

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Monday, 19 July 2021

New Council Chamber, Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 3.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 5.35 pm

Councillors:

Richard Westwood (Chairman)

Mike Bell

Steve Bridger

Mark Canniford

Ashley Cartman

Andy Cole

John Crockford-Hawley

Ciaran Cronnelly

Donald Davies

Catherine Gibbons

Hugh Gregor

Sandra Hearne

Huw James

Stuart McQuillan

Robert Payne

Marcia Pepperall

James Tonkin

Richard Tucker

Apologies (mainly for Covid related reasons): Councillors Karin Haverson (Vice-Chairman), Mark Aplin, Nigel Ashton, Mike Bird, Peter Bryant, Gill Bute, John Cato, Caritas Charles, Caroline Cherry, James Clayton, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew, Mark Crosby, Wendy Griggs, Ann Harley, David Hitchins, Steve Hogg, Nicola Holland, Ruth Jacobs, Patrick Keating, Ian Parker, Bridget Petty, Lisa Pilgrim, Terry Porter, Geoffrey Richardson, Mike Solomon and Roz Willis.

Absent: Councillors Caroline Goddard, John Ley-Morgan, David Shopland and Timothy Snaden.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services) and Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer).

COU Chairman's Welcome

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The Chairman welcomed everyone to this face-to-face meeting of the Council in

the New Council Chamber. He referred to the government's recommendations to exercise caution, together with the council's own health and safety advice, which had made it necessary to limit the number of councillors, officers and members of the public in attendance in the Chamber to ensure the meeting could take place safely. He thanked everyone for their understanding and co-operation with this.

The meeting was being streamed live on the internet and a recorded version would be available to view within 48 hours on the North Somerset Council website.

To avoid the need for councillors to sign an attendance register and for the benefit of those watching via YouTube, the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer undertook a roll call of councillors to confirm attendance.

The vast majority of absences recorded were for Covid related reasons.

COU 28 Public Participation, petitions, and deputations (Standing Orders 2(vi) and 17) (Agenda Item 1)

The Chairman reported three requests for public participation had been received. The first submission would be heard at the meeting, the other two had been provided in advance and published with the supplementary papers. These would also be read out at the meeting.

(1) Affordable Home Ownership for All: Richard Sibley, Claverham Resident

At the invitation of the Chairman Mr Sibley addressed the meeting on the matter of affordable home ownership for all. He referred to a paper he had circulated to a number of councillors setting out proposals to address this issue in answer to current economic, social and environmental challenges and for the future. He outlined the benefits of an alternative homes policy for the district and asked councillors and officers to study his proposals as a means of tackling this important issue.

(2) Reopening of Churchill Sports Centre: Thornton Daryl Hirst, Churchill Resident

At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer read out the statement from Mr Hirst as published with the papers.

(3) Affordable Housing: Alan Rice, Weston-super-Mare Resident

At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer read out the statement from Mr Rice as published with the papers.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their submissions and proposed that they be noted and referred to the relevant Executive Member and the Director of Place.

COU 29 Petitions to be presented by Members (Standing Order No. 16) (Agenda Item 3)

It was noted a petition had been received from Councillor Crew who was unable to attend the meeting. At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer presented the petition on Councillor Crew's behalf.

The petition was in the following terms and signed by residents of the 57 properties in Thorn Close:

"To Whom it may concern.

The residents of Thorn Close, Worle, are petitioning North Somerset Council to bring pressure to bear on the relevant authorities to fully deal with the infestation of Feral Pigeons under the Solar Panels fitted to many of the properties in the Street. These birds are causing misery to all of us, presenting both a health hazard and a noise nuisance."

The Chairman thanked Councillor Crew for the petition and referred it to the Director of Place.

COU 30 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda Item 4)

None declared.

COU 31 Minutes - 20 April 2021 (Agenda Item 5)

It was noted that Councillor Ashton had yet to receive a response to the question he had raised under Question Time and the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer agreed to follow this up.

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

**COU 32 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)
Motion to Review and Strengthen the Council's Low Carbon Advertising Policies (Councillor Petty) (Agenda Item 6 (1))**

In Councillor Petty's absence and at the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor McQuillan introduced the Motion. He pointed out the intention was not to ban advertising but rather to modify existing policies to address the climate emergency, public health, air pollution and sustainable consumption.

Motion: Moved by Councillor McQuillan and seconded by Councillor Cronnelly

"As of November 2020, over 480 councils in the UK have made climate emergency declarations. Low Carbon Advertising Policies present an opportunity for local authorities to further their existing health and environmental policy goals relating to air pollution, active travel, climate change, sustainability and town planning.

It should be noted that restricting advertising for harmful products (e.g tobacco or SUVs) is not the same as banning the products themselves.

Fossil fuel companies, car companies and airlines spend billions each year advertising their high carbon products -despite growing public concerns over air pollution and climate breakdown.

Extracts here have been taken from a toolkit for local authority councillors and officers in the UK wishing to implement a 'Low Carbon Advertising Policy' which would prohibit adverts for these products in council-owned ad spaces.

This motion looks at the ecological and climate impacts of advertising from these high carbon industries:

- petrol and diesel car advertising, particularly for the largest and most polluting cars such as Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs)
- airline advertising for flights
- fossil fuel companies (such as Shell and BP)

There is plenty of additional information available to read about this subject on these links

<https://www.badverts.org/>

Advertising's role in climate and ecological degradation. What does the scientific research have to say? Professor Tim Kasser with Andrew Simms, David Boyle and Emilie Tricarico

Upselling Smoke: The case to end advertising of the largest, most polluting new cars New Weather Institute and Possible, August 2020

Taking Down Junk Food Ads - how local areas are taking action on outdoor advertising Sustain, 2019

Why Taking Down Billboards is Good for the Local Economy Adblock Bristol, 2019

All here - <https://www.badverts.org/reports-and-publications>

This council notes:

- That it is possible for local authorities to implement advertising policies against specific products if they consider them to be harmful to the amenity of an area.
- This Council notes that the Greater London Authority (GLA), which controls Transport for London (TFL) property, were able to enact a Healthier Food Advertising Policy in 2018 prohibiting High Fat, Sugar or Salt (HFSS) food advertising on TFL property. Council planning departments will be able to advise on how to restrict the use of 'deemed consent' under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 including writing to the relevant Secretary of State.
- That North Somerset Council currently holds an Advertising Concession Agreement with Clear Channel UK involving the upkeep and maintenance of over 25 bus stops across the area all of which include advertising panels (there are over 600 bus stops across the district).
- That advertising prohibitions and restrictions already exist regarding all tobacco products and e-cigarettes, guns and offensive weapons, breath testing and products designed to mask the effects of alcohol, 'pyramid schemes', prostitution services, 'obscene material' as well as other rules regarding marketing to children, high fat sugar and salt products, medical and health claims, religion, financial products, and pornography.
(<https://www.badverts.org/case-studies>)
- That a double-sided digital bus stop advertising screen uses four times the

electricity of the average British home.

(<https://adfreecities.org.uk/2019/11/the-electricity-costof-digital-adverts>)

- That a climate emergency was declared by this council in February 2019, which included a commitment to reduce area wide carbon emissions and become carbon neutral by 2030.

This council believes:

- That the purpose of advertising is to stimulate demand for goods and services.
- That some advertising content undermines the council's objectives regarding public health, air pollution and sustainable consumption. For example, High Fat Sugar and Salt products undermine health objectives, petrol and diesel car adverts, especially for Sports Utility Vehicles, undermine climate and air quality objectives and airline advertising undermines carbon emission reduction targets.

This council resolves:

- That the Director of Place in liaison with the Executive Member for public transport reviews the scope of the Advertising Concession Agreement[s] which are currently being updated in readiness for an imminent tendering process to investigate the possibility of amending the current set of prohibitions and restrictions to include products that contribute to climate change and air pollution – it is recognised that this may have some impact on the potential value of those concessions and in order to evaluate any impact the option of seeking variant bids should be considered
- That the Director of Place in liaison with the Executive Member for planning policy be asked to investigate and to the extent possible implements a Low Carbon Advertising Policy as part of the council's planning policies, to apply to bus stops, billboards and advertising spaces in the area within the jurisdiction of the local planning area."

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

Councillor McQuillan spoke in support of the Motion and urged all members to support it. In seconding the Motion, Councillor Cronnelly reported the matter of low carbon advertising had been raised with him by a local resident and the Motion was in response to the issues raised.

In discussing the Motion members expressed support for the proposals but referred to the need to clearly define what was meant by low carbon advertising and the scope of any future policy. Once agreed the council could then take a community lead on this matter by supporting and encouraging partners and others to do the same. Reference was also made to the revenue implications of this and the need to balance any loss of revenue against potential health and social benefits.

In response to comments made the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer confirmed the concession contract was due to be re-let shortly and in scoping any future contract, variant bids could be requested from tenderers to enable costs to be quantified.

Following further discussion, it was

Resolved: that the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

**COU 33 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)
Planning for the Future and the Planning Bill (Councillor Bell) (Agenda Item 6 (2))**

In introducing the Motion Councillor Bell sought members' support for the proposals as set out.

Motion: Moved by Council Crockford-Hawley and seconded by Councillor Canniford

"Council notes:

- The significant concerns that have been expressed about the planning reforms proposed by the Conservative Government in their Planning for the Future white paper.
- The Government's intention to introduce a Planning Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech in May, which builds on the Planning for the Future white paper.

Council is concerned that Government proposals:

- Perpetuate an arbitrary target-driven approach that will require 20,085 homes in North Somerset, irrespective of evidence of community need or land supply.
- Take away many of the opportunities for communities and their locally elected representatives to have a final say on how their areas develop.
- Reduce or remove the right of residents to object to applications near them by giving automatic rights to build in 'growth' areas, and increase permitted development rights, risk unregulated growth and unsustainable communities.
- Remove local Section 106 payments and the Community Infrastructure Levy for infrastructure and replace them with a national levy; it is unclear how the new level of developer contributions would work.
- Fail to recognise the climate emergency by making it a key priority that would enable the planning system to respond to the climate crisis.

Council believes that the Government's Planning Bill should give local councils greater powers to:

- Challenge unrealistic housing targets.
- Deliver improved infrastructure alongside new developments.
- Require new development to meet high sustainability standards.
- Require quality design standards as part of new developments.
- Strengthen developer contributions to essential services including health, employment, and education.
- Prevent land banking and poor delivery by developers where planning consents are in place.

Council resolves to write to the Government and our local MPs to set out our concerns and to emphasise our belief that local councils, in consultation with their businesses and residents, are best placed to understand the issues in their area and respond with an appropriate spatial strategy."

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

Councillor Crockford-Hawley spoke in support of his Motion and urged all members to support it. He stressed he was not against housing or other development in North Somerset but that as a local authority this council, together with its businesses and residents, should be in charge of how the area developed rather than taking instruction from central government on arbitrary new homes targets, regardless of community need or land supply.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Canniford referred to the challenges faced by the previous administration in responding to the government's unrealistic housing targets. He referred to the importance of addressing some of the misinformation being circulated and highlighted the impact of the Government's proposals on development in the area, with the removal of the rights of local councils and residents to object to applications in their area, the removal of Section 106 payments to fund local infrastructure and a reduction in the council's powers to require quality developments and provide homes people wanted to live in.

In discussing the Motion members expressed support for the proposals. Reference was made to the following issues: the benefits of a developers' charter with planning reforms to address land banking and poor delivery by developers and recognise and respond to the climate emergency; the need to challenge unrealistic housing targets which created division amongst local communities and failed to address local housing need or land supply; the widespread opposition to the proposals across all political parties and by the Local Government Association (LGA), resulting in a delay in bringing forward the White Paper; the need for planning departments to take on additional work and new skills, and the importance of securing additional funding to support already overstretched departments; the need to move away from an arbitrary target-driven approach to one that focusses on local need, real affordability and sustainability; the need for an imaginative approach to housing development given limited land resources and the avoidance of development on flood plains.

Following further discussion, it was

Resolved: that the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

COU 34 Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman drew members' attention to the forthcoming by-election on Thursday 22 July for the Congresbury and Puxton ward, following which the Council would return to its full complement of 50 councillors.

He also announced that he had decided to postpone the Civic Service, scheduled for 26 September, until next year and would notify councillors of the revised date in due course.

COU 35 Leader's announcements (Agenda Item 9)

The Leader thanked all those involved in getting the room ready and making the necessary arrangements for today's meeting, and for the Bristol Airport Planning

Inquiry starting on Tuesday 20 July. He expressed disappointment that many councillors had been unable to join the meeting as a result of the remote meeting regulations not being extended, and in referring to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases in North Somerset, he urged everyone to do all they could to keep safe and look after each other.

COU 36 Chief Executive's announcements (Agenda Item 10)

The Chief Executive thanked councillors and officers for all they had done in responding to the pandemic. She referred to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 cases within the community, with increased demand across council services as case numbers continued to rise. She confirmed that as an employer, the council was maintaining a cautious approach, encouraging working from home where possible and the continued wearing of masks, social distancing and hand washing within council buildings.

COU 37 Forward Plan dated 2 July 2021 (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Davies presented the Forward Plan.

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

COU 38 Corporate Parenting (Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Gibbons presented the report. She thanked the Director of Children's Services for bringing together the details within the report and updated members on the findings of our care leavers' contributions to the national survey 'Your Life Beyond Care', progress with members' individual offers of support made during last year's Corporate Parenting seminar and the 'Case for Change' published by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care following the last Council meeting.

Members thanked Councillor Gibbons for the report and welcomed the offers of support made by individual members. In response to a concern raised regarding an instance of fostering and the non-payment of guardians, Councillor Gibbons advised this was an historic issue dating back to 2010 and whilst regrettable had now been resolved, with no indication of any more recent cases.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 39 Question Time (Standing Order No. 18) (Agenda Item 14)

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

**COU 40 Reports and matters referred from the Policy/Overview and Scrutiny Panels other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda
Peer Review Member Working Group (Agenda Item 16(1))**

Councillor Crockford-Hawley, Chair of the Peer Review Member Working Group, presented the report, outlining the key findings and the recommendations from the Peer Review of Planning carried out in January 2021. He confirmed the Working

Group was recommending that Council accept all the recommendations as detailed within the report. He made particular reference to the recommendation to reduce the size of the Planning and Regulatory Committee to 13, with non-members being allowed to attend and address the committee on applications in their ward or where an application materially affects their ward. He referred to the call-in process and the importance of discussing any proposed call-in with officers and the Chairman in advance to be clear on the reason for the call-in, and also to the proposal to move public speaking on planning applications from the start of the meeting to immediately before the consideration of the application in question. There would be additional meetings of the Working Group to consider further the issues raised as part of the recommendations.

The Leader thanked the Local Government Association review team, Councillor Crockford-Hawley, Councillor Tonkin and others involved in the review for the wide-ranging consultation with members, officers and stakeholders and for bringing forward this comprehensive report.

In discussing the recommendations reference was made to the following issues: the need to ensure the enforcement service was properly resourced, and the proposal for closer working with parishes on enforcement issues was welcomed; the review of internal collaboration processes to streamline the application process and avoid bottlenecks in the system was supported, together with greater clarity and guidance for members around the call-in process and the need for clear justification in doing so; the benefits of addressing current work pressures by way of a triage system and reducing the number of applications coming before the committee with a focus on more important applications; the need for adequate resourcing across the planning service and for this to be addressed within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP); the importance of regular training updates for members to keep abreast of changing planning policies and legislation.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Crockford-Hawley, seconded by Councillor Tonkin and

Resolved: that the recommendations of the Local Government Association Planning Advisory Service Planning Peer Review be noted, the recommendations made therein be agreed and the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer, Director of Place and Head of Planning be authorised to implement them.

COU 41 Heritage and Regeneration Champion Report (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Crockford-Hawley presented the report.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 42 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: Avon Fire Authority (Agenda Item 19 (1))

Councillor Payne presented the report.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 43 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: Avon and Somerset Policy and Crime Panel (Agenda Item 19 (2))

Councillor Westwood presented the report.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 44 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 19 (3))

Councillor James gave an oral update on the recent meeting of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee. He raised some concerns in relation to amendments raised at the meeting without the opportunity for scrutiny or public engagement. The agenda papers and minutes for the meeting are available to view on the WECA website.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 45 Development Programme: Business Case and Commissioning Plan for Development of Council-owned Land to the south of The Uplands, Nailsea (Agenda Item 20)

Councillor Canniford presented the report. He outlined the business case for the delivery of residential development on council-owned land to the south of The Uplands, Nailsea and confirmed the proposed development would meet the council's housing objectives and deliver beyond market norms in terms of standards, quality and sustainability. With reference to the recommendation in the report he proposed an additional requirement for a procurement group to be involved in driving this forward, comprising Nailsea local members, the Chairman of the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel and himself as Executive Member.

In discussing the report members raised the following issues: the option for providing allotments as part of the residential development where some of the properties included communal shared gardens; members welcomed the high standards proposed, including building to Passivhaus certified standards to ensure sustainability, good build quality and low energy bills; reference was made to the need to ensure the development was child/family friendly; the importance of early engagement with the chosen development partner to ensure the carbon footprint of the build was minimised as well as carbon use within the building; issues in relation to construction traffic and road access to the site, with new residents and commercial traffic going through Tickenham or Backwell where roads were already gridlocked at peak times and the need for a proper solution to address increasing traffic in the area.

In response to comments made regarding the separate Executive Member decision on the appropriation of the land, the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer confirmed that this decision had now been taken and the Decision Notice and associated papers were available to view on the council's website. He confirmed the decision had been taken in accordance with legal requirements and due process. Consultation responses were included

within the Decision Notice on the website. He advised that the appropriation decision was subject to call-in and that any changes to that decision may result in the need for the Council decision to be reconsidered.

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

Resolved: that the business case and Commissioning Plan for the procurement of a development partner for residential development on council-owned land to the south of The Uplands, Nailsea be approved as set out in section 3 of the report, with the additional requirement that a procurement group comprised of local members, the Chairman of the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel and the Executive Member for Placemaking and Economy be involved in the development partner selection process.

COU 46 Submission of Bid to the Levelling Up Fund (Agenda Item 21)

Councillor Canniford presented the report. He referred to the benefits of seeking levelling up funding to support delivery of the SuperWeston Placemaking Strategy objectives and drew attention to the match-funding proposals as set out in paragraph 3.2.6 of the report. He stated that Weston town centre and seafront had been chosen due to its close match with the funding criteria and referred to the extensive engagement activity as part of the SuperWeston Placemaking Strategy, with over 5,000 responses from residents, businesses and visitors. He thanked officers for their work on this and advised that a decision on funding was expected in the autumn.

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

Resolved: that retrospective approval be given to the submission of a bid to the government's Levelling Up fund, in support of the delivery of SuperWeston Placemaking Strategy objectives and to a value of £14,893,438, matched by local funding of £2,930,582 as set out in paragraph 3.2.6 of the report.

COU 47 Adoption of the North Somerset Active Travel Strategy (ATS) (Agenda Item 22)

Councillor Davies presented the report. He thanked officers for their extensive work on the strategy and referred to the importance of a strategic vision which sought to address the climate emergency and the health crisis, while supporting local jobs and businesses. He drew members' attention to the summary set out on page 77 of the strategy highlighting ambitious delivery plans and the benefits for residents.

In discussing the report members expressed support for the strategy but were critical of the way in which government funding was made available for such schemes, with local authorities forced to chase the money rather than focussing on the delivery of a comprehensive strategy. It was suggested this approach did not always produce the best schemes and solutions. Reference was also made to the length of the strategy and whether this was necessary and to the need for this to be considered alongside other strategies to ensure a co-ordinated approach in addressing the high percentage of carbon emissions as a direct result of travel. Members recognised the importance of effective consultation and engagement in

order to achieve the council's vision and to make it easier for people to make active travel choices. Delivery plans needed to be ambitious and to include more cycle paths in areas such as Portishead, prioritising cyclists and pedestrians over car users. Reference was also made to the importance of ensuring the needs of the elderly population and those with mobility issues were recognised and addressed within the strategy.

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

Resolved: that the North Somerset Active Travel Strategy be adopted.

COU 48 MetroWest Phase 1 - Delivery Update (includes exempt appendix) (Agenda Item 23)

Councillor Bridger presented the report, updating members on the latest progress with particular reference to Phase 1B of the project to re-open the Portishead rail line, and seeking authorisations to move ahead with the next stage. He thanked the project team for their work on this, together with the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel, and drew members' attention to recommendation 6 of the report proposing disposal of some historic railway assets to Avon Valley Railway for re-use for their heritage railway line extension into Bath.

Members welcomed the report and noted the project was now reaching a critical stage in relation to project costs and key financial risks. Reference was made to the importance of close budget monitoring and sufficient member engagement and scrutiny of the project to avoid project cost escalation beyond the risks identified. It was noted that in addition to high level officer discussions the Place Panel was involved in scrutinising the project but that it may be appropriate to involve the Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Panel to scrutinise the financial aspects of the project.

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

Resolved:

(1) (a) that authority be delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery, the Assistant Director Legal & Governance & the Director of Corporate Services, to enter into (jointly with the West of England Combined Authority(WECA)) an Implementation Agreement with Network Rail, Part 1 – Detail Design GRIP5 and subsequent addendums to the agreement as outlined in section 5 of the report, as per the values in confidential appendix 2 of the report, leading up to Full Business Case approval, subject to:
(b) North Somerset Council (NSC) and WECA firstly entering into a Side Agreement to extend the 50:50 cost sharing to include all project costs (except revenue costs associated with the operation of the train service), through to the completion of the project, including risks and liabilities arising from NSC entering into Protective Obligations and Protective Provision Agreements with statutory undertakers, as set out in section 4 of the report;

(2) that Council notes that following completion of Detailed Design GRIP5 and the approval of the Full Business Case, a separate report will be brought to Council in summer 2022 seeking authorisation to proceed with Part 2 of the Implementation

Agreement and award construction contracts including GRIP 6-8, via Network Rail and authorisation for all other contract awards required to implement the project and re-open the branch line for scheduled passenger train services;

(3) that Council authorise the Client Owned Scope Procurement Plan, attached at appendix 1 of the report and outlined in section 6 of the report, entailing the procurement of the (NSC & WECA) scope of works via the route to market identified for each package at an estimated cost of between £0.800M and £1.100M leading up to Full Business Case approval;

(4) that the Director of Place be authorised to agree terms for the acquisition of land by agreement or any interests in land and to complete acquisition transactions (including the entering into of options for the acquisition and/or use of land and agreements as to compensation and/or accommodation works) as may be required for the proposed railway and associated works, up to a further £500,000, leading up to the decision on the Development Consent Order by the Secretary of State for Transport (anticipated Autumn 2021) as outlined in section 7 of the report;

(5) that Council authorise an indicative budget of up to £14.4M for the 2022-23 financial year up to the award of Part 2 of the Implementation Agreement and award construction contracts including GRIP 6-8, to be met from the allocated Economic Development Funding, within the approved £116.4M total project cost and to add this to the Council's Capital Programme, as set out in section 10 of the report; and

(6) that Council authorise the disposal of some historic railway assets within the Portishead area of the dis-used railway to Avon Valley Railway for re-use for their heritage railway line extension into Bath, as set out in section 8 of the report. The historic railway assets are not needed by MetroWest Phase 1 and have to be removed to make way for new railway assets and only have a nominal scrap value. The arrangements for the disposal of these assets will be managed via Network Rail and any additional costs incurred will be passed onto Avon Valley Railway, subject to further discussion between the parties. The assets will not be removed before the decision by the Secretary of State on the Development Consent Order. It is anticipated the assets will be removed in mid to late 2022.

Chairman

Appendix 1

Council Meeting, 19 July 2021 Question Time (agenda item 14)

1. Question from Cllr Payne to Cllr Davies, Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Public Transport

Councillor Payne asked the following question of the Leader:

“The A3 bus service from Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Airport, which is a service commissioned by the airport under contract, has been suspended for some months now, which we can understand with the reduction of use of the airport during the pandemic. But are you concerned that the airport is now making no commitment to re-start the service although things are starting to open up and since the airport is actively trying to get people back to flying again?

The only way people can currently access the airport from the Weston area is by going via central Bristol, and it can't be done at all for early morning flights from the airport. Do you agree with me that this encourages more people to go to the airport by car, which is the opposite of what the airport has told us they are trying to achieve?”

The Leader responded that he had discussed this matter with the Chief Executive and had agreed to look into airport public transport provision. He would ask the public transport team to keep members updated on this.

2. Question from Cllr James to Cllr Gibbons, Executive Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

Cllr James asked the following question of Cllr Gibbons:

“I read with real sadness the Ofsted and CQC Joint Report dated 16 June. This report highlighted the ‘lack of strategic direction and planning by senior leaders across this authority to implement the SEND reforms through an effective SEND strategy’. This said that attempts to introduce change had been ineffective, insufficient and inconsistent. It also highlighted that stability had been a strength locally, and a blame culture that damages that stability might be unhelpful. How will the council change and what will be different in our approach after this Ofsted report.”

In response, Cllr Gibbons stated that the report findings involved the council's partners such as the CCG as well as the council and that one or two challenges had been recognised and were being addressed as part of an accelerated action plan. She added that the original inspection in 2018 had raised 8 points needing attention with the revisit finding only two had been addressed to date. The remaining points were being worked on via the accelerated action plan.

In response to a supplementary question, Cllr Gibbons confirmed she was confident that the new approach was sufficient to provide trust in the system and address the

damaged reputation. She referred to positivity and a willingness to address the challenges so all partners could do better for these children and their families which was important for everyone.

3. Question from Cllr Bryant to Cllr Davies, Leader of the Council

Cllr Bryant asked the following question of the Leader:

“On Friday last I was privileged to meet with Julian Turner - Chief Executive Officer of Westfield Technology Group and Dr Paul Phillips Principal of Weston College to examine and experience at first hand an autonomous vehicle or POD. Westfield Technology Group is one of the UK’s leading autonomous vehicle providers and globally they are known for their niche sports cars with over 20,000 sold worldwide. The POD has been developed in conjunction with Heathrow Airport and has now completed over 5 million kilometres in a live commercial environment serving Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, known as POD Parking. The vision is to bring PODs to WsM as an added benefit to the Town and an attraction to its many visitors. Initially it would operate a service from the new bus terminal currently being built, extending into the Town and along Marine Parade.

This innovative idea has a number of benefits, the first of which is to help and assist in the reduction of global warming. Last but certainly not least the PODs would arrive in modular form, to be built by the College providing a hands-on approach for the mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering students which hopefully you agree would be a huge benefit.

Unfortunately, all creative ideas such as this require inward investment and I ask if the Leader will ask officers to make contact with Dr Paul Phillips and his team to see how the Council can assist both practically and financially.”

Cllr Bell responded to the question, stating that he had participated in a demonstration by Weston College so was aware of the PODs. He agreed this was an interesting idea and he was happy to take this away and discuss with officers. However he stressed this was a costly option, but if an extended trial or a lease option was possible then it may provide an opportunity for the council to achieve something different.