

# North Somerset Council

## REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**DATE OF MEETING: 16 JULY 2019**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: THE PANEL'S ROLE, REMIT AND WORK PLAN**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER PRESENTING: PHILIPPA PENNEY, ELECTORAL SERVICES AND SCRUTINY MANAGER**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Receives the contents of the report and information provided on policy and scrutiny.
2. Develops and agrees the Panel's work plan.

### 1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides an overview of the policy and scrutiny function, confirms the remit of the Panel and invites discussion and agreement on the Panel's future work plan.

### 2. POLICY

Policy and scrutiny contributes towards the council's corporate aim: Improving the way we work. Most reviews undertaken by this Panel contribute towards the council's corporate aim: Building safer and stronger communities; protecting and improving the environment.

### 3. DETAILS

Members are referred to **Appendix 1** for an overview of the policy and scrutiny function and how it currently operates at North Somerset Council.

At the panel meeting, Members will develop and agree the Panel's work plan. Effective work planning will lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Members are referred to **Appendix 2** for a reminder of the Panel's remit and guidance on developing the work plan. **Appendix 3** is the Panel's current work plan.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

Members will agree the Panel's work plan, taking into account any views that local constituents have expressed to them. Officers are encouraged to contribute their ideas, and the Panel's is cognisant of the work being undertaken by the relevant Executive Members.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. In undertaking future work, the Panel may make recommendations that have financial implications for the council.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risk assessments would be undertaken in respect of any future work.

#### **7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

The work of the Panel is based on the council's commitment to ensure that the consideration of equality and diversity becomes a day-to-day part of decision-making to bring about positive changes that are felt by services users and employees.

#### **8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

Corporate implications would be dependant on the outcome of individual reviews.

#### **9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

N/A

#### **AUTHOR**

Philippa Penney, Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01275 884010

Email: [philippa.penney@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:philippa.penney@n-somerset.gov.uk)

### **POLICY/OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **WHAT IS IT?**

Policy and scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that decision makers remain effective and accountable. It helps in ensuring that the Executive's decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve council policy and services.

Policy – examining the council's aims and priorities and considering whether or not they are being achieved. This provides a vital means of ensuring all councillors can take part in the development of council policy.

Scrutiny – questioning and challenging major decisions that are being made about delivering services in order to help drive improvement. This is the main democratic means of ensuring that the council and its partners are held to account for decisions made.

#### **FOUR PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SCRUTINY:**

1. Provides "critical friend" challenge to executives as well as external authorities and agencies.
2. Reflects the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.
3. Should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public.
4. Should make an impact on the delivery of public services.

*[CfPS Good Scrutiny Guide]*

#### **THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF POLICY AND SCRUTINY AT NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL:**

There are currently five Policy and Scrutiny Panels. Within their terms of reference, these panels will:

- review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions
- make reports and/or recommendations to full Council and/or the Executive and/or individual Executive Member in connection with council policy
- consider Councillor Calls for Action, Petitions and any other matter affecting the area or its inhabitants
- exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive or individual Executive Member.

The functions of the panels are to:

- review and engage in the development of council policy – helping shape the way council services are delivered
- review and scrutinise decisions and performance in relation to the Council's policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas – ensuring that decisions are made within policy and budget (this does not include decisions of the Planning and Regulatory Committee nor Licensing Committee)
- review finance and performance and contribute to the budget setting process
- Report to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate
- exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of the Officers employed to support their work

## **WAYS OF WORKING:**

- Panel meetings – these will take place in public to review issues and make recommendations to Council, the Executive, and Executive Members;
- Task and Finish Groups (Working Groups) – much of the scrutiny work will be done in these informal, member-led, non-public meetings. Meetings involve small groups of councillors (and other co-opted individuals) who have been appointed by the Panel to investigate a given issue before reporting back to the Panel with recommendations for improvement or value for money. Topics are agreed and prioritised with the Chairman, taking account of officer resource to ensure capacity;
- Steering Groups – ongoing monitoring and policy development. These can be organised and progressed by identified lead members in direct consultation with the relevant directorate officer/team;
- Site visits / public consultation;
- Workshops – usually one-off informal sessions to receive information on a service or issue of concern to Members;
- Call-in – a formal challenge of a decision made by the Executive or Executive Member, undertaken at a panel meeting where the decision will be examined and recommendations sent back to the Executive or Executive Member;
- Informal briefings or information sent to Members – can be done at any time in order to ensure that Members are aware of changes to services and are best placed to undertake meaningful debate and make informed recommendations to Council and the Executive.

## **REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REFERRED TO COUNCIL AND/OR THE EXECUTIVE**

All working groups should report back to a formal panel meeting with suggested recommendations which are ratified by the Panel and referred to the relevant body. If referred to Council, the Executive or an individual Executive Member, a formal response should be made at the first panel meeting after two months.

## **USEFUL WEBSITES:**

<http://www.cfps.org.uk/> (Centre for Public Scrutiny)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/> (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

<http://www.local.gov.uk/> (Local Government Association)

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/councillors/decisions/meetings/meetings-committees-panels/> (North Somerset Council – previous Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting agendas, reports and minutes)

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/councillors/decisions/executive-member-decisions/> (North Somerset Council - decisions of Executive Members)

# COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

## Panel remit

This Panel deals with issues within areas including recreational services, community safety, crime and disorder (in accordance with the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006), public protection services, corporate organisation.

## The Panel's Work Plan

The work plan is a flexible document that is updated at each meeting to reflect progress and new developments.

Scrutiny is most effective when focusing on a limited number of in-depth topics, so it is important to prioritise suggestions put forward. When identifying topics to add to the work plan, the Panel should ask the following questions:

- Have Members or Officers identified the topic as a key issue for the public?
- Is it an area of poor performance?
- Has the topic been identified as a strategic risk?
- Is there new government guidance or legislation that will require a significant change to services?
- Has the external auditor or other inspection body highlighted concerns about the issue?
- Could scrutiny lead to increased value for money?
- Is there potential for policy development?
- Will the outcome make a difference?

Once topics have been chosen, brief terms of reference should be agreed at the panel meeting to address the basic questions of:

- What does the topic include?
- Why should Panel consider?
- How should Panel proceed? (such as working group, workshop, site visit, informal briefing, item for agenda)
- Who should be involved? (agree appropriate Members, Officers and witnesses)
- Timescale



## Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel Work Plan – June 2019

The panel will consider issues of significant public concern, areas of poor performance, and areas where members think the council could provide better value for money.

### 1. CURRENT WORK

Area for investigation	What does the topic include?	Why should panel consider?	How should panel proceed?	Timescale
<b>Waste Scrutiny Steering Group</b>	Refreshed ToR to reflect cross-remit working with SPED, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and recycling contract (see section 3.6 of the report to Council 19 July 2016)</li> <li>• Waste Strategy review 2018</li> <li>• Implementation of revised kerbside collection rounds and new waste segregation regime</li> <li>• Peak time (Christmas) catch-up</li> </ul>	Included within MTFP consideration  Improved recycling Waste minimisation  Efficiencies in service provision	Steering Group membership:	Steering Group meetings: 3-4 times per year  Regular reporting to Panel

Area for investigation	What does the topic include?	Why should panel consider?	How should panel proceed?	Timescale
<b>Community Safety Steering Group (including Community Response)</b>	<p>Development of a programme of partnership working between North Somerset Council and Avon and Somerset Police</p> <p>Ensuring an efficient and cohesive partnership response</p> <p>Public Space Protection Orders – consultation with all councillors</p>	<p>To inform the development of a programme to improve our community response and make the best use of limited resources across both organisations.</p> <p>To consider matters of community safety across North Somerset in Autumn 2018</p>	<p>Steering Group membership:</p>	<p>Steering Group meetings: 3-4 times per year</p> <p>Regular reporting to Panel</p>
<b>ICT and Digital First Steering Group</b>	<p>To review existing digital inclusion measures, encourage digital inclusion, and ensure adequate facilities are in place to support those who cannot use/access digital</p> <p>To be engaged in user testing</p>	<p>To achieve efficiencies and improve access for the public to council services</p> <p>To achieve financial savings contribution towards closing the budgetary gap contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	<p>Steering Group membership:</p>	<p>Ongoing review and user testing as required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intranet</li> <li>• Website UAT</li> <li>• Earthlight</li> </ul>



Area for investigation	What does the topic include?	Why should panel consider?	How should panel proceed?	Timescale
<b>Community Access Review Steering Group</b>	Reviewing front facing community based services in view of financial reductions, changes in user demand and changes in technology	Consultation and engagement throughout the development of the review.	Steering Group: Terry Porter, Peter Crew, John Ley-Morgan, Bob Garner, Sarah Godling	Agreed approach by the Executive in December 2015  WG meetings and Workshop for all Councillors  Regular review to Panel + ward member engagement  Report to Panel January 2019

**2. ISSUES AWAITING RESPONSE FROM EXECUTIVE**

<b>Area for investigation/ recommendations</b>	<b>Expect answer by (first panel meeting 2 months after recommendations were agreed)</b>
None	

**3. PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>Panel Recommendation</b>	<b>Executive actions – implementation progress</b>
None	

#### 4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ONGOING MATTERS

Issue	Format and Timing
<b>Community Safety Local Priorities</b>	To hold partners to account through the Scrutiny process. Meeting with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Avon and Somerset Constabulary for all Councillors to discuss policing priorities held on 28/09/2018
<b>Winter Gardens – community use</b>	Ongoing reassurance of continued provision of community use following transfer of the Winter Gardens to Weston College
<b>Performance Monitoring Report</b>	To be reviewed in line with the refreshed Corporate Plan and KPIs 2016 Quarterly – to be reported to panel by exception
<b>Contact Centre / Gateway</b>	To continue to monitor the progress against any issues raised and introduction of the new telephony system
<b>Parks and Street Scene Contract Service Provision</b>	Engagement in review of Parks and Street Scene contract service provision. Initial report to Panel June 2018
<b>Outside Bodies Review</b>	<del>Review of NSC representation on Outside Bodies (Executive and Council appointments)</del>

**5. ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN FUTURE**

<b>Area for investigation</b>	<b>What does the topic include?</b>	<b>Why should panel consider?</b>	<b>How should panel proceed?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Financial management and monitoring	To include property and business purchases	Agreed to add longer term asset management on a commercial basis to the work plan (January 2019)	To be agreed	
CCTV	Engagement with review and upgrade of the CCTV system	Agreed to add to the work plan January 2019	To be agreed	

**Lead Members:**

~~Cllr Peter Crew — Community Safety, Community Response (and related issues)~~  
~~Cllr Terry Porter — Community Access Review, Customer Engagement, Communication~~  
~~Cllr David Oyns — Waste and Recycling Services~~