

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Update on the Work of the Policy Advisors

Date: 5 September 2024

Author: Chief Executive

Wards Affected

Borough-wide

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the actions and activities that the Policy Advisors have undertaken since the last report to Cabinet in February 2023.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation(s)

Members are recommended to note the content of the report, and the actions and activities undertaken by the Policy Advisors since February 2023.

1. Background

1.1 At the Annual General Meeting on 22 May 2019 the Leader notified the Council of the composition of the Cabinet and resulting Portfolio Holders.

1.2 The Leader also announced that the Cabinet would be supported by five Policy Advisors:

Policy Advisor for Growth and Regeneration;
Policy Advisor for Young People and Equalities;
Policy Advisor for Environment;
Policy Advisor for Health and Well-being;
Policy Advisor for Housing and Homelessness.

1.3 At the Annual General Meeting in May 2022 the number of Policy Advisors was reduced to four and the areas of focus were changed as follows:

Policy Advisor for Regeneration, Recovery and Rural Affairs;

Policy Advisor for Equalities, Diversity and Young People;
Policy Advisor for Environment and Climate Change;
Policy Advisor for Heritage and Homelessness.

- 1.4 In July 2022, a report made under the Leaders delegated authority - *Changes to the appointment of Portfolio Holders and Policy Advisors* – the number of Policy Advisors was reduced to two:

Policy Advisor for Environment;
Policy Advisor for Heritage and Homelessness.

- 1.5 At the Annual General Meeting on 24 May 2023 the areas of focus were changed as follows:

Policy Advisor for Vulnerable Communities;
Policy Advisor for Environmental Services (Operations).

- 1.6 Policy Advisors do not hold delegated responsibility but support their respective Cabinet member on development and progression of specific Gedling Plan actions as appropriate. The precise focus for the work of each Policy Advisor is agreed by the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet member in discussion with the Policy Advisor.
- 1.7 The work of each Policy Advisor has been reported to the Leader on a regular basis since May 2019, and this report provides a summary of work undertaken by the Policy Advisors since February 2023.
- 1.8 In general terms the work undertaken by Policy Advisors has been agreed by the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet member as follows:

Work Applicable to all Policy Advisors

- Initially the roles involve fact finding and understanding how decisions are made in each applicable directorate/service area.
- Attending regular meetings held between the Portfolio Holder, relevant Director, and Heads of Service to discuss delivery of actions and initiatives as approved within the Gedling Plan.
- These meetings also involve discussion of operational matters that are of significance to the Portfolio Holder and Policy Advisor.
- Attending individual meetings with Heads of Service and officers as appropriate to deliver specific actions as allocated by the Leadership.
- Feeding back updates, ideas and concerns to the Portfolio Holder and officers at the regular meetings on the work undertaken.
- Keeping up to date with business held at Cabinet, Scrutiny, Licensing and Planning meetings as appropriate.

1.9 Work undertaken by individual Policy Advisors

The following actions and activities have built upon the above actions and activities in furtherance of the specific projects allocated to each Policy Advisor.

Policy Advisor for Vulnerable Communities – Councillor Sandra Barnes since May 2023

- Attended meetings and discussed community issues with the housing team to try and resolve people's personal situations.
- Met with representatives of 'Black Heritage' with the aim of helping black people across the borough, and will be supporting Black History month in October 2024.
- Regularly attend the Gedling Youth Council meetings.
- Undertook training in domestic violence.
- Attended the Arnold Summer Fair and other community events and discussed topics with stallholders.
- Will be attending the Killisick fun day and Nottinghamshire day events.
- Discussed the build out of Rolleston Drive with Jigsaw Homes.
- Raised awareness of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Regularly visit St George's Centre in Netherfield to meet people and seek their views.
- Liaise with staff from the communities and regeneration teams on local matters.
- Keep involved with the Arnold Methodist Church and the Daybrook food bank service.

Policy Advisor for Environmental Services (Operations) – Councillor Sandra Barnes / Councillor Paul Wilkinson since February 2023

- Attended the depot on numerous occasions and thanked the staff for their hard work and dedication to the Council and borough.
- Gained an understanding of the issues affecting the service under the new Environment Act, in particular the collection of food waste.
- Discussed how we would cope with the introduction of new services such as food waste, and what changes would be needed to our vehicle fleet and depot provision.
- Developed knowledge and understanding of waste management and recycling principles and operations.
- Attended Portfolio Holder and ad hoc meetings with the environment managers and wider teams, inputting into agendas.
- Contributing to service updates and asking questions/seeking information from officers.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the summary of work, the actions and activities undertaken by the Policy Advisors since the last update report to Cabinet in February 2023.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 An alternative option is to not to update Members on the work undertaken. Whilst Portfolio Holders will be fully aware of the work the Policy Advisor is undertaking within their specific portfolio, this provides an update of work undertaken across all portfolios.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Each Policy Advisor receives a Special Responsibility Allowance as approved annually by full Council as part of the Independent Remuneration Panel report (usually in March). There are no other costs associated with these positions.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 It is the duty of all representatives of the Council to be fully aware of the equality legislation. Also as set out in this report, the Leader of the Council previously nominated a Policy Advisor to be specifically responsible for equalities, namely the Policy Advisor for Young People and Equalities. However, since the reduction in the number of Policy Advisors, this responsibility now rests with the Portfolio Holder for Life Changes and Vulnerability.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications arising from this report. However, the Leader of the Council previously nominated a Policy Advisor to be responsible for the environment, which has now changed to the Policy Advisor for Environmental Services (Operations). However, overall responsibility for carbon management rests with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Natural Habitat.

8. Appendices

None.

9. Background Papers

None.

10. Reasons for Recommendations

To share with Members the good work that the Policy Advisors have been undertaking since May 2019 across all portfolios, in particular the actions and activities undertaken by the Policy Advisors since they were last reported to Cabinet in February 2023.

Statutory Officer Approval

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer
Date: 28/8/24

Approved by: Monitoring Officer
Date: 28/8/24