

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 24th September 2019

held in the New Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Meeting Commenced: 6:00 pm Meeting Concluded: 8.50 pm

Councillors:

P David Shopland (Chairman)

P Richard Westwood (Vice Chairman)

P Marc Aplin

P Nigel Ashton

P Mike Bell

Mike Bird

P Steve Bridger

P Peter Bryant

P Gill Bute

P Mark Canniford

P Ashley Cartman

P John Cato

P Caritas Charles

P Caroline Cherry

P James Clayton

P Sara Codling

P Andy Cole

A Peter Crew

P John Crockford-Hawley

P Ciaran Cronnelly

P Mark Crosby

P Donald Davies

P Paul Gardner

P Catherine Gibbons

P Hugh Gregor

A Wendy Griggs

P Ann Harley

P Karin Haverson

P Sandra Hearne

P David Hitchins

A Steve Hogg

P Nicola Holland

P Ruth Jacobs

P Huw James

P Patrick Keating

P John Ley-Morgan
P Stuart McQuillan
P Ian Parker
P Robert Payne
P Marcia Pepperall
P Bridget Petty
P Lisa Pilgrim
P Terry Porter
P Geoffrey Richardson
P Tim Snaden
P Mike Solomon
P James Tonkin
P Stuart Treadaway
P Richard Tucker
P Roz Willis

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Nicholas Brain (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Richard Penska (interim Director of Finance), Zoe Briffitt (Corporate Services), Sue Efford (Corporate Services), Alex Hearn (Development and Environment), Rosalind Hime (Corporate Services), Cara MacMahon (Development and Environment), Paul Morris (Corporate Services), Mike Rees (People and Communities)

**COU Public participation: Emma Crewe, local resident – Airport Planning
60 Application (Agenda Item 1)**

Emma Crewe addressed the Council on matters relating to Bristol Airport expansion. She referred to her professional role in evaluating development projects and referred to the results of a poll commissioned by the airport that purported to support the expansion but suggested these results were misleading. She referred to the impact of an increasing number of flights and to the significant harm that would result without corresponding benefits for the local area. She suggested local opinion was overwhelmingly against the airport expansion plans.

The Chairman thanked Professor Crewe for her address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director.

**COU Public participation: Johnny Boxshall, local resident – Fracking
61 (Agenda Item 1)**

Johnny Boxshall addressed the Council on matters relating to climate change, referring to the Climate Emergency Motion given unanimous support at Council in February and expressing his hope that the new coalition would now take this forward. He referred to approaches made to landowners in Bleadon with regard to acidisation, a process using chemicals to extract coal, to the Bristol airport expansion proposals and to the need for investment in renewable energy and asked members to have regard to the climate emergency motion in addressing these issues.

The Chairman thanked Mr Boxshall for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 62 Public participation: Leonard Hurley, local resident – Public Open Space at rear of Brookfield Walk, Clevedon (Agenda Item 1)

Leonard Hurley addressed the council on matters relating to public open space at the rear of Brookfield Walk in Clevedon. He referred to the recreational importance of this site for local people and to the negative impact of the loss of trees and hedgerows on the site both on wildlife and on noise and pollution from the M5, suggesting this would be contrary to the Council's climate emergency policy.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hurley for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 63 Public participation: Tim Taylor, local resident – Healthy Weston Consultation Outcome (Agenda Item 1)

Tim Taylor addressed the council on matters relating to the overnight closure of Weston A&E on a permanent basis as proposed under the Healthy Weston proposals. He outlined the reasons why a 24/7 A&E service was needed in Weston, referring to the impact of the closure on local residents and suggesting the CCG proposals would result in further downgrading of Weston General. He referred to promises made by councillors to fight the closure and urged the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel to use its powers to refer the matter to the Secretary of State and save Weston's A&E service.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 64 Public participation: Alan Rice, local resident – Viability Assessments for Affordable Housing (Agenda Item 1)

Alan Rice addressed the council on matters relating to the large number of residents living in unsuitable properties. He referred to the assistance available to those living in poor and sub-standard accommodation and to the recently formed Weston Housing Action seeking to help those caught in a poverty trap caused by the lack of affordable housing in Weston. He referred to the use of viability assessments by developers to circumvent the requirements for affordable housing and asked the Council to consider following the practice of Bristol City Council and publishing all viability assessments on its website.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rice for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 65 Petitions to be presented by Members: Councillor Gibbons – Mendip Road, Weston-super-Mare (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Gibbons presented a petition signed by 105 residents. The petition highlighted issues affecting residents and road users in Mendip Road which they wished to bring to the attention of the council in the hope that solutions

could be found and implemented. The issues related to the bus stop at the top of the road and heavy delivery vehicles using the road to turn around in.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gibbons for the petition which was referred to the appropriate Executive Member.

COU Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 4)

66

Councillor James declared an interest in relation to agenda item 23 (Affordable Housing Delivery Partnership Agreement with Alliance Homes) as a member of the Alliance Homes Board. He confirmed he would update his online declaration of interest form to reflect this interest.

COU Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 (Agenda Item 5)

67

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

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)

68 Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy (Councillor Davies) (Agenda Item 6 (1))

In presenting his Motion Councillor Davies proposed an amendment to include a request that the Chief Executive write to central government to ask for a national ban on the release of balloons and sky lanterns.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Tonkin -

“(1) 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 D&E 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

(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.

For the information of members a proposed policy would be:

North Somerset Council
Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 In recent years outdoor balloon and sky lantern releases have become a more common event at summer fairs, fundraising events, opening of new stores, or part of commemorative and celebratory occasions. However, what is less known is what happens once these items have been released and the potentially harmful consequences for wildlife and property that can occur as a result of this form of celebration.

1.2 The Marine Conservation Society (MSC) - an internationally recognised charity for the protection of seas, shores and wildlife has produced a thorough and detailed Pollution Policy and Position statement on Balloons and Sky Lanterns, asking UK Local Authorities to recognise balloons and sky lanterns

as a form of littering and to ban all outdoor releases. This stance is actively supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the National Farmers Union (NFU) and many other public organisations.

2. Objective

2.1 The objective of this policy is to discourage and, if possible, to prevent the intentional outdoor release of balloons and sky lanterns in North Somerset and to prohibit releases from Council owned land and premises.

3. Parameters

3.1 This policy covers the release of balloons and sky lanterns within the boundary of North Somerset and sets out the Council's position in relation to the release of balloons and lanterns from Council owned land and premises.

3.2. The policy covers all types of balloon and sky lantern materials. The main types of balloon are latex (rubber) and foil (also known as Mylar) and can include other materials. Latex balloons, whilst biodegradable, may persist in the environment for several years and sky lanterns typically contain a metal frame.

3.3 The principles and commitments set out in this policy apply to all services of the Council and to our contractors and partners delivering council services on our behalf.

4. Principles and Commitments

4.1 North Somerset Council will

- refuse permission for the release of balloons and sky lanterns from any Council owned land and buildings, regardless of the purpose for 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 North Somerset Council 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.

5. Litter

5.1 Where balloons and sky lanterns are released intentionally outdoors and are not disposed of responsibly, they litter the environment and could be considered as a potential littering offence. Where the Council receives evidence of littering through the release of balloons and lanterns, which are not disposed of responsibly, the Council may consider exercising its powers under the appropriate legislation

6. Permitted Releases

6.1 Piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy. Helium balloons may also be permitted when used for research purposes, for example, weather balloons, if supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and/or any hazards to the environment and with any appropriate mitigation.

7. Monitoring, Assessment and Review

7.1 The Council will inform event organisers of the Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy by means of including relevant information within booking forms and other promotional material.

7.2 The Council will include details of this policy within any new letting agreement or leases of land/buildings where permitted events take place.
7.3 The Council will promote the awareness of the potential harm of balloon and sky lantern releases, where appropriate.”

Seven members signalled their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Davies spoke in support of the Motion outlining the environmental harm and animal welfare issues caused by sky lanterns and mass balloon releases and asking members to support the adoption of a policy restricting the use of council land for their release.

In discussing the Motion Councillor Bell moved an amendment, asking for the proposed policy to be referred to the relevant policy and scrutiny panel. Councillor Davies and Councillor Tonkin, as mover and seconder of the Motion, agreed to take this on board.

Following further discussion, the revised Motion was put to the vote and it 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.

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)
69 A Changing District and Changing Times – Updating the Approach to Reflection before Council meetings (Councillor Charles) (Agenda Item 6 (2))

Motion: Moved by Councillor Charles and seconded by Councillor Gardner

“ North Somerset is a vibrant and diverse community that has seen many changes over the years. Our diversity comes in many forms be it cultural, spiritual or social and all contributions have a valued role in creating and enhancing the tapestry of life in North Somerset.

Our new administration elected in May reflects many thoughts and opinions and has found a way to come together in a spirit of openness and inclusivity. We welcome the opportunity that can be afforded by a moment of pause for reflection before the start of each council meeting can offer. Such a moment allows us to reflect on our mission to serve and remind us of the wider context of our role within the community of North Somerset.

The current arrangement of prayers before full council however though valued does not give voice to our wider community. We miss the opportunity to hear words of guidance or reflection from other voices who may wish to share their wisdom with us.

The last census (2011) recorded religious preference as:

• Christian 61% • No Religion 29% • Muslim 0.40% • Buddhist 0.30% • Hindu 0.20% • Jewish 0.10% • Agnostic 0.10% • Other 8.40%

Alongside the strong spiritual work done in our community we have an active volunteering culture that adds to the civic strength of our region and plays a vital role in all aspects of our lives. The Quartet Community Foundation report that there are over 556 registered voluntary organisations in North Somerset offering services in a variety of areas including:

• Social activities (48%) • Volunteering (41%) • Information & signposting (40%) • Health & social care (30%)

We should have an opportunity to hear these voices within the context of a moment of reflection not just those voices that are spiritual in nature.

The Chairman of the Councils role is a vital one as an ambassador for the authority and to reflect on the core values and approaches we wish to portray. We therefore ask officers to make arrangements to replace the prayer time before the start of full council with an opportunity for members to gather for up to 15 minutes ahead of the council meeting for a period of reflection which would be an opportunity for councillors to receive insight from our community which can aid us in our work. The insight we receive can be open to a variety of spiritual and voluntary groups as long as they agree with our principles of equality and tolerance.

We also call for the chairman to reflect this spirit of diversity and inclusivity in all civic functions under their control. “

Seven members signalled their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Charles spoke in support of the Motion outlining the benefits of making provision for councillors to gather for a period of reflection before the start of Council meetings and to receive insight from the community to aid councillors in their work.

Amendment: Moved by Councillor Crockford-Hawley and seconded by Councillor Willis

“This Council retains the status quo whereby the Chairman exercises his discretion regarding pre-meeting prayer.

Should this Council decide to dispense with pre-meeting prayer then this Council invites the Chairman to commence meetings in an orderly and dignified manner without any need for additional opening contributions from within or without the Council unless a particular event necessitates appropriate observation.”

In speaking to the amendment, Councillor Crockford-Hawley suggested the Motion missed the point of the current ritual of prayers before the start of

Council meetings stressing these were not necessarily Christian prayers. He suggested the revised arrangements put forward in the Motion placed a heavy imposition on officers and that if members were not minded to retain the status quo it would be preferable to dispense with prayers altogether.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the amendment should be taken as two separate propositions. If the first proposition was lost, the second part of the amendment could then be addressed.

In discussing the Amendment members considered whether the current arrangements were satisfactory together with the merits of replacing them with an extended period of reflection.

On being put to the vote **the Amendment** (first proposition) was **LOST**.

The Amendment (second proposition) was then put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

Following further discussion the **Substantive Motion** was then put to the vote and it was

Resolved: that Council invites the Chairman to commence meetings in an orderly and dignified manner without any need for additional opening contributions from within or without the Council unless a particular event necessitates appropriate observation.

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)
70 Modernising the role of the Council (Councillor Cronnelly) (Agenda Item 6 (3))

Motion: Moved by Councillor Cronnelly and seconded by Councillor Gibbons

“This council notes:

- That analysis of the 2019 Local Election results by the Fawcett Society found that only 35% of councillors in England are women and only 20 (7%) councils reported having a parental leave policy in place for councillors
- The Local Government Association’s 2018 census of local authority councillors found that 45% of councillors were retired, the average age was 59, and 36% of councillors had responsibilities as a carer (including children)
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background, and that introducing a parental leave policy is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors
- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt
- Digital technology provides opportunities to remove some of these barriers through remote working and voting

The council resolves:

- To adopt the parental leave policy drafted by the LGA Labour Group's Women's Taskforce to give all councillors an entitlement to parental leave after giving birth or adopting (link to policy: <https://tinyurl.com/councilpl>)
- To use technology to allow councillors to attend meetings remotely and vote remotely where appropriate
- That North Somerset Council actively promotes the benefits of remote working to its staff and look at ways to improve take up."

Seven members signalled their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Cronnelly spoke in support of the Motion outlining the benefits of modernising and improving working arrangements for members.

In discussing the Motion members were broadly supportive of the proposals but made reference to the following issues: the flexibility that already existed within the current system with members only required to attend a meeting once within a six month period; the importance of councillors being available to fulfil their ward councillor responsibilities; the need for any policy for councillors to be consistent with staff policy and for this to be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances; the benefits of developing available technologies to enable members to work and to take part in meetings remotely.

Amendment: Moved by Councillor Codling and seconded by Councillor Bridger

"that the Motion be supported in principle but referred to the Governance Working Group for greater scrutiny."

Councillor Cronnelly and Councillor Gibbons, as mover and seconder of the original Motion, agreed to take on board the proposed amendment.

On being put to the vote it was

Resolved: that the Motion be supported in principle but referred to the Governance Working Group for greater scrutiny.

COU Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 8)

71

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Westwood to the meeting following his recent surgery.

COU Leader's announcements (Agenda Item 9)

72

The Leader announced a change to Executive Member portfolios, reporting that he would be taking over the public transport element of Councillor Tonkin's portfolio with immediate effect, as previously reported at the last Executive meeting.

COU Chief Executive's announcements (Agenda Item 10)

73

The Chief Executive referred to the recent death of Jo Mercer, Service Manager, Safer and Stronger Communities and gave details of her Memorial Service which would take place on Monday 30 September, at 12 noon, in St Paul's Church, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare.

COU Forward Plan dated 2 September 2019 (Agenda Item 11)

74

Councillor Davies presented the Forward Plan.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report - Weston-super-Mare Transport Works Public Consultation (Agenda Item 12)

75

Councillor Crockford Hawley presented the report.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU Question Time (Standing Order No. 18) (Agenda Item 13)

76

Oral questions were directed to Members concerned and the summary notes and topics involved are contained in Appendix 1.

COU Reports and matters referred from the Policy/Overview and Scrutiny Panels: Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel 30 September 2019 (Agenda Item 15)

77

Councillor Tucker reported the finalised Healthy Weston proposals on the future of Weston General Hospital had now been published by the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG), which included the permanent closure of the A&E department. The Panel would be considering its statutory response to these proposals for agreement at its next meeting on 30 September, prior to the CCG's Governing Body meeting on 1 October, and he encouraged councillors to feed any comments on the proposals into the Panel's response by Thursday 26 September. If the Panel was minded to refer the matter to the Secretary of State, this would come forward as a recommendation to Council in November.

COU Reports and matters referred from other Committees: Audit Committee 25 July 2019 (Agenda Item 16)

78

Councillor Cato presented the reference from the Audit Committee. He referred to the recommendation from the Committee and proposed an amendment as follows:

“that the Audit Committee Annual Report 2018/19 be received in respect of the previous municipal year until May 2019, and it be noted that the next Annual Report will cover the period from May 2019.”

In discussing the reference Councillor Cato extended an invitation to all councillors to attend the next meeting of the Committee to gain a better understanding of the work being undertaken. He confirmed that formal

meetings of the committee were held three times a year with members meeting as a working group on a monthly basis.

Motion: moved by Councillor Cato, seconded by Councillor Gardner and

Resolved: that the Audit Committee Annual Report 2018/19 be received in respect of the previous municipal year until May 2019, and it be noted that the next Annual Report will cover the period from May 2019.

COU 79 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: Avon Fire Authority (Agenda Item 17 (1))

It was noted the Avon Fire Authority had not met since the last Council meeting.

COU 80 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 17 (2))

There was no report on the Joint Scrutiny Committee as none of the Council's representatives had attended the recent meeting of the Committee.

COU 81 Heritage and Regeneration Overview (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Crockford-Hawley presented the report. He wished to record his thanks to the Council's archaeologist and conservation officer for their work and drew particular attention to concerns in relation to the future of Worlebury Hillfort.

In discussing the report members recognised the archaeological significance of Worlebury Hillfort, the work undertaken by volunteers to clear vegetation at the site and the need for action to be taken to ensure its long term conservation. In response Councillor Charles, as Executive Member for Culture, took on board the concerns raised and reported that he had asked officers to proceed at pace with action to ensure the long-term conservation of the site.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 82 Shop Front Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Agenda Item 19)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report. He thanked officers for their work in producing the Shopfront Design Guide.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Tonkin, seconded by Councillor Davies and

Resolved: that the Shopfront Design Guide, which includes guidance on conversion of Use Class A properties to residential use, be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

COU 83 Statement of Community Involvement Revisions (Agenda Item 20)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report. He thanked officers for their work on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

In discussing the report reference was made to the importance of effective consultation and engagement on planning matters and to the role of ward councillors in ensuring those who needed to know were aware of forthcoming applications. It was noted that all councillors received a weekly list of registered planning applications, listed by parish.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Tonkin, seconded by Councillor Crosby and

Resolved: that the proposed revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as set out in the report be approved and the revised SCI be adopted for use in undertaking consultation and engagement during the production of the Council's Planning Policy documents and decision making on planning applications.

COU 84 Adoption of Youth Justice Partnership Plan (YJPP) (Agenda Item 21)

Councillor Gibbons presented the report.

In discussing the report members thanked the Service Leader for the valuable work being undertaken by the service as part of a multi-agency approach working to prevent youth offending and enhance community safety. Reference was made to the importance of partnership working, the positive results of the High Impact Families (HIF) Programme, and the benefits of extending mentoring and advocacy services for vulnerable young people to children in the care of the local authority who requested it. The Service Leader then responded to questions from members in relation to the process for monitoring re-offending within certain groups, funding contributions to the service and the extent of consultation with service users and others as part of the YJPP process.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Westwood and

Resolved: that the the Youth Justice Partnership Plan 01/04/19 – 31/03/22 be approved and adopted, and the Plan be submitted to the Youth Justice Board.

COU 85 Commissioning Plan Approval - National Residential Contract for the Placement of Children in Children's Homes (Agenda Item 22)

Councillor Gibbons presented the report.

In discussing the report reference was made to the importance of ensuring the new framework arrangements provided good quality residential home placements for children in care and proposed that the report be referred to the Children and Young People's Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Westwood and

Resolved:

(1) that the commissioning plan be approved;

(2) that approval of the Inter Authority Partnership Agreement (IAA) and associated costs be delegated to the Executive Member, as it has not yet been drafted by the lead authority;

(3) that approval of the Contract Award be delegated to the Executive Member, as the Executive meetings scheduled for next year do not tie in with the proposed timeline for recommissioning; and

(4) that the report be referred to the Children and Young People's Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

COU 86 Affordable Housing Delivery Partnership Agreement with Alliance Homes (Agenda Item 23)

Councillor Davies presented the report.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Davies, seconded by Councillor Cartman and

Resolved:

(1) that the Heads of Terms for an Affordable Housing Delivery Partnership Agreement between the Council and Alliance Homes, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the S151 Officer and Director of People and Communities, to agree the Affordable Housing Delivery Partnership Agreement between the Council and Alliance Homes;

(3) that officers be authorised to amend the LSVT Contract in accordance with the report to:

a) allow Alliance Homes to retain all the receipts from the sale of land and/or buildings transferred to Alliance Homes by the Council under the terms of the LSVT Contract, subject to the receipts, after the deduction of any direct sale costs incurred by Alliance, being spent on providing new or replacement Affordable Housing in North Somerset.

b) remove from the definition of an Exempt Disposal reference to the circumstances where the land disposed of will be developed as affordable housing; and

(4) that authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the S151 Officer and Director of People and Communities, to agree changes to the definitions of 'Exempt Disposal' and associated clauses in the LSVT Contract.

COU 87 Governance Review Working Group Report (Agenda Item 24)

Councillor Gardner presented the report. He explained the way the working group had approached the review and summarised the conclusions reached. He thanked the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Andy Bates from the LGA and councillors for their support and constructive ideas in responding to the Council's request for a governance review.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gardner and seconded by Councillor Solomon

(1) that Council accepts the working group recommendation to implement changes to the existing executive arrangements as described in paragraph 3.8 of the report;

(2) that Council requests the working group to progress the suggestions in paragraph 3.10 of the report which are capable of immediate implementation e.g. group room arrangements and skills/knowledge/interest audits; and

(3) that Council requests the working group to continue work to develop and bring forward the strategies, protocols and working practices also referenced in paragraph 3.10 of the report where those suggestions require working up in detail for relevant decisions.

In discussing the report members generally welcomed the proposals put forward to create a more accessible, open and transparent council. In considering the proposal for individual group rooms to be replaced with a shared member area some concerns were raised in relation to privacy and confidentiality when undertaking ward work, and to the need to retain party privacy. The option of a committee system approach was also raised and reference was made to the importance of scrutinising any modified Executive model to ensure it was achieving the objectives identified as part of the review.

Councillor Davies proposed an amendment to the recommendations, requesting that the working group be asked to amend Standing Order 19 to remove the requirement for councillors to stand when addressing the Chairman (19.4) and, in the meantime, the Chairman be requested to allow speakers the option to remain seated. Members discussed the merits and difficulties of standing to speak at Council meetings.

Councillor Gardner confirmed he was happy to take on board the proposed amendment in relation to Standing Order 19.

On being put to the vote it was

Resolved:

(1) that Council accepts the working group recommendation to implement changes to the existing executive arrangements as described in paragraph 3.8 of the report;

(2) that Council requests the working group to progress the suggestions in paragraph 3.10 of the report which are capable of immediate implementation e.g. group room arrangements and skills/knowledge/interest audits;

(3) that Council requests the working group to continue work to develop and bring forward the strategies, protocols and working practices also referenced in paragraph 3.10 of the report where those suggestions require working up in detail for relevant decisions; and

(4) that the working group be asked to amend Standing Order 19 to remove the requirement for councillors to stand when addressing the Chairman (19.4) and, in the meantime, the Chairman be requested to allow speakers the option to remain seated.

COU 88 Appointment of Independent (Lay) Member Representatives to the Standards Sub-Committee (Agenda Item 25)

Councillor Cole presented the report.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Cole, seconded by Councillor Tonkin and

Resolved: that Mr Ian Carrington-Porter and Mr Nick Carter-Brown be re-appointed as non-voting Independent (Lay) Member representatives of the Standards Sub-Committee for a period of four years, in accordance with Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011.

COU 89 Appointments on Outside Bodies and Other Roles: Older People's Champion (Agenda Item 26)

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the item.

Resolved: that Councillor Parker be appointed as Older People's Champion for the 2019/20 municipal year, and in future years this role be included within the annual Council report on appointments to outside bodies and other roles.

Chairman

Appendix 1

North Somerset Council Council Meeting, 24 September 2019 Question Time (Agenda Item 13)

Question 1

From Councillor Haverson

To Councillor Tonkin, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Footpath Maintenance

Councillor Haverson stated that over the last few years, it appeared that footpaths along our major highways such as the A38 had not been maintained, to the extent that they could not be used safely any more, not even by walkers and definitely not by pushchairs or wheelchairs. She referred to the large accumulation of soil and vegetation restricting the footpath width, sometimes to as little as a foot wide or less. Hedges were also growing into the overhead space. The issue had been raised several times by local residents and she asked the Executive Member if he could assure her that in view of the council's attempts to encourage sustainable travel as part of its efforts to tackle climate change, facilities for walkers and cyclists would receive a higher priority in future and not just cars.

Councillor Tonkin responded he would provide a full reply to the question in writing.

Question 2

From Councillor Payne

To Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Closure of Clarence Park GP Surgery

Councillor Payne stated that as the Executive Member was aware Clarence Park GP surgery had closed for the last time yesterday, and all of its patients had been transferred to Graham Road surgery. He asked if the Executive Member shared his concern that Graham Road was wholly inadequate for this large increase in patients and asked if he could update the Council on the proposed new health facility for central Weston, already funded by central Government, since specific plans for it seemed to be taking an exceptionally long time to come forward.

In response Councillor Bell agreed that management of the surgeries had been poor and there was significant uncertainty but the new contract holders were doing their best to address. The longer term priority was to get the right facilities in place and the CCG was currently looking at six possible sites. The CCG had given assurances that the new facility would be up and running by Winter 2020/21 and the council would make every effort to ensure this was delivered as soon as possible.

Question 3

From Councillor Keating

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Joint Spatial Plan

Councillor Keating asked the Leader if he could set out the steps that the administration would be taking in respect of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan now that the final letter from the Government inspectors had been received.

At the invitation of the Leader Councillor Tonkin as Executive Member for Planning and Transport responded to the question. He stated that officers from all the unitary authorities were carefully considering the content of the Inspector's second letter and a joint response would be issued by the councils in due course and would then work together to explore how best to deliver plan-led, sustainable and long term growth in the West of England. While the pressure to build tens of thousands of new homes across the region would not go away, it was important that we and the other councils worked to ensure that the dividend of growth, in the form of homes, jobs and infrastructure, was realised.

He added it was important to pursue an objective and evidence based spatial strategy in North Somerset and across the region and to undertake engagement and consultation with local people, business and parish & town councils.

Question 4

From Councillor James

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Change to Executive Member Portfolios – Public Transport

Councillor James referred to the Leader's announcement earlier in the meeting and asked if the Leader was now responsible for all public transport.

The Leader responded he would be taking on responsibility for those areas of public transport that were within this council's control, more specifically bus services.

Question 5

From Councillor McQuillan

To Councillor Canniford, Executive Member for Business, Economy and Employment

Forward Plan item on Measures to Manage On-street Parking at Leigh Woods

Councillor McQuillan asked the Executive Member for more detail in relation to the item on the forward plan due for Executive decision in October.

Councillor Canniford responded that the preferred option was likely to be the adoption of a permit scheme by next summer. If agreed he would be asking officers to progress this as soon as possible but added implementation would be largely dependent on RTO timescales.

Question 6

From Councillor Westwood

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Brexit Preparations

Councillor Westwood stated that according to the latest 'Operation Yellowhammer' document the military had been put on standby to take over the running of local

councils in the event of a crash-out no deal Brexit. He asked the Leader if the council should be contacting the government to ask for details of how and in what circumstances the military would be asked to step in to provide council services.

The Leader responded that there had been no mention of this during recent discussions with the Local Government Minister on Brexit preparations or contingency planning for the ports. He would ask the Brexit Officer to request further details on this and to email the response to all councillors.

Question 7

From Councillor Gardner

To Councillor Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment

Expansion of Solar PV across schools and other public buildings in North Somerset

Councillor Gardner referred to a well-established community enterprise in North Somerset called 'Low carbon Gordano' that had recently installed roof schemes on two local schools, the latest one being a 200kw system at Churchill Academy. However overtures to Gordano and St. Peter's Schools in Portishead to install such schemes had not met with any success. He had been led to believe that NSC still had control over the buildings, and roof lease issues may be an impediment.

He asked the Executive Member if she could investigate whether there were any obstacles to a wholesale expansion of Solar PV across schools and other public buildings in North Somerset and, if there were, to explain what the Council proposes to do to remove them.

In response Councillor Petty referred to the excellent work of Low Carbon Gordano in delivering projects and undertook to follow this up and discuss any legal barriers and restrictions that applied.

Question 8

From Councillor Cato

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Material Considerations in relation to net zero CO2 emissions

Councillor Cato asked the Leader what the council was doing to ensure CO2 emissions were a material consideration when it comes to planning and other decisions given the council had declared its commitment to action with respect to the climate change emergency, and a commitment to net zero CO2 emissions.

The Leader responded that material considerations were governed by national planning legislation and any such change would be a matter for central government.