

# North Somerset Council

## Report to Council

**Date of Meeting: 12 July 2022**

**Subject of Report: Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report**

**Town or Parish: All**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Councillors Wendy Griggs, John Crockford-Hawley**

**Key Decision: NO**

**Reason: Council report not Executive decision**

## Recommendations

That Councillors receive and consider the report from the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel (CYPS) and the Chairman of the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

### 1. Summary of Report

This report provides comments from the Chairmen of two of the Policy and Scrutiny Panels, highlighting:

- a) key areas that the Panels have focused on for the current municipal year;
- b) on-going issues progressing on into the next municipal year.

### 2. Policy

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision for: an open, fairer, greener North Somerset. Policy and Scrutiny Panels have an integral role in the delivery of the Council's aims and priorities by engaging with the development of policy, monitoring performance and holding decision makers to account.

### 3. Details

#### 3.1 Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel

##### 3.1.1 CYPS Panel Meetings

- **10 March 2022– formal meeting** – along with the standing items (Election of the Vice-chairman for the 2021-22 municipal year, Children's Services Budget Monitor, Performance Monitoring and Work Plan) Panel members received updates on Family Support and Safeguarding, the Children's Improvement Focus Group, the terms of reference for the Accelerated Progress Plan and Care Leavers NEET CYPS working groups.

- **16 June 2022 – informal meeting** – decisions to be presented to future meeting for ratification – Election of the Vice-chairman for the 2022-23 municipal year, the Children’s Services Annual Directorate Statement, an update on CYPS Panel working groups, the Overview of findings from the joint CYPS/HOSP CAMHS working group, Resetting the Education Agenda for North Somerset, the Executive Member/ Assistant Director Education Partnerships Report – Community of Practice SEND, North Somerset’s Annual Children’s Social Care Complaints and Complements Report for 2020/21 Financial Year, the Adoption West Ofsted Report in addition to the standing items (Children’s Services Budget Monitor, Performance Monitoring and Work Plan).

### 3.1.2 Scrutiny Steering/Working/Focus Groups

#### 1. CYPS Front Door Working Group

- Focussing at a strategic level on scrutinising the delivery of the Children’s Improvement Plan.
- A meeting of the Focus Group took place on 7 April 2022, which looked at information received from the many partner agencies that use the Front Door. Presentation on a number of case studies showing the different pathways into the Front Door and beyond.
- A further meeting on 30 June 2022 will gather feedback from service users.

#### 2. CYPS Accelerated Progress Plan Working Group

- The working group has been set up to identify and recommend further effective delivery of the Council SEND Improvement plan in relation to the experiences of Parents and Carers.
- Meetings on 24 March 2022 and 1 June 2022 focussed on: a review of data on waiting times for ECHP’S, referrals to health specialists, and responses from North Somerset and other partners, as well as results of any available parents / carers surveys. There was also feedback from parents and children during a working group visit to Bourneville Primary School.
- A further meeting planned for 6 September 2022 will discuss student and parent responses gathered in a secondary school context.

#### 3. CYPS Care Leavers NEET working group

- The Working Group has been organised to identify and recommend sustainable and effective delivery and creation of opportunities for all care leavers in NSC who are NEET for the next 6-8 months and beyond.
- The meeting of 17 March 2022 looked at qualitative and benchmarking data for review by Members.
- The meeting of 28 April 2022 looked at further data.
- The meeting of 9 June 2022 looked at the barriers to mentoring by care leavers and some initiatives supporting NEET Care Leavers in North Somerset.
- The upcoming meeting of 14 July and 8 September 2022 will review evidence gathered to date in order to develop and propose an action plan to improve NEET outcomes with clear timescales over the coming 12 months.

#### **4. School Organisation Working Group**

- This Working Group looks at school operational changes, the school's capital programme and school place planning. The Steering Group met on three occasions in the 2021/22 school year.
- At the meeting on 10 September 2021 the Panel was provided with updates and asked questions about the Baytree School Expansion project, the recently completed delivery of Chestnut Park Primary and considered a draft paper about the proposed second school in the Haywood Village area
- The 15 December 2021 meeting concentrated on an Overview of the SEND Improvement Plan and outline plans for Nurture Groups/Hubs, it reviewed the responses to the updated Baytree Consultation Review in relation to this school's expansion and received, as part of its regular updates, progress on actions within the Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2021 – 2024
- The Working Group received an update on 18 January 2022 on the progress being made in the delivery of the Winterstoke Hundred Academy and Baytree Expansions, it reviewed and made recommendations in relation to the Term Date Consultation for the 2023/24 School Year and North Somerset's maintained schools School Admission Policies. The latter included considering the draft Community and Voluntary Controlled School Admission Arrangements 2023-24 and the North Somerset Coordinated Schemes 2023 - 24.
- Further meetings will be planned for the 2022/23 school year concentrating on further progress on actions within the Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2021 – 2024, the delivery of additional SEND places and the impact of the Local Plan on school place delivery in the future.

The Chairman would like to thank the members of the panel and officers for their efforts in supporting the work of the panel.

#### **3.2 Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel**

The need to face challenges brought by Covid has given the panel opportunities to question how and where we should meet. It's been quite a learning curve for everyone. Most councillors are now happily used to on-line gatherings and our screen briefing sessions have become constructively focussed on the business in hand. iPad technology, information storage and message retrieval continue to cause councillor dissatisfaction.

For those living some distance from the Town Hall there have been clear advantages in holding 'teams' meetings. However, whilst efficient, it is difficult to understand nuance, interpret body language, catch the eye or bend a colleague's ear, or even offer those occasional touches of humour which help conversational conviviality. Worst of all it has been impossible to welcome public participation in our deliberations. Perhaps we've spent too much time talking amongst ourselves?

We appear to be moving towards a hybrid working pattern: retaining the efficiency of 'teams' meetings for straightforward briefings but re-engaging one with another for the more complex sessions.

My thanks to the vice-chairman for his constant help, and support and to all colleagues for their high degree of participation in panel proceedings. Thanks also to Leo and Brent for managing their chairman and keeping him 'on track', and thanks to all officers for helping we amateurs understand the complexities of that which we are charged to scrutinise - especially the time-consuming and inevitably controversial Local Plan. Though officers advise with exemplary thoroughness I am concerned about the increasing workload which is being placed upon their shoulders

### 3.2.1 Place Panel Meetings

- **14 July 2021 – informal meeting** – the Panel considered the Local List Procedure, the 2021-22 Annual Place Directorate Statement, the month 12 Place budget review, a Local Plan update, a report on Inward Investment in North Somerset, and the Panel's Work Plan.
- **24 November 2021 – informal meeting** – the Panel considered reports on Rewilding and Great Lakes, the Library Strategy update, a Local Plan update, the Month 5 Place Budget Monitor, and the Panel's Work plan.
- **10 March 2022 – formal meeting** – the Panel formally ratified the election of the Vice-chairman for the 2021-22 municipal year, and considered reports on the Development Programme, a Place Finance update, and the Panel's Work Plan.

### 3.2.2 Briefings:

- Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – ongoing series of briefings since July 2020, held roughly every six weeks
- Marine Lake (briefings on 20th April and 28th May)
- A38 Major Road Network (MRN) – written briefing and input from Members on proposed scheme
- National Bus Strategy & (North Somerset) Bus Improvement Plan (Place-led all Member briefings 16th June and 7th October 2021, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022)
- Travel Plan SPD (briefing on 20th July with further briefing planned post public consultation)
- Parking Standards SPD (8th September)
- WECA briefing (meeting with WECA officers on 11th October to discuss current scrutiny arrangements and accession plans/progress)
- Article 4 (Heritage) Directions (briefing on 27th September)
- Clevedon Active Travel Area TRO 11APR22
- Ash dieback action plan 01APR22
- All-Member Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Proposals 28MAR22
- Adoption of the first buildings onto the Local (Heritage) List 26MAY22

### 3.2.3 Scrutiny Steering/Working/Focus Groups

#### 1. Joint Cladding Working Group with ASH Policy and Scrutiny Panel

- Set up following a recommendation from Council on 23 February 2021.

- The group met on 8 April and 30 November 2021, and was on hold while national legislation was under development. Updates on these are in the bullet points below:
- The Building Safety Act (2022) to make provision about the safety of people in or about buildings and the standard of buildings which fundamentally changes the approach to design, build and management of properties has been implemented. Multiple clauses to be implemented through secondary legislation, yet to be announced.
- The Fire Safety Act (2021) applies to buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises and puts beyond doubt that the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors fall within the scope of the Fire Safety Order (FSO) and requires responsible persons to ensure that these elements are included in their fire risk assessments, if they have not been covered already. The FSO is enforced by Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AFRS). Regulations have been introduced implementing the provisions and majority come into effect on 23 January 2023.

## **2. Local Plan Working Group**

- The working group to scrutinise and provide feedback on the Local Plan met four times in the last municipal year.
- These meetings focused on: 16 July 2021 – Sustainable Development; 16 August 2021 – Planning Policy for Rural Areas; 13 September 2021 – Broad Locations; 11 October 2021 – Appraisal of Opportunity Areas.
- Engagement at the meetings provided feedback to the development of the Local Plan.
- Further Place-led engagement with all Members is expected in September, with further engagement before the public consultation in the winter.

## **3. Transport and Highways subgroup**

- The standing group was set up to engage Members on the significant pieces of work taking place with a highways and transport theme.
- The group met on 1 December 2021 and discussed the Highways maintenance contract extension, and also gave Members the opportunity to provide feedback on the Highways Project Spreadsheet.

## **4. Waste Scrutiny Steering Group**

- This standing group was initiated as a successor to the CCO Panel subgroup once functions that fell under that Panel were moved to the Place Panel.
- The group met on 10 November 2021, and officers engaged Members on: the Waste Strategy update; the Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance contract update; a garden waste update; and the use of the online service to report issues around waste.

The Chairman would like to thank the Members of the panel and officers for their efforts in supporting the work of the panel.

## **4. Consultation**

The Panels undertake regular consultation with officers, Councillors, the Executive Members and relevant partners through working group and steering group monitoring and Panel reporting.

## **5. Financial Implications**

None specific

### **Costs**

None

### **Funding**

None

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

Policy and Scrutiny Panels operate within legislation and the Council's Constitution

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

Climate Emergency is included in the remit of the Partnerships and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel due to its council-wide responsibility

## **8. Risk Management**

N/A

## **9. Equality Implications**

N/A

## **10. Corporate Implications**

None

## **11. Options Considered**

None

### **Authors:**

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### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Papers:**

Policy and Scrutiny Panel agenda, reports and minutes

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