

Planning Policy and Local Plan Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Status

1.1 The Planning Policy and Local Plan Advisory Group (“the Group”) is established as an Executive, cross-party advisory Group of the Council.

1.2 The Group does not have any formal decision-making powers but acts as an advisor to the Executive, Director of City Development and Executive Member on matters within its remit.

1.3 All formal decisions relating to the Local Plan and associated planning policy documents shall be taken by the Executive, Full Council, or other appropriate bodies in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.

Membership

2.1 The Group will comprise eight Elected Members, appointed in accordance with political proportionality. Appointments will be agreed through the annual appointments process and accompanying guidance.

2.2 The appointment of Chair and vice chair will be agreed as part of the Annual Appointments process. In the absence of the Chair, and vice Chair, a Chair will be appointed for the duration of the meeting.

2.3 The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities will not be a Member of the Group but will be invited as an attendee.

2.4 The Group will be supported in its work by Officers from the City Development Directorate and Democratic Services, the Lead Officer will be the Head of Strategic Policy.

2.5 Substitute members may be permitted with the agreement of the Council’s Monitoring Officer, although continuity of attendance is strongly recommended.

2.6 Additional Members, Officers or External specialists may be invited to attend meetings for particular items, at the discretion of the Chair.

Principles of Operation

3.1 Members of the Group are expected to:

- Act in the interests of the City as a whole, rather than solely their ward
- Participate in a constructive, collaborative and cross-party manner
- Recognise the advisory role of the Group
- Avoid predetermination in relation to planning decisions.
- Provide constructive advice on strategy, priorities and deliverability
- Advise on alignment with the Council Plan, climate objectives and other strategies

Purpose

4.1 The purpose of the Group is to:

- Provide a forum for detailed cross-party Member engagement on the preparation, review and maintenance of the Local Plan and associated planning policy documents
- Enable Members to consider and discuss evidence, options and emerging policy approaches
- Offer informal advice, input and constructive challenge to officers and the Executive Member
- Support consensus-building across political groups, where possible
- Ensure that Members are appropriately informed at key stages of plan preparation
- A forum for Members to consider and discuss planning policy matters, including emerging issues and developments in planning policy

Functions and Responsibilities

5.1 The Group will undertake the following functions:

Plan preparation and review:

- Consider progress in preparing and reviewing the Local Plan
- Provide input at key stages of plan-making, including evidence base, issues and options, preferred strategy, and draft policies

Evidence and policy development

- Review and comment on technical studies, growth options, spatial strategy and draft policy approaches
- Provide a Member perspective on key issues and choices

Consultation and engagement

- Consider consultation approaches and feedback
- Provide a forum to explore key issues arising from stakeholder and community engagement

Meetings

6.1 Meetings will be held:

- At key stages of the Local Plan preparation process; and
- Typically, at intervals of approximately 6–8 weeks, or as required and agreed by the Chair.

6.2 Meetings will generally:

- Focus on specific topics or stages of plan preparation
- Include officer presentations and facilitated discussion

6.3 Meetings would be held in public, include opportunities for public participation, and agendas and minutes would be published in accordance with access to information requirements.

Reporting

7.1 The Group will provide informal feedback to:

- The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities (or equivalent)
- The Executive and other relevant decision makers

7.2 Outputs from the Group will inform Officer reports to formal decision-making bodies and if requested the Scrutiny Committee.

7.3 The Group will not publish formal decisions or reports in its own right.

Duration and Review

8.1 The Group operates for at least the duration of the Local Plan process.

8.2 The terms of reference will be reviewed annually, or earlier at the request of the Group

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