

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Update on the Work of the Policy Advisors

Date: 4 September 2025

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 September 2024.

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 September 2024.

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. The Leader also announced that the Cabinet would be supported by five Policy Advisors.
- 1.2 Over the last six years, the number of Policy Advisors has been reduced to two, and at the Annual General Meeting held on 21 May 2025 the areas were confirmed as follows:
 - ✓ Policy Advisor for Vulnerable Communities, supporting the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Place and the Portfolio Holder for Life Chances and Vulnerability.
 - ✓ Policy Advisor for Environmental Services (Operations), supporting the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Operations).

It should be noted that the Policy Advisor for Vulnerable Communities is currently vacant as Councillor Sandra Barnes is performing the role of Deputy Mayor.

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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 September 2024.
- 1.5 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 and relevant Director 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 Assistant Directors 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.

1.6 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

Communities and Place:

- Events and venues – active participation in the summer fair, fun / play days, and attendance at community centres like Netherfield St George's Centre and Daybrook Baptist Church. Also attended the parish conference.
- Support for deprived areas – focussing on Netherfield and Daybrook, including meeting with foodbanks and breakfast clubs.
- Cultural and historical initiatives – attended talks on black heritage and promoted their displays and engaged with the local Gedling history group.

- Community groups – involvement with Daybrook bowls club, several volunteer days and friendship groups. The Chinese New Year event was a particular highlight.
- Youth and employment – noting the success of the school employability programmes and apprenticeship fairs. Also engage with the Gedling Play Forum.

Life Chances and Vulnerability:

- Youth Council – attendance at meetings held every 4-6 weeks, discussing topics such as knife crime, drugs, bullying and social mobility.
- Housing challenges – notes the shortage of housing and the work being progressed by the team to support homelessness, future housing provision, and refugee resettlement.
- Domestic Violence – attended a course and engaged with initiatives such as the 'Ask for Angela' scheme in public venues to help victims discreetly escape unsafe situations.
- Health and wellbeing – attending events such as 'Her Spirit Day' and 'Safe Gym Day' to promote safer environments for women and girls.
- Reporting – receive regular updates on housing benefits, mental health, safeguarding, and supporting vulnerable groups.

Policy Advisor for Environmental Services (Operations) – Councillor Paul Wilkinson

- Regular attendance at monthly Portfolio holder meetings with officers and other ad hoc meetings to discuss progress against priorities.
- Input into these meetings to seek solutions to issues as well as praise for positive achievements.
- Attendance at the depot to thank staff for their hard work and contribution to Gedling's successes.
- Promotion of new road sweeping vehicles.
- Regular discussions with Portfolio Holder to contribute to smooth running of areas of responsibility.
- Positive feedback from Portfolio Holder for contributions and participation.

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 September 2024.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 An alternative option is to not update Members on the work undertaken, however this report provides an update of work undertaken by the Policy Advisors across the three Portfolio Holder areas.

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. For 2025/26 the amount per Policy Advisor is £2,048.30 (pay award not included). 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. However, equalities, diversity and inclusion 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, carbon management and climate change 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 September 2024.

Statutory Officer Approval

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer
Date:

Approved by: Monitoring Officer
Date: