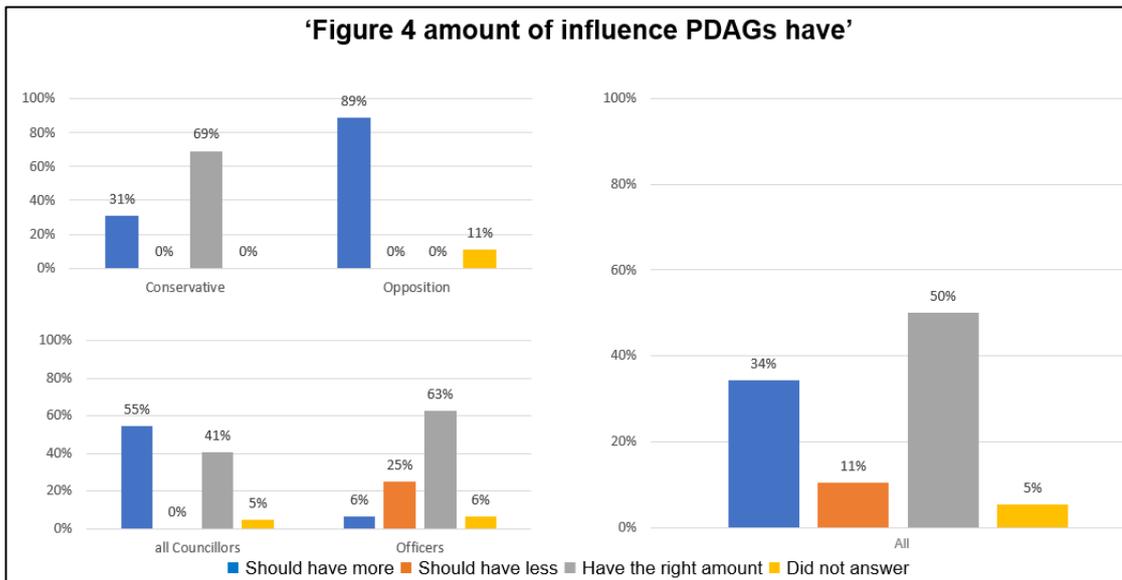
1.3a

Table 3: Do PDAGS have influence on decision making? (% of respondents)	Yes	No
Ruling group	77	23
Opposition	44	56
All Councillors	64	36
Officers	63	38
All Respondents	63	37



1.3b

Table 4: Amount of influence PDAGs have (% of respondents)	Should have more influence	Should have less influence	Have the right amount of influence	Did not answer
Ruling group	31	0	69	0
Opposition	89	0	0	11
All Councillors	55	0	41	5
Officers	6	25	63	6
All Respondents	34	11	50	5

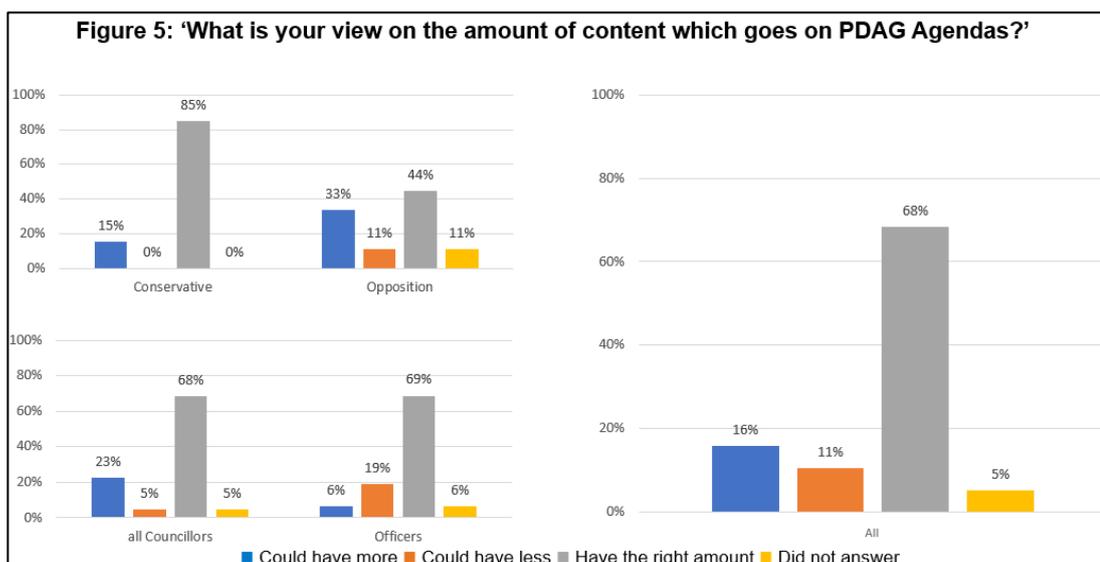


Respondents who were satisfied with the level of influence tended to leave the comment section blank therefore the summary of results is skewed towards those who wanted it to have more influence.

In summary of the comment section for this question, the recurring themes were around the lack of influence PDAGs have, with many councillors feeling decisions had already been made by the time they got to PDAGs. Several officers referenced Contract Awards that go to PDAGs as a result of passing the value threshold, despite there being no ability for councillors to influence these at this stage.

1.4

Table 5: Amount of content on PDAG agendas (% of respondents)	Could have more Content	Could have less Content	Have the right amount of Content	Did not answer
Ruling group	15	0	85	0
Opposition	33	11	44	11
All Councillors	23	5	68	5
Officers	6	19	69	6
All Respondents	16	11	68	5



Again, several respondents chose not to leave a comment, however of those who did there comments on the type of content which go to PDAGs. Comments were again made on contract awards, and how some items were just informative. There was support & opposition as to if this was wanted.

There were a small number of comments in relation to the structure of the agendas and a few members asked for more information on agenda items in advance or to receive full reports.

1.5 Strengths of a PDAG

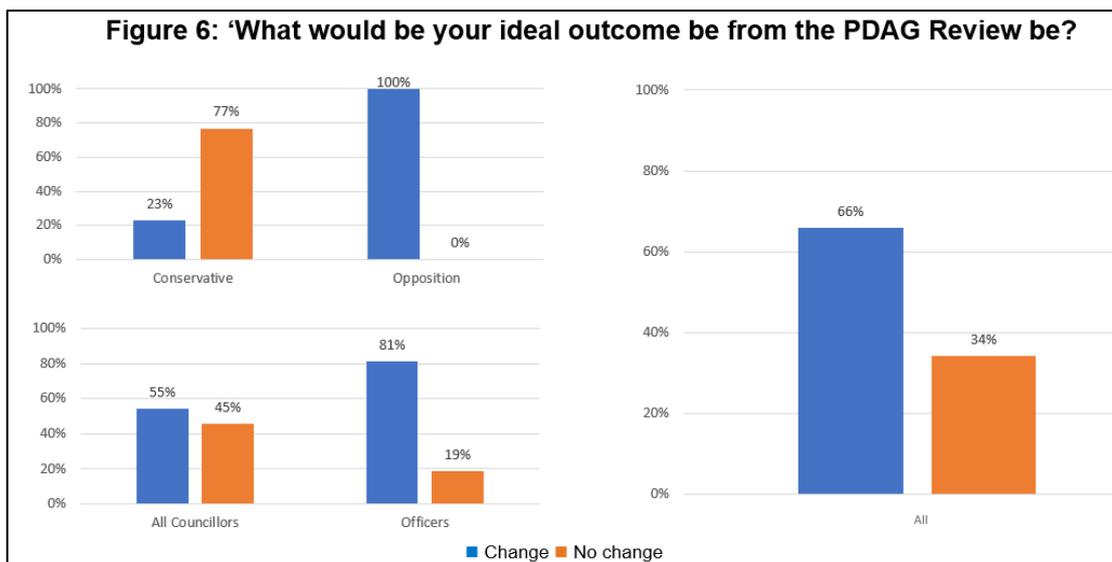
This had several reoccurring themes with the most common responses pointing to the ability to influence policy, provide information on council activities, engage in cross party discussion and allow for Officer/Councillor interaction beyond just Senior Officers and Cabinet.

1.6 Weaknesses of a PDAG

Again, there were several reoccurring themes in the responses to this question. The most common response was the lack of influence PDAGs have. Responses suggested that decisions had already been made before they got to the PDAG. Responses also included comments on the variety of chairing styles and meeting structures between different PDAGs. These comments were echoed in several of the interviews where there were discussion around the chairing styles. Some interviewees felt this was partly due to the different content that comes to each portfolio and others felt this variety is necessary for the cabinet member to get the most out of their PDAG. Lastly, there were some responses which commented on the lack of information prior to the meetings.

1.7

Table 6 Desire for change (% of respondents)	Change	No Change
Ruling group	23	77
Opposition	100	0
All Councillors	55	45
Officers	81	19
All Respondents	66	34



1.8 If change, how?

Theme taken from response:	Number of respondents
would like the PDAGs to focus more on policy matters	9
would like the views of the members of the PDAG taken into account more	7
would like the PDAGs to be involved earlier in the decision making process	6
wanted to retain general updates for Councillors on the portfolio	5
wanted contract award reports to not go to PDAG because Councillors cannot change the outcome at this stage	3
would like either more information in advance or the chance to go away, reflect and comment later ¹	3
raised issues about Overview and Scrutiny ² 1x concerned it was weak but didn't think the PDAG caused this 1x wanted to ask questions of Cabinet members and did not think this would undermine Overview and Scrutiny	2
mentioned the structure of PDAGs 1x felt it should be clearer they are to discuss policy development 1x said they needed more structure but wasn't specific how	2
mentioned attendance at the PDAG adding delay into projects	2
wanted clarity about who they could tell about the discussions	1
Councillor wanted to be able to raise non-agenda issues with the Cabinet lead in the meeting	1
<p>1. This was echoed in interviews with some Councillors asking for full reports in advance or information prior to the meeting.</p> <p>2. This was echoed in the interviews where several interviewees suggested that the roles of PDAGs and Overview and Scrutiny needed to be clearly defined and any conflict or duplication explored.</p>	