

ADVISORY OBSERVATIONS

Proposed responses

Multiple Special Responsibility Allowances

RECOMMENDATION 20 (i): The Panel invites comments from the Council on the policy of allowing 1.5 SRAs to be claimed by an individual Member.

The 1.5 SRA provision is understood to have been inherited from the Bath City Council/Wansdyke Council prior to B&NES formation on Local Government Reorganisation.

Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels

RECOMMENDATION 20 (ii): That the Council be invited to comment on these observations about the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels and in particular indicate to this Panel what arrangements formally exist for the leadership, direction and management of this statutory function at Member level.

As part of our statutory duty the Council is required to appoint at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Panel that will have sole responsibility to discharge the functions under Sections 9F and 9FA to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000, as relevant to the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities. Our current model includes; 3 Policy Development & Scrutiny Panels these include: -

1. Corporate Panel
2. Climate Emergency & Sustainability Panel
3. Children, Adult, Health & Wellbeing Panel

The agreed structure and remits of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels were discussed by the new administration and agreed by full Council at the AGM on the 21st May 2019. This was based on a paper that was developed during 2018, which explored whether the existing model, number and structure for scrutiny is working, and the different options for future change. The underlying objective is to ensure that the Council is delivering good scrutiny

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs Group has oversight of the overall PDS work planning and has responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's scrutiny activity, as follows:

- Share and co-ordinate individual PDS Panel work plans, in order to prioritise resources effectively
- Decide how to deal with cross-boundary issues, or issues that do not readily fall into the remit of any of the Panels (Integrated forward plan)
- Decide how to respond to/programme instructions from Council or requests from Executive
- Identify training, development and support needs for all Panel members

- Consider progress and direction of PDS function and working practices, and identify and implement future developments
- Oversight of financial, staff and other resources made available to support scrutiny.
- Discuss or propose variations to Panel membership, operating framework and Terms of Reference (constitutional) for Council approval where appropriate
- Champion the PDS process within the Council and externally
- Compile (with PDS Team) and approve Annual Report; take to Council.

The Chair of the group has been nominated as the chair of the Corporate panel and from the Chairs & Vice Chairs group. The agreement of chairing this meeting is decided at the first meeting after the elections for that period. The scrutiny officer supports the coordination and delivery of this group.

The terms of reference for the Chairs & Vice Chairs group is currently agreed internally and is not formalised at Council, however this could be formalised and added to Section 5 (TOR) of the Constitution to formalise the role. This role could then be reviewed by the IRP review.

The proceedings of all overview and scrutiny bodies are conducted in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in our Constitution and within the Overview & Scrutiny procedure Rules which includes Rule 9¹ and 10² on the agreed work programming for the panel.

¹ Rule 9: - A rolling programme of work for each Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is drawn up, with individual discretion as to the best means for achieving their individual work programme. Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs will ensure work plan activities are maximised to the benefit of the whole Overview and Scrutiny function, within shared resources and available budgets.

If there is any doubt or disagreement about the allocation of business between Panels, the Chief Executive is authorised to determine such matters after consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and/or Group Leaders (or their nominees).

² Rule 10: Where a matter for consideration by a Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel also falls within the remit of one or more other such Panels, the Monitoring officer, on behalf of the Chief Executive, and in consultation with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels will determine (a) which such body will consider it, or (b) which parts will be considered by which body or (c) that the matter will be considered by a joint meeting of the relevant bodies

Chair of the Council

RECOMMENDATION 20 (iii): The Council be invited to comment on these observations on the role of Chair and in particular to advise the Panel about the future level of commitment required of the Chair over and above charring Council meetings.

The role of the Chairman of the Council will be considerably reduced due to a reduction in the resources available to support this role, this includes a substantial reduction in the funding and staffing available for the Chairman's role.

The Executive Support team responsible for supporting the Chairman will continue in this role, however, the role will only concentrate on the following type of events:

- Charring Council Meetings
- Citizenship ceremonies
- Key national or local events (such as chairman awards, royal visits etc)

The team will continue to review any specific requests received from local communities or organisations and will review these on a case by case basis to ascertain whether the chairman can help or support these events.

Member Performance and Development

RECOMMENDATION 20 (iv) The Council be invited to comment on measures for supporting Councillor development and performance management of Councillors, particularly those in receipt of an SRA.

Councillor development

All Councillors receive training as part of their induction process and for those with a special responsibility, further training is offered in the various roles assigned to them e.g.; Planning issues, Pensions, Charring meetings etc.”

Councillor Performance

Cabinet members are required to have a quarterly performance development review and all those with special responsibility are required to have at least an annual performance development review with their Group Leader. This review should include a discussion about any development or support required.