

## Draft Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

# Community and Corporate Organisation Policy & Scrutiny Panel

## Thursday 12 November 2020

Held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm Meeting concluded: 4.10 pm

### Councillors:

P Steve Bridger (Chairman)

P Stuart McQuillan (Vice-Chairman)

A Gill Bute

P James Clayton

P Mark Crosby

P John Ley-Morgan

P Terry Porter

P John Cato

P Peter Crew

P Wendy Griggs

A Robert Payne

A Stuart Treadaway

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

**Other Councillors in attendance:** None

**Officers in attendance:** Michèle Chesterman, Brent Cross, Simone Davey, Philippa Penney, Richard Penska, Howard Potheary, Mike Riggall, Beccy Scott, Nicola Webb (Corporate Services), Gemma Dando, John Flannigan, Cathy Lynch, Colin Russell, (Development and Environment)

### CCO Chairman's Welcome

09

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this virtual Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting.

He explained the procedures to be followed at the meeting and confirmed that proceedings would have the same standing and validity as if they had taken place at a physical meeting of the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting in the Town Hall.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to extend his thanks to Paul Morris, who had left his role of Head of Performance Improvement & HR and taken retirement. On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman wished Paul the very best for the future.

At the invitation of the Chairman a roll call was taken of the Panel members by Democratic Services for the benefit of those in attendance and members of the public watching the meeting online.

**CCO 10      Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Agenda item 3)**

None.

**CCO 11      Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2020 (Agenda item 4)**

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

**CCO 12      Domestic Abuse Update Report (Agenda item 6)**

The Community Safety Manager and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator presented the report. The Panel was provided with an update on the progress of the current domestic abuse strategy; the change of service provider in April 2020 and the work being undertaken to ensure readiness for the Domestic Abuse Bill due to become law in April 2021.

The Domestic Abuse Strategy (2020-2023) had been signed off by the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (DASG). Once finalised the priorities, timescales and leads needed to be agreed by the DASG. It would then be submitted to the Community Safety Partnership Board and both safeguarding boards would need to sign it off prior to it being published. The formalised action plan would be developed at the next DASG early in 2021.

Next Link had been appointed as the new provider for domestic abuse services in North Somerset with effect from 1 April 2020. Since taking over the contract extended eligibility criteria and support hours had been introduced. Members also noted changes to the referral process which had been well received by partner agencies. In May 2020 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) also moved to Next Link. Next Link had to manage increased demand in terms of referrals coming into their service and significantly increased complexity of referrals. It was felt that Next Link was providing an excellent service to victims and was working incredibly well with partnership agencies.

Moving on to the Domestic Abuse Bill, whilst still subject to change in its current form the Bill would create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse was not just physical violence, but could be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children would be explicitly recognised as victims if they witnessed abuse. Members noted that the Bill created the statutory appointment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner whose role was to represent the voice of victims and survivors, to raise public awareness of domestic abuse and instigate a wider mapping of services.

It was reported that the provisions in the Bill which directly involved the Council included placing a statutory duty on local authorities in England to

provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. Presently the level of refuge and support provided was left to individual authorities to determine. The Government's intention was to establish a standardised needs assessment through which authorities would determine the appropriate level of provision. The Government had suggested it would provide ring-fenced funding for this purpose. At this stage the needs assessment had not been made available and it was therefore not yet known as to whether North Somerset would be required to increase its current level of provision. Nor was it known how quickly authorities whose provision fell short of the level would be required to increase capacity to this level.

The Bill introduced a second statutory duty to convene a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to ensure appropriate strategic oversight, accountability and consistency in services delivered to victims. Local Authorities would have flexibility in utilising, expanding or amending existing boards or structures which could cover the remit of the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (DASG) was the nearest body to this in North Somerset and had been running since 2010.

In discussing the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPD) Members asked whether there were any concerns over the constitution of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group taking on the role of the DAPD in terms of diversity and inclusion, if any measures are being taken to broaden the membership of that group, and whether it was fit for purpose. The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator responded that this one of the strands of work being addressed in the next steps. Attendance of the DASG was being analysed over the last few meetings to identify any gaps. It was vital to ensure that meetings were inclusive of the needs of everyone in the community. It was noted that there were key agencies that had not been a part of the group that would be invited to attend in future. The aim was to retain the core membership and expand on that. The Community Safety Manager added that a new Chair had been appointed to the DASG (Chief Inspector/Commander, North Somerset) which had been an opportune time for a review.

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator summarised the next steps which included consultation with the existing Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) to review and amend current membership so that the group could take on the role of Local Partnership Board and be best placed to fulfil the remit of the new statutory duty; consultation with the DASG regarding how best to include the voices and views of survivors in decision making; consultation with the DASG regarding the training need within the agencies they represented with regards to the Domestic Abuse Bill; updating the terms of reference for the DASG to clarify the Board's role in supporting the local authority in meeting its duty through the provision of expert advice, data and information for the needs assessment, feeding into the development of domestic abuse strategy and reporting requirements, as supporting a joined-up approach amongst wider DA and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) areas.

It was acknowledged that the Authority was in a fairly good position at the moment and as prepared as possible - bearing in mind there were still some things outstanding, such as the standardised needs assessment template to support Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards in conducting their local assessments (with accompanying guidance clearly setting out what was expected); the standardised reporting format to support LAs in reporting back to Government on the delivery and outcomes of this new duty, and the finalised statutory guidance for Local Authorities underpinning this duty. However, Members noted that 1 April 2021 was not the date when local authorities needed to start delivering at this higher level of provision but to start the process of the needs assessment and put the strategy in place.

Members asked for a definition of MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) to which the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator responded that this was the multi-agency process by which risk was managed for victims who were at high risk of serious harm or murder, the most serious domestic abuse cases that required a multi-agency intervention to put in place safeguarding measures immediately to reduce risk.

In response to a question from a Member in relation to whether any discussions had taken place with stakeholders about the new provider in terms of research, questionnaires, etc., the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator replied that no formal research had been undertaken but partners had commented that they were benefitting from a professional and more streamlined referral process, which was easier to navigate. The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator acknowledged that research would be undertaken to ask the relevant questions of partner agencies to gain a better understanding of the feedback on the service being provided. The Community Safety Manager added that customer/service user feedback was usually built into the performance monitoring of the service. Some of that feedback from the survivors of domestic abuse who had been through the service from Next Link would be shared at a future Panel meeting.

Members expressed their appreciation to officers for the report and all the agencies involved. Members were keen to take on a more active and informed role as part of any monitoring group in the future. The Chairman thanked the Community Safety Manager and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator for the report and the excellent work being undertaken.

**Concluded:**

(1) that the Panel provide feedback on the ongoing preparation for the Domestic Abuse Bill;

(2) that the Panel receive feedback on the service provided by Next Link at a future Panel meeting.

## **CCO Climate Emergency Six Month Progress Report (Agenda Item 7)**

**12**

The Climate Emergency Project Manager presented the report. Members were informed that there were no decisions to be made but to consider the progress made to date against the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. The report provided specific progress on a few key activities related to the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. It also reported on the half-year update of the Council carbon footprint which it was felt was appropriate due to the significant changes made to working patterns in response to COVID-19. A full update report would be provided to Council in January 2021.

Members were aware that North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and part of this Motion included reporting to Council every six months on progress. In November 2019 the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan was published and in February 2020 the Corporate Plan 2020-24 was published with 'greener' as one of three high-level aims, meaning that climate change would be factored into all policy and strategy decisions going forwards.

Members' attention was drawn to the annex in the report which contained brief descriptions of progress against each item in the Action Plan. Members were encouraged to learn that progress had been made on almost all the items.

The Climate Emergency Project Manager reported that overall emissions from gas and electricity consumption between April and September 2020 compared with the same period 2019 had decreased by 23%. For fleet and vans there had been a reduction of about 54% in mileage; the distance recorded by staff car mileage has reduced by 8%; the estimated reduction of emissions from commuting was 80%. The total reduction of emissions for gas, electricity, and transport fuel was 29%. It was noted that as part of the fair share target carbon budget reduction the Council needed to reduce emissions by approximately 14% per year by 2020. Although it appeared that the Council was doing well this was unlikely to continue throughout the year particular as the figures quoted were for the summer period.

Members would be aware of questions over the last few months about working from home in relation to whether this would result in an increase or decrease in emissions. National and international research generally agreed that on average emissions were lower for home workers when commuting was factored in. The Climate Emergency Project Manager reported that this would be reviewed with staff if possible and some were being consulted to understand how their energy consumption has changed since they had started working from home.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan highlighted the leadership role that the Council needed to take across the area to encourage others to reduce their own carbon emissions. One of the best ways to do this was to ensure that Council employees were fully engaged with the strategy and that acting on the climate emergency was embedded into everything that the Council did. North Somerset Council was committed to becoming a carbon literate organisation. The definition of carbon literacy was an awareness of the

carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis. The Council had given the green light to employees to suggest and implement carbon reduction actions.

This process was started in October 2020 with a day of training facilitated by the Centre for Sustainable Energy. That was aimed at elected members and senior officers. This was the first course of its type to be run in the country and it had been adopted by the Carbon Literacy Project for use with other councils. Following on from this a carbon literacy training course was being rolled out for officers. It was envisioned that a similar course would be offered to new starters. As a direct result of the training the Chief Executive and Leader had both asked to be updated directly at least quarterly and to play a much more active role in climate emergency work. The first cohort of officers completed their training this week and left with inspiring ways of incorporating climate and environmental awareness into their roles which could not have happened if it was just initiated on a top down basis alone.

The Climate Emergency Project Manager referred to updated guidance for cycling infrastructure published in July 2020 which set out that cycling had to be placed at the heart of the transport network so that it was no longer to be treated as marginal or an after-thought or just a leisure activity.

Members were informed an Uphill Road North shared use path had been completed in the Spring just before lockdown which completed the Brean Down Way providing a traffic free route from Weston town centre for Weston College, Weston hospital, Broad Oak Secondary and Uphill Primary. The Portishead Marina Electric Vehicle charging hub was currently under construction and due to open in December 2020 and there were recent staff appointments to work with businesses, communities and schools to support active travel.

An Energy Efficiency Audit of 34 of the Council's buildings would be undertaken in the near future with the aim of providing recommendations on improvement to insulation, lighting and heating controls. The Council was working in conjunction with Bristol City Council who were managing this and also supporting some of North Somerset's Town and Parish councils to do the same. It was hoped to extend to schools shortly. There were some grants available for improvement to public buildings and also for homes (Green Home Grant scheme). The Council was in the process of applying for some funding to improve its buildings and also some support for lower income families to insulate their homes. It was intended to develop some zero carbon homes working with colleagues in the other West of England local authorities. The Council was also working with consultants on a shared project with B&NES and South Gloucestershire to assess the potential for renewable energy generation (heat and energy) across all three councils. This work should be completed in the Spring of 2021 and it would inform some of the next steps of the Local Plan and hopefully unlock some government funding for renewable projects.

Members were informed that the Climate Emergency web page had recently been updated with details of the strategy and action plan in addition to

useful information on climate actions for the public. The re-wilding and Green Infrastructure Strategy had also been included.

In discussing the carbon literacy project Members asked if this was something that the Council could engage town and parish councils with in addition to elected members, officers and employees. The Climate Emergency Project Manager responded that the Town and Parish councillors would have attended a slightly different version of the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) course that NSC elected members attended in October 2020. It was intended that this would be extended more widely in the future once the North Somerset training was embedded.

Members discussed energy consumption in Castlewood and the Climate Emergency Project Manager informed Members that an asset strategy was currently being undertaken. As buildings were not being used due to the COVID-19 pandemic questions were being asked in relation to how many buildings were required. Castlewood had been included in the energy efficiency audits. Members commented that there were sensors in Castlewood to activate the lights when there was no movement. Members attention was also drawn to the fact that there was an All Member Briefing on Assets and Accommodation Strategy on 2nd December 2020.

The Chairman thanked the Climate Emergency Project Manager for an excellent report. Members added their thanks and were pleased to see the progress and logical structure behind it and engagement of officers in the carbon literacy training. The Panel Members looked forward to hearing about future progress.

**Concluded:**

- (1) the Panel noted the progress with specific initiatives within the Climate Emergency Strategy an Action Plan;
- (2) the Panel noted the half-year update of council carbon footprint

**CCO Green Infrastructure Strategy (Agenda Item 8)**

**13**

The Community and Environment Services Manager presented the report. Members were informed that the Green Infrastructure Strategy would ultimately identify projects across North Somerset that would enhance the natural environment thereby contributing to addressing significant social and environmental issues such as the climate emergency, re-wilding, health and well-being and the economy. However, at this stage the draft strategy was being presented to Members to provide strategic direction ahead of a wider consultation with residents and other interested parties and organisations in North Somerset.

The Community Environment Service Manager requested feedback from Panel Members in relation to the consultation and in terms of making sure the objectives lined up correctly the way they were presented. It was considered vital that the consultation was as wide as possible. A workshop would be delivered for all the interested organisations in order to obtain their input.

Members were shown a series of slides mapping the green infrastructure to illustrate concept to actions. Members were informed how the green infrastructure had been organised; the five themes identified (water/blue GI, biodiversity and habitats, open space and access routes, food growing, heritage and landscapes). A range of electronically mapped data sets had been used to map these themes. The maps would be available for Members to access on line.

It was emphasised that the final document would contain a lot of data and proposals around actions. The data would provide robustness helping to support it for evidence for the Local Plan and also for future grant applications.

In relation to the workshop to be hosted in the near future the Community Environment Service Manager was asked to include North Somerset Bee Keepers' Association. It was noted that there was a considerable amount of work being done nationally and regionally in terms of pollinator diversity. The officer made a note of the contact and encouraged other Members to come forward with any other groups who should be engaged in the process.

In discussing the report and presentation Members' considered the maps helpful in understanding what green infrastructure was and putting the topic in context. Green infrastructure was considered to be an important for informing the Local Plan, habitat restoration as part of nature emergency, and also helping to inform future re-wilding work. It was felt important that communities were engaged with the strategy and took some ownership of the maps, which would be key to moving re-wilding and nature projects forward.

The Community and Environment Manager said he hoped that by the end of 2021 the Council will have completed its initial work around re-wilding and the whole nature recovery network. Work was being undertaken to ensure that the public consultation reached as many key audiences as possible and that it was readable and understandable. Any organisation could have access to the data to pick out what was important for them. The data was potentially of great advantage to North Somerset. If all the information and plans could be contained in one place the Council would also be better placed to take advantage of government grant funding which was often announced at short notice.

Members asked for the mapping data to be incorporated into the public consultation. In addition, a request was made to for a one-pager describing the hierarchy of all the related documents and strategies. While the strategy itself was quite a large document, maps and other data could bring it to life. It was felt that would lead to better engagement.

The Chairman thanked the Community and Environment Services Manager and confirmed that the Panel supported the recommendations in the report.

### **Concluded:**

(1) that the Panel support the publication of a draft Green Infrastructure Strategy for public consultation based on the concepts described in the Executive Summary (Appendix A);



(2) that the Panel support the definition of green infrastructure in the Strategy;

(3) that the Panel support the eight key objectives described in the strategy;

## **CCO Ash Dieback Disease Report (Agenda Item 9)**

**14**

The Community and Environment Service Manager presented the report on Ash Dieback Disease. Members were informed that Ash Dieback Disease was a fungal pathogen that affected all types of ash trees. It was first noticed in Europe in the 1990s. The disease spread from Asia and there was little genetic resistance against it in the European Ash. The first official record for the disease being in the UK was 2012 but it is likely that it had been around longer (probably from 2004).

The Community and Environment Services Manager added that Ash Dieback killed trees by preventing water from being transmitted through the tree. The lack of water and nutrients moving around the tree caused the branches to die. The infected tree became weaker, with no energy reserves remaining and became susceptible to secondary root killing pathogens such as Honey Fungus. The disease caused the tree to become brittle lose branches and to die. In some cases, the tree died quickly while other trees died over several years.

Members were made aware that tree surgeons would not climb trees that were more than 40% dead in the crown due to safety concerns and the stability of the tree. There were many ash trees next to roadways and where people lived and worked and in order to maintain public safety it was necessary to remove these trees.

An analysis of existing data revealed that North Somerset Council managed around 80,000 ash trees - it being one of the most common trees. These ranged in size from saplings to large trees. The trees were common in the hedgerows and parks and made up a large part of the woodlands. It was important not to rely on that figure of 80,000 as the number was based on sampling but the Community and Environment Service Manager emphasised to Members that it was a large number of trees and that Ash Dieback was already in the district and some trees had already been felled. A programme of removals through the winter had been identified from the summer survey. Whilst Ash Dieback was not on a massive scale in North Somerset it was starting to be seen hence it was important to bring to Members' attention what the plan was going forwards.

The Community and Environment Services Manager outlined the environmental costs of Ash Dieback. There would be significant landscape changes as trees died and were removed. There would be losses to ecosystems services – reductions in air quality, potential for increased flooding, biodiversity losses, increased noise levels and a loss of screening. There would be a risk to protected species through a loss of habitat, such as bats; a loss of carbon storage and sequestration and a decline or extinction of species that were largely or entirely dependent on ash trees.

It was reported that there was no cure for Ash Dieback disease. In discussing how many trees were resistant the Council was working on the premise that 90% of trees would not be resistant and it might be as much as 95%. Other surveys suggested 80%. Some of the district's trees would survive. One of the problems was that if public safety was at risk (for example next to a highway) a healthy ash tree may have to be removed. Members were informed a survey would be carried out in summer 2021 to identify the number of trees and the extent of the problem and at that time identify ownership. An Ash Dieback plan would be developed initiated by the Tree Council. Included in the Ash Dieback Plan would be a communication strategy and to work with neighbouring landowners. From summer 2021 it was anticipated there would be a plan in place and an estimate of the financial costs and impacts on the landscape of the disease. It would be a machine intensive approach. It would be necessary to close roads and there was going to be an impact on residents when trees were felled in their neighbourhood.

Members noted that Torbay, adopting the Tree Council's toolkit, had launched a campaign entitled 'My Tree, My Responsibility' and were asking owners of trees to look out for the signs of the disease and then either flag to the Council or take action themselves. The Community and Environment Services Manager agreed that this was the kind of approach that was being considered.

In discussing the report Members felt it was vital that when North Somerset removed some of the large ash trees there was information provided to passers-by in relation to why the trees were being felled (i.e. for safety reasons and because the tree was diseased) and not just communication related to the dangers or road closures. Also, there were many smaller landowners who had ash trees on their land. Members asked if there could be communication on how to spot the virus and how to assess whether a tree was healthy or not as opposed to leaving it to an individual to wonder whether an ash tree was contaminated or dying.

Members discussed the possibility of some early awareness raising with landowners and residents stating that there was a problem and a chance that an apparently healthy tree might have to be removed. Members asked if there was a particular type of tree that was used to replace the felled ash tree. The response was that there were many choices for a replacement such as oak, lime, maple, sycamore. For urban environments disease resistant elms might be used.

The Chairman thanked the Community and Environment Manager for bringing this issue to the attention of the Panel. Panel members supported the plan for the strategy and any subsequent action and had a keen interest in the communications plans in relation to Ash Dieback Disease.

**Concluded:**

(1) that the Panel support the need to carry out a survey of ash trees across North Somerset in the summer of 2021 to establish the extent of the problem thereby enabling more detailed reports to follow.

(2) that the Panel support the subsequent creation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan (as recommended by the Tree Council).

**CCO 15 Face to Face (F2F) Town Hall, Gateway (Agenda Item 10)**

The Customer and Digital Services Manager presented the report. Members noted that the gateway reception and library closed in 2020 as a result of lockdown and re-opened on 7 September 2020 on an appointment only basis. Members were informed that the impact of COVID-19 had instigated a re-think of the service offered now and for the future. There had been an inevitable channel shift away from face-to-face March, and it had been found that customers and residents had to find and work with alternative solutions that they may have not tried before.

Reduced hours being offered for appointments on reception, together with a triage system in the contact centres, had significantly reduced demand. In September 2020 there were 11 appointments compared with almost 3,000 in September 2019. Most of the enquiries in September (8) were for support in completing a Blue Badge application. In October 2020 there were 7 appointments all in connection with Blue Badge applications. Since the second lockdown in November 2020 there had been no appointments and it was reported as being very quiet although staff were on standby to provide advice if required.

Since putting in place the reduced arrangement, the service had not received any formal complaints about the face to face provision. Customers at the door had been very understanding of the need to move away from face to face in the current environment, and most issues were dealt with successfully over the phone.

By default there had been the development of the channel shift strategy. There was an idea to try and reduce face to face contact as it the most expensive channel and only have face to face available for those who really need it. This had created an opportunity to test that properly. In terms of the future it was proposed to offer an appointment only service with members of the public being asked to call in. The calls would be triaged in through the contact centres who were the experts on those areas. Then if the issue could not be dealt with via the telephone, then arrangements would be made for them to come in and see someone who was experienced in that area.

It was recognised that Blue Badge applications were an issue in particular as these made up the majority of appointments. After discussions with libraries they had confirmed a willingness to take on that service which would be an improvement as people would not have to travel into Weston but could go to any library to receive support with their application.

Talks had also taken place with colleagues in Housing and Licensing who were also using the gateway for face to face meetings. All of their appointments were now carried out over the phone and they had encountered no issues with this system. They had acknowledged, however, if issues could not be solved over the phone they would offer face to face.

The other issue highlighted to Members in terms of the Gateway was the complexity of managing the space. Historically it had been a very difficult space to manage. There had been issues with customers being warned, banned and vandalism had occurred. Two security guards were in place to secure the safety of staff and customers. Despite the complexity of managing the space, however, it was vital to ensure that those people who needed to be seen face could be seen.

In response to a question in relation to whether there were Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings related to this the Customer and Digital Services Manager responded that £100k savings needed to be found in customer services and the channel shift would go a long way towards achieving that.

The Customer and Digital Services Manager opened the discussion asking for Member's views on the proposed channel shift away from face to face. Members noted that the pandemic had accelerated the channel shift and that the changes were already in flow. It was felt there was a delicate balance between finding savings and customer support and experience. Members agreed there had been a dramatic drop in numbers using customer services but when normality returned suggested there was chance that people would want to go back to face to face services again and that there was a risk if Members made a decision based on numbers of people accessing a service during a pandemic. Members felt as much as everyone had to use online services out of necessity people would come out of the pandemic feeling that they had really missed social contact with human beings.

Members accepted the need to make financial savings and also that if there was an opportunity it should be investigated but also stressed the need to ensure that any decision was managed carefully so as not to be viewed purely as an exercise to save money. Whatever decision was made it was crucial to ensure that the Council's vision of openness and transparency was upheld. The opportunity to adopt a more federal system was discussed with appointments for the public at other locations such as rural locations where there were community facilities could resolve the issue of the front door at the Town Hall. Members of the public would have the opportunity to book an appointment at a community hub near them at a time to suit them.

Members discussed the use of libraries and community hubs in terms of boosting support for Customer Connect. If people visited their local library or community hub not only could they deal with the things they needed to like applications, but there are people on hand to offer support and advice. The use of community hubs was felt to be the way forward – saving money and ensuring those residents living outside the Town Hall did not have to travel but instead access services close to home.

### **Concluded:**

(1) the Panel noted the review the information offered regarding proposals around the future of face to face in the Town Hall gateway.

(2) that the Panel form a small working group to discuss and monitor the issues.

## CCO Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 11)

16

The Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager presented the Work Plan. It was noted that this was the first time that the Panel had seen the new. The aim was to develop a Work Plan which was forward thinking and forward looking to enable Panel Members to be able to see what was on the horizon and engage in it more readily.

The Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager referred to the introduction of Section 3 which referred to Panel Member activity between the formal Panel meetings thus providing an insight for the public into the work of the Panel. This included details of briefings, workshops and informal panel meetings and allowed the opportunity for it to be seen by the public and members. It was also felt that introducing a Section 2 (proposed projects) gave members time to think about things they might want to look at in the future.

Another consideration for the development of the new format was the issue of consistency across the panels. Over time each panel had evolved its own plan but it meant that particularly from the public's point of view it was quite difficult to look at one plan and get a grasp of the Panel's activities in relation to another panel.

Members were provided with updates on the following:

- **Waste Scrutiny Steering Group** – meeting most weeks in relation to the ending of the Biffa contract and the establishment of the Local Authority Trading Company.
- **All Member Briefing Strategic Asset and Accommodation Plan** – 2 December 2020
- **Library Strategy – Working Group Meeting 16 November 2020** – An important piece of work as libraries come under pressure to be seen as more of a community hub. A request was made for additional members of the Panel to join the group.
- **ICT Scrutiny Steering Group** - All but one Member out of half a dozen who were encountering issues had now been able to access Council meetings online but this was an issue that could not be resolved by IT as it was in relation to the infrastructure at the individual member's home.
- **Community Safety – All Member Session on Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)** – was well received and go out to consultation for 28 days. It was hoped to have result of that consultation just before Christmas so that a recommendation could be made to the Executive to publish them.
- **Council's Budget Engagement Plan** – The Chairman encouraged all Panel members become engaged in the Council's Budget Engagement Plan.

The Chairman thanked the Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager for the amount of work put into the Plan. It was a deceptively huge piece of work

that had to be compiled but was incredibly important in terms of helping the public to see what was going and provided Panel Members with a valuable oversight.

Members were asked for any observations on the Work Plan. It was noted that the Panel had been incredibly busy since the July meeting which was a particularly important message in the current climate.

**Concluded:**

- (1) that the Panel receive and comment on the Work Plan.
- (2) that Panel members interested in joining the Library Strategy Working Group contact the Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager.

---

Chairman

---