

Council	Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	23 September 2015
Report Title	Policy Development and Review Committee – Annual Report 2014/15
Lead Member	Councillor Lloyd Bowen, Chairman, Policy Development and Review Committee
SMT Lead	Abdool Kara, Chief Executive
Head of Service	David Clifford, Policy and Performance Manager
Lead Officer	Bob Pullen, Policy and Performance Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number:
Recommendations	1. That Council considers the Policy Development and Review Committee’s Annual Report for 2014/15.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details of the work of the Policy Development and Review Committee during its first year of operation (2014/15) since being established in 2014.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Policy Development and Review Committee’s terms of reference require it to report annually to Council on its work, and to make recommendations for amended working methods if appropriate.
- 2.2 Up until 2014/15, the Council had two overview and scrutiny committees – a Scrutiny Committee and a Policy Overview Committee, which were established in 2009. Whilst the arrangements worked well, there had been some confusion regarding the role of each committee, and at time a lack of clarity as to which committee an item should be considered by. There was also a need to review the ‘call-in’ procedure to make this easier to understand and to bring it in line with best practice.
- 2.3 It was therefore decided that the General Purposes Committee would review the Council’s overview and scrutiny arrangements to define more clearly the roles of each committee and update the call-in procedure.

- 2.4 The General Purposes Committee considered that ‘pre-scrutiny’ and involvement of scrutiny in matters that the Cabinet intends to consider was a very useful tool, and so it proposed that a new committee be established which focussed on this area, in particular the development of policy. This new committee would not be designated as an overview and scrutiny committee, and therefore will not consider ‘call-in’ items. Its terms of reference are set out at Appendix I.
- 2.5 The General Purposes Committee recommended to Council that these changes be made, and Council approved them at the meeting on 19 February 2014.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It has been the practice in Swale for the Scrutiny Committee and former Policy Overview Committee to report on their work to Council each year. The Policy Development and Review Committee is required by its terms of reference to also report on its work and the report at Appendix II fulfils this requirement.
- 3.2 No proposals for changes to working methods are proposed at this stage.
- 3.3 It is recommended that Council considers the Policy Development and Review Committee’s annual report for 2014/15 at Appendix II.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 None.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Policy Development and Review Committee considered a draft of the annual report at its meeting on 3 June 2015.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Committee reviews policies, strategies and plans across a wide number of issues across all the corporate priorities, and more generally helps to improve and enhance decision making in the Council.
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified at this stage.
Legal and Statutory	None identified at this stage. The Committee has not been established as a requirement of legislation, but it does conform to the Council’s Constitution.
Crime and	The Committee does review the Swale Community Safety Strategy

Disorder	periodically.
Sustainability	The Committee will be reviewing the Climate Local Swale Strategy in 2015/16.
Health and Wellbeing	The Committee are expected to review policies, plans and strategies that encompass health and wellbeing.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The Committee is actively involved in reviewing the development of the Council's new Corporate Equality Strategy.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Policy Development and Review Committee terms of reference
 - Appendix II: Policy Development and Review Committee Annual Report 2014/15

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 None.

Policy Development and Review Committee Terms of reference

(As agreed by Council on 19 February 2014)

Within its terms of reference, the Committee will:

- (i) consider any built-in review of any existing policies, strategies or plans of the Council;
- (ii) consider existing policies in the light of changes to legislation or national guidance;
- (iii) consider other reviews of existing council policy referred by a Cabinet Member or by resolution of Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee or Full Council;
- (iv) consider proposals for new council policy referred by a Cabinet Member, Cabinet or Full Council; and
- (v) provide pre-decision comment on policy decisions.

A policy shall not be re-considered by the committee within two years or before its built-in review period, unless by resolution of the full Council or Cabinet, or as required by a change in legislation or national guidance.

The chairman may invite Cabinet Members and officers of the council or other persons to attend committee meetings to answer questions pertinent to the business of the committee.

Having considered an item, the Committee may make recommendations to the person or body that referred the item to it; Cabinet, Cabinet Member, Officer of the Council or the Full Council.

The Policy Development and Review Committee shall exercise overall responsibility for any finances made available to it.

Annual Report – the Policy Development and Review Committee must report annually to the Full Council on their work, and make recommendations for amended working methods if appropriate.