

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Policy and Scrutiny Panel Thursday, 10 November 2022

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.05 pm

Councillors:

Geoffrey Richardson (Chairman)
Stuart McQuillan (Vice-Chairman)
Peter Bryant
John Cato
James Clayton
Robert Payne
Richard Tucker

Apologies: Councillors: Gill Bute, Mark Crosby, John Ley-Morgan and Terry Porter.

Also in attendance: Councillor Ash Cartman

Officers in attendance: Amy Webb, Melanie Watts, Emma Diakou, Dee Mawn, Howard Potheary, Harry Mills, Philippa Penney, Leo Taylor

PCO Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) 12

None.

PCO Minutes 13

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

PCO Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Response (Agenda Item 6) 14

The Safer Communities Service Manager and the Enforcement Manager presented the report which updated the Panel on the development of the Council's response to anti-social behaviour and environmental crime enforcement and which also provided a description of the Community Response work programme and an update on progress to date.

Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- the volume of contacts from the public about anti-social behaviour and how the response was evaluated and reported. Members noted the effect of the

Community Trigger which, once activated by a member of the public, would require a review of the response and the implementation of actions arising;

- liaison with the police service;
- the level and sustainability of the service's resourcing;
- fly tipping enforcement and the current level of covert camera surveillance; and
- evaluation of the potential impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on crime and disorder.

There was some discussion about the potential use of customer satisfaction surveys to better evaluate the service response and further discussion around the Community Trigger.

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be received;
- (2) that Officers provide Members with an informal briefing on the Community Trigger.
- (3) that future meetings might include a police representative when appropriate; and
- (4) that officers consider the introduction of random customer satisfaction surveys.

PCO 15 Sky Lantern Balloon Release and Firework Policy (Agenda Item 10)

[This item was taken out of sequence.]

The Environmental Protection Service Leader presented the report which set out proposals to the above policy to include restrictions on firework displays so that those taking place on Council owned land were limited to the low noise variety only.

In discussion there was no clear consensus from Members around the proposal with some supporting the proposal and others raising concerns including the risk of unpopularity with the wider public and the inconsistency this would cause between those events on private land (that were not subject to the restriction).

Members' proposed that Parish and Town Council's should be consulted before any decision and Officers confirmed that this would take place.

Concluded: that the report be received and that Members' feedback be provided to officers in the form of the minutes.

PCO 16 Executive Member Report - MTFP and Budget Monitoring (Agenda Item 7)

The Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services gave a presentation updating Members on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget Monitoring setting out the Council's current in-year financial position and outlining plans to mitigate the significant pressures arising in large part from the ongoing global financial crisis.

Member sought and received clarification on the following:

- the implications of the use of reserves in the plugging funding gaps;
- the importance of being 'up-front' with the public where the driver for

mitigations impacting services was inflation;

- the likelihood of Government Council Tax caps being removed; and
- the extent to which the Council was lobbying Government on the Council's forthcoming Local Government Financial Settlement.

Members noted that Chancellor of the Exchequer would be delivering the Autumn Financial Statement on 17th November, the same day as the all-Councillor Budget Scrutiny session, and there was discussion about whether this session should be deferred by a few days. It was however concluded that the event should go forward as planned as the detailed implications of the Statement as applying to individual Council financial settlements would not be reported until late December.

Concluded: that the report be received.

PCO 17 Accommodation Strategy (Agenda Item 8)

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report which provided an update on delivery of the Accommodation Strategy (approved by the Council on 23 February 2021) and an update in relation to the Accommodation Strategy Programme, the work to date and key milestones.

Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- the timescales for implementation of key objectives and
- the response from staff, whether this had changed over time and how the response was being addressed (eg had the balance between staff wanting to work at home/at work changed?)
- opportunities to demonstrate compliance with net zero strategy (eg office equipment re-use and travel plans)

There was discussion around costs with some Members concerned about the level of expenditure on new office equipment, on some proposed facilities, and the need to account for public perception. It was noted, however, that significant proportion of the expenditure was unavoidable due to regulatory standards (eg fire safety) and that there were compelling reasons for the provision of a modern working environment where people would want to work (eg retention/recruitment challenges). Members also noted there was ongoing challenge from the Executive on costs with a view to finding further savings and that the Panels Accommodation Strategy Working Group would continue to monitor, review and report back to the Panel on strategy delivery, including issues around cost and quality.

Concluded: that the report be received and that Members' feedback be provided to officers in the form of the minutes.

PCO 18 North Somerset District and Parish Council Elections 4 May 2023 (Agenda Item 9)

The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services presented the report which summarised the planning and actions undertaken to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the forthcoming North Somerset District and Parish elections. It also noted the provisions of the Elections Act 2022 and the impact this would have for these elections.

In discussion, Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- arrangements for publicising the photo ID requirement;
- funding arrangements for additional polling staff; and
- voter registration campaign/canvassing arrangements.

Concluded: that the report be received.

PCO 19 Q1 performance management update 2022-23 (Agenda Item 11)

The Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships presented the report which gave an update on progress against the organisational-wide commitments, the Key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs) and the Strategic Risk Register as of end Q1. The paper also provided links to published data sets which gave additional context and/or oversight against Council performance.

Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- the significant number of strategic risk items listed as high risk after mitigating actions. Members noted that this was largely due to inflationary pressures and other associated implications of the current economic crisis.
- Implications of potential proposed MTFP cost savings on performance against Corporate Services directorate commitments (current KCPIs showing as green).

There was further discussion around the Panel considering in more detail the quarter-by-quarter implications of the current financial pressures on performance.

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be received and Member feedback provided to officers in the form of the minutes; and
- (2) that an informal Panel session be arranged in December to consider Q2 performance in more detail.

PCO 20 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the work plan which included detail of informal scrutiny work undertaken since the last panel meeting held in July 2022 and planned work going forward. The Chairman also provided further update on the work of the Panel's working groups and various informal briefings.

There are currently five working groups with another planned as follows:

ICT – Monitoring the ICT and related strategy roll outs, and the replacement of members kit;

Community Safety – Monitoring the efficacy of the Safer Stronger Communities, Violence Reduction, and Safer Streets initiatives;

Accommodation Strategy – Reviewing the project to streamline accommodation use and change working practices;

Financial Planning – Working to ensure appropriate and timely consultation of the

council's finances;
Customer Services – Ensuring progress of improvements arising from the
Customer Services Strategy; and
Major Projects – Assurance that processes to control major projects are in place
and working.

The Chair thanked the members and officers working on these groups for all their
hard work.

Chairman
