

Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

Community and Corporate Organisation Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 16 July 2020

Held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm Meeting concluded: 4.20 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

A Wendy Griggs

Robert Payne

Stuart Treadaway

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Councillors in attendance: Sarah Codling

Officers in attendance: Nicholas Brain, Michèle Chesterman, Brent Cross, , Emma Diakou, Dee Mawn, Harry Mills, Philippa Penney, Mike Riggall (Corporate Services), Gemma Dando, John Flannigan, Colin Russell, Victoria Watkins (Development and Environment)

CCO Chairman's Welcome

01

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this virtual Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting.

He explained the procedures to be followed at the meeting and confirmed that proceedings would have the same standing and validity as if they had taken place at a physical meeting of the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting in the Town Hall.

The Chairman reminded everyone that the meeting was being livestreamed on the internet and that a recorded version would be available to view within 48 hours on the North Somerset Council website.

At the invitation of the Chairman a roll call was taken of the Panel members by Democratic Services for the benefit of those in attendance and members of the public watching the meeting online.

The Chairman referred to the challenges and opportunities of the current COVID 19 pandemic. He emphasised the role scrutiny had to play in the transition from medical emergency to recovery.

CCO 02 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Agenda item 3)

None.

CCO 03 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2020 (Agenda item 4)

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

CCO 04 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) (Agenda item 6)

The Environmental Health Manager presented the report on Public Space Protection Orders. Members noted that PSPOs had been introduced across the district by North Somerset Council on 20 October 2017 to deter individuals or groups of individuals committing anti-social behaviour in public spaces. Every three years legislation dictated that these orders must be reviewed. The review process began in October 2019 and consisted of the following steps: CCO Panel meeting dated 9 November 2019; All member briefing dated 19 May 2020; consultation with North Somerset Council staff, police and other stakeholders; CCO workshop dated 25 June 2020.

The review identified the orders recommended for renewal (Appendix 1). It would also provide an opportunity to put forward any new or amended orders. Any amended or new orders that were recommended would be put forward for further public consultation in accordance with Section 72 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. All the orders recommended for renewal/adoption would then be subject to further levels of sign off.

Members noted and discussed the proposed timetable for the review, as follows-

Date	Activity
16 July 2020	CCO Panel meeting - to agree list of unchanged orders for straight renewal – to be considered by the Executive on 9 September 2020.
21 July 2020	All Member CCO led engagement session (pre-public consultation) to agree the list of amended/new orders.
August/September 2020	Public consultation period on amendments/new orders
9 September 2020	Executive – renew unchanged orders to meet the renewal deadline of 20 October 2020
21 October 2020	Executive – bring into force any new/amended orders

Members queried whether a vote was required on the orders that were going to be renewed. It was felt that this was not necessary. If there were any specific questions on the process these could be addressed at the engagement session on 21 July 2020 and in addition members would have a further opportunity to comment as part of the consultation process.

The Chairman noted his appreciation of the process so far. He was aware that there was a desire to increase enforcement with regards some of orders as they were of great concern to residents.

Concluded:

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

(2) that a further PSPO Session take place on 21 July at 2.30 pm to discuss process and detail of orders. Members would also have the opportunity to comment as part of the consultation (anticipated middle of August to middle of September 2020)

CCO 05 Your Neighbourhood Consultation and Engagement – Update and Consultation Analysis (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Management presented the report on Your Neighbourhood Consultation and Engagement – Update and Consultation Analysis. Members were aware that the CCO Panel had received a report on 3 March 2020 containing details of the Your Neighbourhood Consultation and Engagement which ran from 13 February to 7 May 2020. The services being consulted on were garden waste; leisure and sports centres; libraries; parks and open spaces and street cleansing.

A wide variety of consultation and engagement had been developed including an online survey option for everyone to have their say about the way they used and experienced services; face-to-face engagement via public meetings and through Town and Parish Councils; targeted additional engagement to encourage participation from people who may not usually engage with the council on consultations. The intention was to understand which services were most valued by local people and to understand what opportunities there were to work in partnership locally to enhance what the Council was able to offer.

The purpose of the consultation had been two-fold. Firstly, to gather quality information about local communities and their neighbourhood services, and use the information to inform the strategic, policy and delivery framework for those services. Secondly, to implement a new way of working with local councils, local communities, businesses and other stakeholders that was collaborative and which offered opportunities for people to influence what happened in their neighbourhoods.

Members were informed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability for engagement of the public as planned. Two drop-in sessions and two public meetings were held up until 12 March 2020, but the council made the decision to cancel the rest of the planned face to face engagement and the country went into lockdown on 23 March 2020. Council officers and local stakeholders were then focussed on supporting the most vulnerable through lockdown and delivering essential local services and the resources allocated to the consultation and engagement were redeployed. However, the online survey remained in place for the whole of the consultation process with 1992 responses - the majority of these received in the first 4 weeks before lockdown came into force.

Members considered whether COVID-19 had resulted in those without access to the internet not taking part in the consultation and discussed how this might be addressed with restrictions now easing. Panel members were encouraged to learn that further engagement would take place on the individual workstreams, especially where there was an identified gap in consultation responses due to the engagement not fully taking place. It was noted that young people were not well represented in the consultation responses so further engagement work would take place with them as part of the strategy and service development plans. The intention was to ensure as many people as possible were involved in the consultation.

Because there had been a high level of responses from the online survey and some interesting feedback from the face to face engagement that did manage to take place, the council proposed to use the results received (and which were outlined in the report) in order to inform the service reviews and find ways of engaging with residents and stakeholders in the development phase, particularly where groups were not well represented in the consultation results.

The Assistant Director Neighbourhood Management presented the consultation results. It was noted that garden waste attracted the most responses with 1500 and Leisure and Sports Centres attracted the least responses with 700. Street cleansing had received 900 responses. Some respondents completed all five areas and others only completed those that were of specific interest to them.

Members enquired about the use of easy read format in the consultation. Consultation had taken place with the Disability Forum with regard to easy read, plain English for those with hearing and vision impaired. They assisted with communicating with individual group representatives. It was usual to have some text in plain English format and if this had been missed it would be picked up in the next phase of the engagement.

Members asked to what extent the Council kept those who had participated in the consultation informed. Each service area maintained a contact list of addresses and emails of interested people. Individuals were asked two questions – ‘do you want to be kept informed?’ and ‘are you interested in actively taking part?’ Those who requested to be kept informed would receive further communications.

Members asked about next steps which were to complete the consultation report to include the free-text responses in the surveys, the face to face and other written submissions and feedback to the consultation. The consultation results would be used to shape service strategies for libraries, leisure and sports centres, waste and parks; to form the service specification for the new street cleansing and parks maintenance delivery; and to inform how the garden waste collection service charges would be implemented and to guide the work on home and community composting. In respect of garden waste, the Chairman added that scrutiny would be involved via the CCO Waste Scrutiny Steering Group. With regards to scrutiny engagement in the other areas of the consultation these would be picked up later in the meeting and under the Work Plan.

Members were informed that feedback from the public during the consultation period included a strong appetite for enforcement for dog fouling and littering. There had been huge spikes in recent weeks in relation to litter and also dog fouling and fly tipping. The Council was looking at ways to increase enforcement by working with an external provider to enforce. It would be cost neutral as the fines would be shared by the provider and the Council but it was crucial to ensure that the way enforcement was carried out was consistent with the Council’s corporate values. The current timescales being considered were end of August, beginning of September 2019. It was intended for there to be a trial period of a year. Panel members would be kept informed.

Members expressed concern that increased enforcement was being considered prior to the consultation on PSPOs. Members were informed that the Assistant Director Neighbourhood Management and Environmental Health Manager were working together to check enforcement was appropriate alongside the PSPOs. One of the options being considered was to remove litter as a PSPO and use primary legislation instead.

In discussing the consultation Members' highlighted the importance of liaising with Parish and Town Councils.

A further update on the consultation and next steps would be provided at the next panel meeting and it was proposed that working groups of members from the CCO panel and across the full member group were set up to influence the specific strategy and service development work in each area.

The Chairman congratulated the Assistant Director Neighbourhood Management on an excellent report and work well done in such challenging times.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel receive and review the emerging results from the Your Neighbourhood consultation and engagement (13/3/20 – 07/05/20), including the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on the consultation and engagement process.

(2) that the Panel considers its role in developing and shaping the strategies and service design leading on from the consultation process.

CCO 06 Re-wilding – update report (Agenda Item 8)

The Community and Environment Service Manager presented the update report on re-wilding. The report provided an ongoing update to the Council's re-wilding project and followed on from two previous reports presented to CCO on 3 March 2020 and 5 November 2019. Members of the Panel were informed that the report described 'lessons learned' and sought additional comments from them to help ensure that the delivery of future phases continually improved. The report also described two significant events that had negatively impacted the first phase of re-wilding (weather events and the COVID-19 pandemic) and sought guidance on responding to objections to re-wilding from local residents. A revised programme for re-wilding was also presented.

Members noted that the 5,000 'whips' had been planted during the first phase of tree planting during February 2020. A 30% death rate had been expected but in some areas this was up to 80% due to factors beyond the Council's control. Some trees had been watered but the volume of trees had been a challenge especially with the driest spring since records began. In addition, COVID 19 had interrupted the relationship with the re-wilding volunteers. Members were informed that the Council would be seeking to re-establish that relationship during the remainder of 2020. It was planned to continue delivery of tree planting with the goal of planting 20,000 from October 2020 through the winter months. There had not yet been an opportunity to liaise with nurseries.

With regards tall grass management initially a small pilot project was proposed that would introduce tall grass management. However, this was expanded at the start of the growing season and 100,000 m² of tall grass had been created (25% of the project total). The remaining 300,000m² of tall grass would be created bringing forward the project by one year by summer 2021.

Despite widespread consultation, some residents were unaware that nearby open space was being re-wilded. In future, notices would be erected in advance of when re-wilding was going to take place.

It was suggested that Pound Lane in Nailsea was a very clear demonstration of where tall grass management, tree planting and cut grass alongside paths had combined well so the area looks managed. Signs had also been erected and local residents had also been maintaining the area.

Generally, there had been positive feedback and very few complaints received.

Members discussed how to respond to objections from residents who did not want nearby open spaces to become re-wilded. Examples were given by Members in their wards where complaints had been received that cycle paths and verges were deemed unusable. Residents had been made aware they were on the schedule of works but there were limited resources. It was felt that if the Council was going to leave tall grass to grow there was a necessity to ensure that there were other areas where people could walk and access that were not overgrown.

replacing dead trees in their wards the Community and Environment Service Manager replied that there had been a concerted effort to plant trees in every ward and a map could be shared with Members to show where the tree planting had taken place. A Principal Tree Officer had been appointed and would commence in their post at the end of July 2020 to continue the programme. With regards 'beating up' (replacing dead trees) an evaluation was being undertaken of each site where it would be assessed whether they needed replacing or not.

The Chairman thanked the Community and Environment Service Manager for a very useful report and Panel members for a useful discussion. The development of a re-wilding group had been agreed at the last Panel meeting but it was suggested this should be a Parks and Open Space Working Group and a request would be made for volunteers from Panel members. In addition, it was proposed to hold a conference or workshop in the Autumn to include towns and parishes, interest groups and the contractor. This would provide an opportunity for the Council to share its vision of the rewilding programme and also factor in community expectations and local intelligence. This would further inform the Council's approach and the contract renewal process.

Concluded:

- (1) that the Panel receive and consider the update of the re-wilding programme and to help identify areas for improvement for future phases.
- (2) that the Panel consider the development of a Parks and Open Space Working Group.
- (3) that a conference/workshop be convened in the autumn to further inform the development of the Council's re-wilding programme.

CCO 07 Corporate Performance Monitoring Report (Agenda Item 9)

The Service Lead – Business Intelligence presented the report on Corporate Performance Monitoring. As part of the 2019/20 Performance Management Framework the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel received regular performance management updates for Key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs) from across the organisation. This gave the Panel an overview of work from across the directorates and across services.

As part of Business Planning process Directorates within North Somerset Council produced an Annual Directorate Statement (ADS). This in effect translated the commitments in the North Somerset Corporate Plan into a series of annual Directorate level commitments. These commitments were then monitored through the annual Performance Management Framework.

North Somerset Council Scrutiny Panels were updated quarterly with all Key Corporate Performance Indicators related to their area of work where possible. For Quarter 4 of 2019/20, the Service Lead – Business Intelligence presented Panel members with an end of year performance update. The end of 2019/20 calendar year included the last two to three weeks prior to lockdown based on the previous corporate plan.

Members were informed that overall 60% of key performance indicators had been achieved or exceeded their agreed levels of performance and 19% of key performance indicators were within 5% tolerance of their agreed levels of performance.

Members queried the disparity between some performance data received by Members on a weekly basis (e.g. recycling) and the reality. The Panel received historic data from the previous quarter. It was not known as yet how things had changed during the COVID 19 pandemic but this data would be available in the next few weeks.

Members were made aware that levels of waste had risen and in particular cardboard waste which was up by 20% and a challenge to collect. The next quarterly report would reflect this data. The pandemic had accelerated the shift to online shopping. With the levels of waste increasing the Council was looking at a waste minimisation strategy.

Members discussed the excessive volume of cardboard being generated by by companies such as Amazon and supermarkets and measures which could be taken to address this. It was suggested that perhaps some general education regarding the increase in cardboard waste and the impact on collections would be useful.

It was felt increasingly important for the Panel to obtain a forward view to enable measures to be put in place to address areas that might be at risk of service failure over the next 9-12 months. Of equal importance was the need to promote good news stories. It was suggested that some of the stories behind the data could be converted into data dashboards. There was a desire to make more data communicable to the public in an interesting way.

The Service Lead – Business Intelligence explained that the top-level data was reported to Scrutiny and the Executive. However, data reported at service level contained more detail and complexity and it was possible to do more reporting and forecast scanning. It was noted that it was much harder when aggregating the data upwards to contain as much detail. However, discussions were taking place to provide more real time dashboards. The Service Lead- Business Intelligence suggested a meeting with the Chairman and Vice of CCO to discuss the development the dashboards.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel received and discussed the information provided in the report and the timetable for future reporting.

(2) that the Service Lead - Business Intelligence meet with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Panel to discuss the development of data dash boards.

CCO 08 Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 10)

Members discussed the Work Plan as presented by the Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager. It was stressed that the current work plan had been compiled following the March 2020 CCO Panel. As a result of COVID-19 the landscape had changed. The intention was to ensure the work plan reflected current Panel member activities and desired work and provided more of a forward steer.

Members' attention was drawn to the following:-

- A meeting of the CCO Waste Scrutiny Steering Group to be convened – focussing on charging for green waste collection service.
- A meeting of the Waste and Planning Task and Finish Group to be convened focussing on other matters in relation to waste and access on large residential developments.
- A meeting of the CCO Community Safety Steering Group to be convened to consider matters of community safety across North Somerset.
- A meeting of the CCO Scrutiny Steering Group to be convened focussing on Members ICT with the remit of reviewing existing digital inclusion measures, encourage digital inclusion, and ensure adequate facilities are in place to support those who cannot use/access digital. This was especially pertinent during the pandemic with meetings taking place virtually by Microsoft Teams. Members were asked to contact the Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager with any issues they were encountering with IT prior to the meeting taking place in the next two weeks' time.
- The development of a Leisure Task and Finish Group to focus on leisure strategy.
- The development of a Parks and Open Spaces Working Group.
- An Inquiry Day to be organised (October) focussing on building on the local community response network responses to the pandemic.

The intention was that different sessions would be chaired by different Scrutiny Chairmen depending on the topics and service areas under discussion.

- The Winter Gardens Community Board Annual Report – due to the closure of the Winter Gardens to the public during the pandemic a report to be submitted to the CCO Panel on 12 November 2020.
- Balloon and Sky Lantern Policy Review – CCO Panel 12 November 2020.
- CCTV – at the end of the previous administration upgrade work had started. The anticipated completion date was September 2020. Panel members would be consulted for their input.

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

Chairman
