

# **North Somerset Council**

## **Report to the Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview/Management (PCOM) Policy and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of Meeting: 3 March 2022**

**Subject of Report: Policy and Scrutiny Work Plan**

**Town or Parish: N/A**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Philippa Penney, Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager**

**Key Decision: No**

**Reason: N/A**

### **Recommendations**

That the members consider and agree the panel's work plan.

### **1. Summary of Report**

At the start of the Covid pandemic, the authority for holding virtual meetings was enabled by emergency regulations made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. Following the cessation of these regulations in May 2021, the requirement for constitutional meetings to be held in person resumed.

In line with Public Health recommendation and our own North Somerset Council health and safety advice, meetings held in public were limited to decision making meetings only. As Policy and Scrutiny Panel meetings are largely non-decision-making, these meetings continued to take place as previously scheduled in the Municipal Calendar but were held informally using a remote virtual platform.

This report therefore presents the panel's extended work plan in full to reflect all the work undertaken since March 2021 i.e., throughout the period since the last meeting that the panel was able to hold in public.

### **2. Policy**

Policy and scrutiny contributes towards the council's corporate aim of improving the way we work. It can also contribute towards the council's corporate aim of building safer and stronger communities and protecting and improving the environment

### **3. Details**

Policy and scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that decision makers remain effective and accountable. It helps in ensuring that the Executive's decision-making process is clear

and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve council policy and services.

There are two distinct elements: policy, which develops and examines the council's aims and priorities to ensure they are being achieved; and scrutiny, which questions and challenges major decisions that are being made about delivering services to help drive improvement.

The work plan is published and considered at each of the panel's meetings. It is updated on a rolling basis as existing matters are concluded and new areas of focus are agreed.

#### **4. Consultation**

Members agree policy and scrutiny panel work plans taking a number of factors into account, including cognisance of council, executive and directorate priorities and considering views and issues that local residents may have expressed.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report although in undertaking future work the panel recognises that they may make recommendations that have financial implications for the council.

#### **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

N/A

#### **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

The council's Climate Emergency falls within the remit of this panel, and direct involvement is continuing with the development and implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

#### **8. Risk Management**

N/A

#### **9. Equality Implications**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

The work of policy and scrutiny is based on the council's commitment to ensure that the consideration of equality and diversity is an integral part of decision-making to bring about positive changes that are felt by service users, councillors and employees

#### **10. Corporate Implications**

Policy and scrutiny reviews and work align to the Corporate Plan and emerging priorities.

#### **11. Options Considered**

N/A

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#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – PCOM Panel Work Plan

- Annex A – updated finalised decision 21/22 DP 233
- Annex B - working/steering group and public participation updates

**Background Papers:**

Reports and work plans from all panels:

<https://n-somerset.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny guidance: <https://www.cfgs.org.uk/>