

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 18TH NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT OF REPORT: FORWARD PLAN AND SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: PHILIPPA PENNEY, SCRUTINY OFFICER

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel receives the information regarding cycle of the Forward Plan and scrutiny arrangements for Executive and Executive Member decisions

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Chairman of the Panel has requested that Panel Members be reminded of the process and cycle of the Forward Plan and also for scrutinising decisions of the Executive and Executive Members. This now has heightened relevance in view of the scrutiny New Ways of Working, hence a reminder was timely.

2. POLICY

The review of scrutiny arrangements under the New Ways of Working was originally undertaken having regard to the Council's target operating model and the opportunities afforded by a shift to greater use of digital technologies.

3. DETAILS

This report outlines the process and ongoing cycle of the Forward Plan, including viewing access and publication, and also the options for scrutinising Executive decisions.

3.1 The Forward Plan

The Forward Plan lists the key decisions due to be made by the Executive or an Executive Member. It also includes forthcoming items for Council meetings. It provides information as to when a decision will be presented and lists the background documents for consideration. Key decisions are likely to lead to significant spending or savings and have a significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards.

The Forward Plan gives details of these decision items to be presented during the forthcoming four month period.

The Plan is updated and published on a rolling monthly basis and is accessible to Councillors in the following ways:

- Email – the latest Forward Plan is sent to all Councillors by email in the first week of every calendar month;
- Website – the Forward Plan is simultaneously published on North Somerset Council's website, and is accessible via the following link: <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/councillors/forward-plan/about-forward-plan/>
- Council and Executive Reports – the plan is an agenda item for all meetings of Council and the Executive and is published with the agenda papers accordingly.

The current Forward Plan accompanies this report as Appendix 1.

3.2 Executive Member Decisions

Executive Member decisions are made as required and are published on North Somerset Council's website, and are accessible via the following link: <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/councillors/decisions/executive-member-decisions/>

Please see section 3.4 below for scrutiny engagement with Executive Member decisions.

3.3 Executive Decisions

The Executive is scheduled to meet as a committee six times per municipal year. The decisions to be taken are published with the agenda and reports for that meeting. They are published on North Somerset Council's website, accessible via the following link: <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/committees/comidx10-2016.asp> and are additionally available to all Councillors on their iPad meetings app.

Again, please see section 3.4 below for scrutiny engagement with decisions of the Executive.

3.4 Scrutiny Engagement and the Call-In Procedure

Councillors are invited to review the items included on the Forward Plan and to consider whether any of them should be referred for scrutiny or discussed with the appropriate Executive Member. The same is relevant to the decisions to be taken by the Executive and Executive Members, and it is for this reason that legislation dictates that these decisions are published five clear working days in advance of being taken.

Once the decision has been taken, and published as such, the commencement of the Call-in process is triggered. This is outlined in the Constitution under Scrutiny Standing Order 14, as follows:

14. SSO 14

14.1 Within five working days of the publication of an Executive or Executive Member decision, any two Members of a policy and scrutiny panel of the Council, can request a meeting of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel concerned to consider the Executive or Executive Member decision.

14.2 The two Members concerned can request a meeting of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel by writing to the Chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel and sending a copy to the Proper Officer of the Council stating that such a meeting is requested and indicating the decision of the Executive which is to be considered at the meeting of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel and stating the reason for the call in and how a matter within the remit of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel is affected by the Executive decision.

14.3 If such a request of the Chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel is received by the Proper Officer, the decision of the Executive which is to be considered shall not be implemented for at least ten working days during which time the Policy and Scrutiny Panel will have considered the decision and the Executive will be made aware of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel's opinion.

14.4 If the Policy and Scrutiny Panel, when it considers the decision of the Executive, decides that it should be reconsidered it shall make that recommendation to the Executive. If in the opinion of the Policy and Scrutiny Panel, and the consideration of the Monitoring Officer, the decision of the Executive in question, has not been taken within the policies of the Council or within the budget approved by Council, the Policy and Scrutiny Panel shall refer the decision to Council and notify the Executive accordingly.

Notice of these decisions is published no less than 5 working days prior to the decision being taken, giving an opportunity for any concerns or questions to be raised in advance. It is the publication of the decision having been taken which triggers the call-in period.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As well as developing more efficient ways of working in line with the council's Transformation Programme, the new ways of working have realised savings in staff costs within democratic services and costs associated with the meetings of panels of approximately £35,000.

5. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - current version of the Forward Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous versions of the Forward Plan