

Annual Review 2012/13: Resources Policy Development Group

- 1.1 Resources PDG has met a total of six times during the municipal year 2012/13 with one meeting being held earlier than was originally scheduled in order to finalise its recommendations in relation to the implementation of fees and charges for 2013/14. The PDG considered eleven substantive items including:

Void Properties	Fees and Charges Strategy	Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme
Car Parking Strategy	Financial Settlement 2013/14	Cycle Centre, Grantham
Implementation of Fees and Charges	HRA Business Model	Local Authority Mortgage Scheme
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Discretionary Council Tax Payment Scheme	

Items where recommendations were made are highlighted in bold in the table above.

- 1.2 The PDG worked closely with officers and external advisors in the development of the Fees and Charges Strategy in 2012/13.
- 1.3 Workshops were held with service managers on the determining of fees and charges for the forthcoming year and subsequent proposals were put to the PDG. The PDG's recommendations were then made to Cabinet. Recommendations relating to fees and charges were broken down by service area.
- 1.4 The PDG formed two working groups during the municipal year to concentrate on fees and charges and the localisation of Council Tax support (including the development of a new scheme for South Kesteven).
- 1.5 Members of Resources PDG made several suggestions and recommendations to officers during the year. Items which may have been secondary to the substantive items became recurring items throughout the year. These included the investigation into the possibility of using a single energy supplier for all council properties, bulk purchasing of fuel oil to assist council tenants, Car Park charges, use and publicising of the Cycle Centre and an Accredited Agent Scheme and charging for pre-application advice from Development Management.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 It has been a productive year for the three Policy Development Groups. Collectively the PDGs have considered forty-three substantive items, made thirty-two recommendations to Cabinet and helped to develop seventeen policies, strategies and schemes for the Authority.
- 2.2 The work programme for Resources PDG has focused on issues relating to the Financial Strategies and plans of the Council. This has become increasingly important given the testing economic environment.

- 2.2 Ensuring that reports and presentations were prepared and distributed within the agenda management timetable meant Members consistently had the appropriate information to allow for informed deliberation and subsequent recommendations to officers and Cabinet.
- 2.3 The production and distribution of the work programme within agenda packs further assisted in the Council's accountability and transparency in the development of policy. Improved systems for following up action points have ensured that members of the PDG are fully aware of milestones and achievements throughout the process of policy development.

3. Moving Forward

- 3.1 Cross-over between Policy Development Groups should be encouraged if we are to work effectively in the future. A joined-up approach to the development of policies and procedures has the potential to involve greater numbers of elected members in a policy's path from proposal through to recommendation and ultimately decision making. This approach has been shown to be effective this year with both Resources PDG and Communities PDG working on the development and implementation of the Car Parking Strategy. This approach could be further enhanced through the use of joint (cross-PDG) working groups so that the different components of policy development could be addressed simultaneously.