

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 24 May 2022 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)
G P Scalese (Vice-Chairman)

J Avery
A C Beal
F Biggadike
H J W Bingham

M D Booth
M Hasan
J D McLean
P A Redgate

J L Reynolds
S-A Slade
S C Walsh

In Attendance: the Assistant Director – Corporate, the Organisational Development Service Manager, the Information Governance Officer, the Communities Manager, the Democratic Services Team Leader, the Democratic Services Officer and Councillor J Tyrrell.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors R A Gibson and G T D Rudkin; and the Senior Change and Performance Business Partner.

	<u>Action By</u>
<p>1. MINUTES</p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the Policy Development Panel held on 23 March 2022.</p> <p>In respect of minute 52, 'SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELC Partnership Policy Register':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarification was requested regarding the wording of 'updating of the register owner where staff had left the organisation'. It was agreed that 'register owner' should be amended to 'policy owner'. <p>AGREED:</p> <p>Subject to the amendment noted above, that the minutes be signed as a correct record.</p> <p>a) Actions</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the new 'Actions' standing item to the Panel which gave a formal record of officer responses to actions which arose from the previous meeting.</p> <p>The Democratic Services Officer added that email responses to member queries would also continue to be circulated to Panel members as soon as possible after the meeting.</p>	

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

The Actions item was welcomed by the Panel and would come forward as a regular item.

AGREED:

That the Actions update be noted.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

3. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

4. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

**5. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL**

There were none.

6. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan dated 24 May 2022.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

**7. SHDC POLICY REGISTER AND THE S&ELCP POLICY
REGISTER**

The Panel gave consideration to the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register.

The Panel noted that the colour coded headings identifying the respective Authorities had been absent from the Partnership Register and requested these be reinstated for future iterations.

AGREED:

That the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

be noted.

8. REVIEW OF HR POLICIES (BATCH 1)

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate to seek the Policy Development Panel’s views on the proposed HR policies (Batch 1) prior to a report to Council.

The Assistant Director – Corporate and the Organisational Development Service Manager were in attendance to present the report and answer member questions

The Assistant Director – Corporate introduced the report by stating that the review and alignment of HR Policies across the three S&ELCP authorities was in progress. Policy consistency would assist with the management of the workforce and support PSPS in the delivery of services.

The review had included engagement with:

- Unions, which had been supportive; and
- Key officers across the partnership (Internal Readers Panel) who had received the opportunity to comment on the operational practicalities of the policies.

Additional batches of policies would be presented to the Policy Development Panel for consideration over the next few meetings. The first batch of HR policies, to be considered at the 24 May 2022 Policy Development Panel meeting, included:

- the Disciplinary Policy;
- the Improving Performance at Work Policy; and
- the Grievance Policy.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members asked if the various appendices which had been referred to within the policies could be circulated.
 - The Organisational Development Service Manager would circulate the appendices after the meeting.
- Members asked whether guidance from the Local Government Association (LGA) had been sought / was available.
 - The Organisational Development Service Manager responded that the HR (PSPS) review had consulted a wide variety of sources, including:
 - the LGA;
 - other local authorities in the area; and

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

- best practice from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
- Members referred to page 12 of the Disciplinary Policy and noted that section 8.3 had been excluded. A further reference had not been included.
 - The Organisational Development Service Manager would review the document to ensure all references were included.
- Members referred to the penultimate paragraph on page 4 of the Disciplinary Policy and asked whether Trade Union representatives were treated differently to other members of staff.
 - The Organisational Development Service Manager confirmed that the process was the same except for the additional step of informing the regional Trade Union representative prior to action being brought against a local Trade Union representative.

AGREED:

That the comments and feedback of the Panel be noted.

9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director – Governance to note minor amendments to the Records Management Policy.

The Information Governance Officer introduced the report which included minor updates to legislation and department/team names.

The Information Governance Officer stated that the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the partnership and the Boston Data Protection Officer had agreed that alignment would be considered at the next date of review.

- Members considered the report and noted that the location of the Document Control Sheet referenced Breckland Council's files.
 - The Information Governance Officer confirmed that she was a Breckland Council employee and her role had remained shared across Breckland Council and South Holland District Council. It was confirmed that South Holland District Council records were held securely within the Breckland Council folder.

AGREED:

That the Records Management Policy with minor amendments outlined within the report be noted by the Panel.

10. SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership, to consider the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Following a review of the Safeguarding Policy, the Communities Manager provided the Panel with an overview of the policy framework for the Council to fulfil its safeguarding statutory responsibilities and to demonstrate competence and compliance. An outline of the changes was given, which related to:

- roles, responsibilities and reporting arrangements;
- guidance on domestic abuse to reflect the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- multi-agency working practices;
- internal reporting and monitoring processes;
- refreshed and updated web links; and
- policy layout changes for ease of navigation.

The Communities Manager highlighted that:

- the policy framework was aligned with other district councils in Lincolnshire to agreed county multi-agency policy and practices.
- the framework had interdependencies with other Council policies including complaints, recruitment and selection, and whistleblowing.
- Safeguarding compliance was audited both internally and externally.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members noted point 5.6 of the report and queried whether any financial implications existed relating to training or potential liabilities.
 - The Communities Manager confirmed that a contribution was made to Safeguarding Boards which allowed employees to access the Lincolnshire training for free. This point would be updated within the report.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

- Members questioned whether the Council could prevent domestic abuse.
 - The Communities Manager stated that everyone had the responsibility to act. Whilst the council could not always stop incidents, it had the mechanism to speak to individuals to offer support and guidance, and ultimately escalation to those authorities which could take enforcement action. District Councils were involved in the prevention of escalation and levels of risk were assessed in order to apply the most appropriate course of action.
- Members asked if the policy was county-wide.
 - The Communities Manager confirmed that whilst the policy had related to South Holland, it linked to consistent county-wide, multiagency protocols.
- Members asked if safeguarding information was shared with other professional bodies; and whether access to/ sharing of systems would be in place.
 - The Communities Manager stated that the different elements of the policy had distinct information sharing arrangements, for example, in relation to Domestic Abuse, meetings were held with other agencies twice per week, and separate information agreements were in place with the Vulnerable Adults Panel. Whilst information sharing with professional bodies occurred, this was limited to relevant personnel and required the highest level of care. Consent also needed to be considered.
- Members stated that the policy was a good piece of work and understandably extensive but suggested that a precis be produced for ease of reference.
 - The Communities Manager confirmed that the following actions were planned upon formal adoption of the policy update:
 - briefing sessions for staff and members, including within induction training for new/returning elected members;
 - crib sheets would be made available; and
 - the Safeguarding area of the intranet would be refreshed.
- Members stated that wellbeing was difficult to quantify and that recent events had placed extreme financial pressure on individuals. It was the responsibility of the Government of the day to assist.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

- The Communities Manager acknowledged that a close relationship existed between Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety. Financial inclusion had an impact on the wellbeing of individuals. From a safeguarding perspective, the council's prevention measures were aimed at protecting those individuals who were identified as at risk from self-harming, personal neglect or suicide. A piece of work to support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents, including the financially vulnerable, would identify such risks. Advice and assistance were available to individuals through the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Wellbeing Service.
- Members asked when the SHDC Safeguarding Policy would be aligned with the partnership.
 - The Communities Manager anticipated that alignment would occur later in the year. All seven Lincolnshire districts were in the process of reviewing their Safeguarding policies and they would be sharing /collaborating on updates in the summer. It was envisaged that alignment of the Safeguarding Policy across the partnership would occur when this process was complete. Whilst the policy had a three-year review cycle, the Communities Manager would bring annual updates to the Panel.

AGREED:

That the comments of the Policy Development Panel regarding the Safeguarding Policy be noted prior to going forward to Cabinet for approval.

11. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Director Governance (Monitoring Officer) which set out the Work Programme of the Panel. The Work Programme consisted of two sections, the first setting out dates of future Panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration, and the second setting out Task Groups that had been identified by the Panel.

Regarding Appendix A:

- The schedule of meetings for the following year had been finalised and items programmed where this was known.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 24 May
2022**

- Members expressed disappointment that the Untidy Sites Policy Handbook had not come forward to the 24 May 2022 meeting. The Panel stated that the policy must come forward to the 13 July 2022 meeting.

Regarding Appendix B:

- the Street Art Wall Task Group had completed its work and the final report was presented to the Panel on 23 March 2022; approved at Cabinet on 26 April 2022; and noted at Full Council on 11 May 2022. The policy would be reviewed after the 6-month testing phase;
- the South Holland Centre Task Group Final Report was presented to a meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel on 4 May 2022 and would be considered by the Cabinet on 7 June 2022;
- regarding the Planning Design Task Group, Design Guidelines were being prepared by officers to supplement the Local Plan and members would be updated in due course;
- potential progression of the Devolution Task Group could be discussed at the July meeting; and
- it was noted that the membership of Task Groups could be refreshed prior to commencement.

AGREED:

That the Policy Development Work Programme be noted.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.13 pm)

(End of minutes)