



Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Community and Corporate Organisation Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday 5 November 2019

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm Meeting Concluded: 5.15 pm

Councillors:

P Steve Bridger (Chairman)

P Stuart McQuillan (Vice-Chairman)

P Gill Bute

P James Clayton

P Mark Crosby

P John Ley-Morgan

P Terry Porter

P John Cato

P Peter Crew

P Wendy Griggs

P Robert Payne

Stuart Treadaway

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance, Joanne Butcher, Emma Diakou, Richard Penska, Harry Mills, Howard Potheary, Paul Morris, Michèle Chesterman (Corporate Services), Dee Mawn, John Flannigan, Colin Russell, Lynn Davies (Development and Environment).

CCO Chairman's Welcome

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The Chairman welcomed councillors, officers and members of the public to the meeting.

In discussing the change of the preferred day of the Panel meetings from a Tuesday to a Thursday it was agreed to keep this under review for 2020/21 municipal year.

CCO Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Agenda item 3)

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None.

CCO Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2019 (Agenda item 4.1)

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Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

CCO 12 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (Agenda Item 5)

COU 55 – Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy

The Environmental Health Service Manager presented the report on the Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy. There was increasing concern on the possible impacts of fallen sky lanterns and balloons on livestock and the environment. The risk could be decreased by the introduction of a policy restricting the sale or release of these from Council controlled parks and open spaces.

The Policy stated that North Somerset would:

- Refuse permission for the release of balloons and sky lanterns from any Council owned land and buildings, regardless of the purpose of the release. This applies to Council run events and events run by third parties.
- Refuse the sale of sky lanterns at any Council event or property.
- Require council 'standard conditions' relating to outdoor events and organised functions on land or property owned and/or controlled by North Somerset to prohibit the release of balloons and sky lanterns.
- Regard the release of balloons and sky lanterns from any land or buildings as potential littering and will act where appropriate.

At Council on 24 September 2019 the following was resolved:

(1) that environmental harm and animal welfare issues caused by sky lanterns and mass balloon releases are of concern to this Council and residents of this area. In order to curtail the harmful effects of these activities Council asks the Director of Development and Environment and the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment to settle and adopt a policy restricting the use of council land for the release of sky lanterns and balloons, and refers the proposed 'Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy' to the relevant policy and scrutiny panel for detailed consideration; and

(2) that the Chief Executive be requested to write to central government to ask for a national ban on the release of balloons and sky lanterns.

Members discussed the policy and queried how the Council would be able to enforce littering caused by sky lanterns and balloons. The Environmental Health Service Manager responded that when organisations signed up for a licence on council owned land and property they would also sign up to not release balloons/sky lanterns. If it then came to the attention of the Council action would be taken against them if there was sufficient evidence. The Council would be issuing a press release to explain what was expected of the public and event organisers.

Members highlighted the need to liaise with neighbouring local authorities in relation to sky lanterns/balloons. It was noted that many local authorities had already introduced a policy in relation to the release of sky lanterns and balloons but some that had not yet introduced such a policy

Members questioned why a ban could not be put in place across the county and what was preventing national legislation being introduced. It had been resolved at the Council meeting on 24 September that the Chief Executive be requested to write to central government to ask for a national ban on the release of balloons and sky lanterns. Members also discussed using bye laws and linking in with firework legislation but also being mindful that some individuals released balloons and sky lanterns as a tribute.

Members agreed that the policy was an excellent start and suggested it could be expanded on in years to come to include further measures and an initial review date be set for twelve months' time. The Chair to include members' feedback on the policy in the CCO Panel Update report to the November 2019 meeting of Council, after which the policy could go forward as a Director decision notice following final consultation with the appropriate Executive Member.

Concluded:

- (1) that the Panel received and discussed the report on the Sky Lantern and Balloon release Policy.
- (2) that the Chair report Panel feedback on the Sky Lantern and Balloon Release Policy in the CCO Panel update report to the November 2019 Council meeting.
- (3) that the Panel review the Sky Lantern and Balloon Release Policy in twelve months' time.

CCO 13 Corporate Performance Update (Agenda Item 6)

The Service Lead, Business Intelligence, presented the report on the Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Update. The Panel received regular performance management updates for the Key Projects and Key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs) within their remit. These updates aimed to help members evaluate the extent to which the council was achieving its ambitions and provided appropriate challenge and suggestions to improve performance. As part of the 2019/20 Performance Management Framework the Panel would receive updates for Key Projects and Key Corporate Performance Indicators from across the organisation, giving the Panel an overview of work from across the directorates and across services.

The Service Lead explained that as part of the Business Planning process Directorates within North Somerset Council produced an Annual Directorate Statement (ADS). This translated the commitments in the North Somerset Corporate Plan into a series of annual Directorate level commitments which were monitored through Key Projects and Key Corporate Performance Indicators and formed the annual Performance Management Framework.

Members queried the process behind how targets were set. The Service Lead responded that some were government targets, some were based on comparisons with neighbours and comparable Unitary Authorities, and others were set by the services themselves. There were also technical specifications behind how the targets were set.

A discussion then took place on customer satisfaction statistics and the numbers involved behind the percentages. One member reported that they had been waiting on call holding for an hour before being dropped and had had no opportunity to say they were dissatisfied with the service received. The Service Lead responded that the framework documents covered issues such as call avoidance and call drop out. These figures could be provided to Members, if required.

It was agreed to re-convene the CCO ICT Scrutiny Steering Group to discuss the issues raised. Councillor Bridger volunteered to be added to the membership of the steering group.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received and discussed the information provided in the report and considered the Quarter 2 performance update presented at the Panel meeting.

(2) that the Service Lead, Business Intelligence circulate the Power Point presentation, performance report and accompanying background information to Panel members.

(3) that Members contact the Service Lead, Business Intelligence with information they would like included in future quarterly reports.

(4) that Democratic Services reconvene the CCO ICT Steering Group early in 2020 with the addition of Councillor Bridger as a member.

CCO 14 Review of Public Space Protection Orders (Agenda Item 7)

The Environmental Health Service Manager presented the report on the Review of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). PSPOs were introduced across the district on 20 October 2017 to deter individuals or groups of individuals committing anti-social behaviour in public spaces. The orders replaced dog control orders, designated public place orders that helped the police to tackle alcohol related anti-social behaviour and, where

appropriate, local byelaws. PSPOs can remain in force for a maximum of 3 years with the current orders needing to be reviewed by 20 October 2020 or they would cease to have effect. The three yearly review cycle was an opportunity for the Council to introduce new requirements. Early engagement with CCO panel members was crucial to the review process.

Since PSPOs were first introduced there had been 199 reported breaches, 87 warnings, 27 fines issued and 5 convictions. The year before enforcement there had been less than half the number of fines (10).

Members asked for clarification on how the 199 reported breaches related to the actual number of breaches and why there were only 5 convictions recorded. Figures were not kept for the actual number of breaches because many went unreported.

Reported breaches related to those reported by Council officers, the police and Police Community Support Officers and were then referred to North Somerset Council to decide on the level of sanction imposed. Sometimes action was not taken as there was insufficient evidence. Convictions related to fines not paid. The Council prosecuted in certain cases but subject to the offence meeting the public interest test. Where people were unwilling to give evidence in court warnings were issued. Members discussed involving town and parish councils in the enforcement of PSPOs.

The Environmental Health Service Manager asked Panel Members for their views on which orders should remain, which required amending and if there were any new orders which should be introduced, (bearing in mind any new orders would need to meet the public interest test). Guidance had been issued since the last set of orders. It was important not to target specific groups such as young people. The skateboarding order, for example, required reviewing in terms of whether it met the order and if it targeted young people. Members had no objection to skateboarding in principle and did not wish to discourage the activity but noted the damage element and whether or not this was detrimental to quality of life.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received and discussed the report on the Review of Public Space Protection Orders.

(2) that Democratic Services organise an all Member briefing session on PSPOs early in 2020.

(3) that following on from the all Member briefing session Democratic Services organise a meeting of the CCO Community Safety Steering Group to progress the review of PSPOs.

CCO Community Safety MAVIS Bus (Agenda Item 8)

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The Community Safety Manager and Community Safety Officer presented the Community Safety report on the MAVIS (multi agency vehicle in service) Bus. The report provided an opportunity for the Panel to review the work led by North Somerset Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Team in partnership with other agencies to provide a safe space in Weston's Evening & Night Time Economy (ENTE) and the impact of this work to date. The report provided an opportunity for the Panel to feed into the future priorities and planned actions for the development and future funding of the council's Street Safe bus, MAVIS.

One of the biggest challenges faced was the sustainability of MAVISbus on a limited budget. Currently financial backing for MAVISbus was provided by North Somerset Council Community Safety Team and their limited Police Crime Commissioner Community Safety budget and successful bids for ad hoc grant funding. MAVISbus costed approximately £500 per shift which included medics, Police Community Support Officers, driver and cleaning. In comparison, the average Safe Space budget for similar schemes nationwide was approximately £1000 - £1500 per shift. As a comparison Norwich cost £1106 per shift, Swansea cost £1345 per shift and Hereford £1186 per shift.

The Community Safety Manager stressed the importance of sustainability. Providing the MAVISbus resource in the town centre of Weston was key to ensuring that people were safe. St John's Ambulance were no longer providing support for the MAVISbus and new arrangements were being piloted with Bristol Ambulance service. The goal was to obtain partnership commitment to funding from the NHS, Police (two PCSOs were currently on board) and local businesses with a bespoke business package for businesses in the town centre. Talks were underway with Weston College for students to support paid staff providing the eyes and ears around the town centre by liaising with door supervisors and other individuals. An advertisement had been placed on Voluntary Action North Somerset to advertise for volunteers also. Members ideas were welcomed moving forwards.

Members supported the business sponsorship plan and a suggestion was made to introduce stickers for businesses contributing financially towards the MAVISbus which would increase visibility and demonstrate their support for the ENTE. There was also a suggestion of linking in with the purple flag scheme and licensing as a lever helping towards the ENTE. Other opportunities suggested included the BID Team and targeting partners who would benefit (health, ambulance, hospital, police).

Members asked for clarification on how street pastors linked into the MAVISbus. A meeting had taken place with the street pastors in March 2019 who were keen for the MAVISbus to operate in the town centre every Saturday in order to use as a hub for providing hot meals for the homeless.

The Community Safety Team was working closely with the street pastors in order to secure them a weekly spot.

Members thanked the officers for their presentation and excellent work on the MAVISbus which made Weston's Evening and Night Time Economy safer and reduced the demand on medical and enforcement agencies.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received the Community Safety report on MAVISbus, discussing its success and provided feedback on plans for its future development in Weston's Evening and Night Time Economy.

(2) that the Panel continue to progress the funding issues surrounding the MAVISbus through the CCO Community Safety Scrutiny Steering Group.

CCO 16 Re-wilding – Progress Update (Agenda Item 9)

The Community and Environment Service Manager presented the report on Re-wilding – Progress Update.

At Council on 23 July 2019 the following was resolved:

(1) that North Somerset Council (NSC) declared a Climate Emergency in February, and the new administration is committed to taking what actions it can to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In this context it is proposed that NSC puts in place a re-wilding programme and actively seeks to identify as many areas as possible, of the verges, parks and open spaces it operates, where this can be done.

NSC should take the lead and help Towns, Parishes and community groups with their own re-wilding and tree-planting projects.

This will be beneficial in creating additional habitats for bees, insects and other wildlife and provide attractive "wild" areas of educational value to the community.

These areas will be easy to maintain and send a positive message out to our residents that North Somerset is a forward-thinking, environmentally aware, eco-friendly region; and

(2) that as a precautionary measure to protect health and biodiversity, the Climate Emergency Working Group be asked to consider the alternatives to glyphosates.

Following the Council motion COU50 (23 July 2019) officers had identified as many areas as possible, of the verges, parks and open spaces it operated, where re-wilding could take place. The focus for re-wilding had been at sites where the Council carried out 'amenity grass cutting' with a target of 25% reduction.

A typology of re-wilding was presented which identified different ways to 're-wild'. Sites had been identified for re-wilding and were available in electronic map form so members, town and parish and local communities could comment and amend as necessary dependent on local needs. Once the site had been selected the specification for the new Grounds and Tree Maintenance Contract would be prepared. It was proposed to carry out the first tranche of tree planting in Winter 2019/20 with the introduction of grass Management changes taking place in the summer of 2020.

The timetable for the first year to deliver the re-wilding was as follows:

- Officers prepare draft areas for re-wilding (Sept – Oct 2019)
- Re-wilding consultation with members, towns and parishes and community (Nov 2019 – Jan 2020)
- First phase of tree planted implemented (Dec 2019 – Jan 2020)
- Specification prepared for new contract (Dec 2019 – Feb 2020)
- First phase of tall grass management implemented (April 2020 – Nov 2020)

Members discussed the importance of a community plan being put in place as grass cutting was a sensitive issue. Partnership and co-ordination with Town and Parish Councils would be important and a gathering/summit with key groups would be useful.

The issue was raised of how to get the message across that re-wilding was acceptable. The council often received complaints about overgrown gardens, so guidelines were needed of what the council would and would not deal with from an enforcement perspective.

Members were informed that following feedback from the Panel it was proposed to carry out a wide-ranging consultation exercise with members, town and parish councils, residents and community groups which would start week commencing 11 November 2019. The consultation would be publicised through econsult, social media, press releases and direct contact with stakeholders. Members' attention was drawn to Appendix D which contained the proposed questionnaire. Feedback would be considered by Executive members which would inform where re-wilding would take place and the specification for the new contract.

Concluded: that the Panel received and discussed the proposals for re-wilding North Somerset Council's verges, parks and open spaces.

CCO Recycling Waste Services Contract (Agenda Item 10)

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The Recycling and Waste Service Manager presented the report on the Recycling & Waste Service Contract. The report provided an update on the Contract which had been in operation for two and a half years. The report further detailed the overall performance of the contract to date and provided a summary of the West of England joint procurement for a non-landfill residential waste contact post 1 April 2020.

The Recycling and Waste Service Manager drew the Panel's attention to items discussed at the CCO Waste Scrutiny Steering Group on 1 October 2019 which included campaigns for engagement with residents and continued encouragement given to residents to separate recycling; waste analysis; planning process requiring greater consideration to be made of recycling and waste collections during the planning process; fly tipping and visits by councillors to be arranged to the Biffa transfer station, West of England new contact site and recycling crew visits within councillors' own wards.

A discussion took place on the planning process and waste which required greater consideration to be made of recycling and waste collections during the planning process including ensuring sufficient width of roads for large vehicles to pass and manoeuvre, condition of roads when collections commenced as some were unfinished and had raised covers and policy review regarding developer requirements at planning stage for holding a supply of containers and service leaflets for residents at new developments.

The Chair suggested a task and finish group to be established to look at issues around Planning and Waste Management and asked for nominations. Cllrs Mark Crosby, Peter Crew, Robert Payne, James Clayton and Steve Bridger volunteered.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received and discussed the contents of the report on the Recycling and Waste Services Contract.

(2) that a Task and Finish group be established to investigate issues in connection with Planning and Waste Management comprising Cllrs Mark Crosby, Peter Crew, Robert Payne, James Clayton and Steve Bridger.

CCO Month 5 Budget Monitor (Agenda Item 11)

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The Interim Director of Finance presented the report which provided a summary of the council's financial performance after the first five months of the 2019/20 financial year in respect of both its revenue and capital budgets and it highlighted the key financial variances and movements which had taken, or would take, place during the year. The report also advised on the impact that forecasted financial variances could have on the level of general reserves.

The Interim Director of Finance drew Members' attention to a change to recommendation (iii) in page 1 of the report – the allocation of £80k from within the corporate risk reserves to fund costs associated with the emerging climate change emergency had increased to £140k over 2 years.

Key areas of pressure included Looked after Children (LAC) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) placements. There had been several additional placements to out of county SEND in the last couple of months, and there remained a risk that there could be more of these before the end of the financial year.

There was significant pressure within the Home to School Transport service largely as a result of significant upward inflation in the local market, especially within Weston super Mare due to the limited number of providers in the area and the cost of Out of County placements.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received notification of the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report;

(2) that the Panel received notification of the revenue budget virements Within Appendix 2 that had been approved during the year.

(3) that the Panel received notification of the allocation of £140k from within the corporate risk reserve to fund costs associated with the emerging climate change emergency;

(4) that the Panel received and discussed the amendments to the Capital Budget as detailed within Appendix 6 of the report.

CCO 19 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 12)

Members discussed the Work Plan as presented by the Democratic and Electoral Services Officer.

Members' attention was drawn to the upcoming session for all Members on the Corporate Plan – 13 November 2019

Concluded: that the Panel's work plan be updated accordingly

Chairman
