

COUNCIL
28 April 2021
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Details of recommendation to Council made by Governance Committee on 23 March

Review into Policy Development Advisory Groups

The Governance Committee had considered the report on the consultations carried out with Officers and Councillors on Policy Development Advisory Groups (PDAGs). The consultation had resulted in a number of suggestions with the aim of ensuring PDAGs have a clear focus on policy development and enabling earlier involvement of PDAGs in the policy development process.

Members discussed the recommendations suggested by officers and concluded that the second recommendation, to remove the requirement for the views of PDAGs to be included in Cabinet reports, would not provide a benefit. A motion was put forward to include a recommendation to require and expand upon the views of PDAGs included in Cabinet Reports.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- i) To remove the requirement for Contract Award Cabinet Reports to be taken to Policy Development Advisory Groups.
- ii) That the views of Policy Development Advisory Groups continue to be included in Cabinet Reports and expanded upon.
- iii) To encourage earlier involvement of Policy Development Advisory Groups in the policy development process.
- iv) To split Policy Development Advisory Group agendas into policy development items and service update items.
- v) To amend the Constitution where necessary.

REASON

- i) Feedback received during the consultation shows that the majority of those surveyed would like to see some form of change to how PDAGs operate.
- ii) The reasoning behind the proposed options is to maximise the value and influence PDAGs have within the council. This could be achieved by involving them earlier in the policy development process, focusing their agendas on issues they can directly influence and clarifying their function as development of policy.

(b) Details of recommendation to Council made by Standards Committee on 19 April

Model Councillor Code of Conduct

The Local Government Association had published a new Model Code of Conduct, following consultation last year with local authorities and other organisations. It is intended that Parish Councils would also adopt this in order to bring consistency across local authorities. The Model Code would be updated annually to take into account changes in legislation and other considerations.

The Committee were supportive of the Model Code, which clearly explained expected behaviours and contained clear advice regarding declarations of interests.

The Committee had identified some grammatical errors and agreed minor changes to increase clarity. Some nouns have also been given capital letters (eg Council, Parish) for consistency.

These proposed minor amendments are highlighted in the attached Model Code.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To adopt the Local Government Association “Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020” as amended.

REASON

- (i) The Local Government Association’s New Code will be a national model and will ultimately contain additional guidance, working examples and explanatory text. If adopted the Council will be applying current national best practice and will mean that the case law and guidance can be applied in a straightforward and simple manner.
- (ii) The clarity of the New Code means that it can be well understood by the public and Councillors. The New Code addresses issues arising through more communication taking place remotely and through social media, which is currently where most problems arise.
- (iii) The New Code is likely to be adopted by Parish Councils allowing for more consistent approaches to conduct to be applied at each tier of government.