

Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Date: Monday, 9th May, 2022

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

Councillors: Karen Warrington, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Andrew Furse, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Hal MacFie, Alastair Singleton and Sally Davis

Panel members – there will be a pre-meeting at 3.30pm



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NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. **Recording at Meetings:-**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Some of our meetings are webcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. If you would prefer not to be filmed for the webcast, please make yourself known to the camera operators.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we require the consent of parents or guardians before filming children or young people. For more information, please speak to the camera operator.

The Council will broadcast the images and sound live via the internet www.bathnes.gov.uk/webcast An archived recording of the proceedings will also be available for viewing after the meeting. The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group.

Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are signposted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

6. **Supplementary information for meetings**

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Monday, 9th May, 2022

at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

- (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
- (b) The nature of their interest.
- (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** *or* **an other interest**, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN
6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 12)
8. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will update the Panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions on the update provided.

9. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCESS

There will be a presentation on this item at the meeting.

10. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

There will be a presentation on this item at the meeting.

11. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 13 - 16)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel. Any suggestions for further items or amendments to the current programme will be logged and scheduled in consultation with the Panel's Chair and supporting officers.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Michaela Gay who can be contacted on michaela_gay@bathnes.gov.uk, 01225 394411.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Thursday, 21st April, 2022

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Warrington, Winston Duguid, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Alastair Singleton, Sally Davis, Mark Roper (in place of Mark Elliott) and Duncan Hounsell (in place of Andrew Furse)

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Hal MacFie

86 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

87 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

88 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Elliott sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Roper.

Councillor Furse sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Hounsell.

Councillor MacFie sent his apologies.

89 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

90 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

91 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Councillor Warrington explained that as Chair she would allow Bob Goodman to make a statement to the Panel. Bob Goodman made a statement regarding the Commercial Estate.

92 MINUTES - 28TH MARCH 2022

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

93 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Panel received an update from Councillor Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources:

Finance

- The finance team are currently working on the end of year outturn which should be ready in a few weeks.

Economic Development

- There will be a member briefing on the launch, regarding the North of the City.
- There has been continued engagement with other landlords which has been positive and effective.
- Keynsham High Street is at the final snagging stage.
- Some funding bids from WECA have been approved including a bid for the Fashion Museum. Four local high street project bids have been approved as well as the first phase of the Riverline funding.
- York Street resurfacing will be finished in a few weeks.
- Somer Valley Enterprise Zone options are being worked through.

Panel Members asked the following questions and raised the following points:

Councillor Hughes asked about the outstanding issues on the Somer Valley design. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that we are not completely there yet but that the last meeting was positive.

Councillor Duguid asked if any major changes were expected in the outturn report. The Cabinet Member stated that the position in February was about right. The over/underspend in Children/Adult Services are balancing each other out at the moment. Councillor Warrington asked what percentage of the budget this represented, the Cabinet Member stated that it was in the range of 78-82%.

Councillor Duguid stated that the Panel will be looking at the Risk Register in June and urged the Cabinet Member to be mindful regarding cyber-attacks. The Cabinet Member explained that there were additional resources in the budget regarding IT resilience .

94 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3 REVIEW

The Chair invited Steve Harman, Head of Corporate Governance and Business Insight, to introduce the report. He explained that when he reported to the Panel in Autumn 2021, there had been around 260 KPI's which had now been whittled down to 22. These are contained in a quarterly report to Cabinet.

Panel Members raised the following points and asked the following questions

Councillor Singleton stated that it was great to see the KPI programme coming along and asked if Panel members could see the 260 KPI's so that they could have some input and help shape the basket. He stated that the system needs to be robust and stand up to scrutiny. The officer explained that he would send the KPI's on but had not brought this to the Panel meeting as it would take too much time. He explained that officers work with the relevant Cabinet Members on this.

Councillor Hodge asked the following questions (*officer responses shown in italics*):

- The access along the bottom of the document could be emphasized. *The officer explained that this aspect is emphasized more when the system is viewed live.*
- Regarding the reablement service – the figures for 2018-21 are shown, there is a sudden drop away from the target recently, can you explain.
- Regarding the Adult Safeguarding 20% of enquiries, the risk was not reduced. What does this mean. *Inquiries will be made to the relevant officer on the questions above and Panel members informed.*

Councillor Duguid commented that some dates show 31st December 2021 and other dates are from 2020 – does this mean management are looking at old data. The officer explained that some KPI's have annual indicators, so they are only collected once a year. Where possible we try to use quarterly or monthly figures.

Councillor Davis commented that children's EHCPs are going up but how does this compare with those wishing to be assessed. The officer explained that he would ask the relevant officer about this and inform the Panel member.

Councillor Hounsell stated that it was important that all data available is accessible to the Panel. He commented that a small number of Council's are in special measures and in a bad financial state, the point of the Scrutiny Panel is that this does not happen here. Clear and independent scrutiny is important. The officer stated that Directors, Head of Service and Cabinet Members are updated regularly so there is confidence that there will not be any surprises. The recent Ofsted report in Children's Services praised the data.

Councillor Hughes asked if the statistics break down into 'Bath' and 'North East Somerset'. The officer explained that most are at BANES level but some are broken down.

Councillor Hodge asked about the Department of Transport indicator and how the average was arrived at. The officer stated that he will check and inform the Panel members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Panel note the performance of the Council against its basket of Strategic Performance Indicators and gave feedback on this.

95 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ESTATE

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources, Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the item, he stated that there is a long history regarding the Commercial Estate and not always a happy one. He stated that there is a need for regular inspection in this area which has not always been done when the Council

Administration at the time had decided to disinvest. There has recently been an independent review which was reported to this Panel, the recommendations were taken on and actioned. If we want a functioning Commercial Estate, we have to maintain and invest in it. Market conditions are tough. He stated that the public statement was fundamentally incorrect.

The Chair invited Simon Martin, Director of Regeneration and Housing and Richard Long, Head of Commercial Estate, to give a presentation to the Panel which covered the following:

- Commercial Property Update
- The starting position
- Commercial Estate
- Finance Functions
- Property Review Project – Governance Structure
- Commercial Market Outlook
- Rent Expectations
- Immediate Priorities
- New Letting achieved for 2021/22
- Commercial Estate Arrears
- BANES whole estate rent arrears position at 4th April 2022
- Commercial Estate Priorities – next 12 months
- Time scales/the year ahead – Commercial Estate
- Risks to the Retail Structure and Commercial Estate

Panel Members raised the following points and asked the following questions

Councillor Singleton asked how much of the nearly £1m of previous tenant debt will be bad debt. The officer explained that the Income Recovery Team are constantly reviewing this situation, some of the debt is from companies that no longer exist.

Councillor Hughes asked about the decline before Covid and the reasons for this. The officer explained that this was mainly in connection to the retail sector – this was already in decline due to changing trends such as the emergence of online shopping.

Councillor Hughes asked about the average annual rent for new lettings. The officer explained that it is hard to give an average. He added that most of the 32 new lettings are in Milsom Street. He stated that some units can be £5k per year in different areas of the authority. Responding to a query from Councillor Hughes about tenants seeking for reduced rents, the officer agreed that this may be the case.

Councillor Hughes stated that there had been a lot of action based on the 22-page independent report – he asked how confident the officers are in the recommendations and why was this not addressed before. The officer explained that the main areas of challenge in the report were the areas that are being restructured. He further explained that the main benefits of the report were that some basic foundations that have now been put in place.

Councillor Hodge asked what is the nature of the consultation and what is involved in each stage. The officer explained that the consultation is with staff in two teams regarding the reorganisation of resources.

Councillor Hodge asked about risks in terms of team capacity and recruitment. The officer explained that there is strong competition for surveyors, and we need to remain competitive as an employer and succession planning is also important.

Councillor Duguid asked about the impact of inflation. The officer explained that we will see an impact. We need to retain engagement with tenants so we can spot problems. There has been some change to the structure of the leases.

The officer explained that the Property Hub has opened in the city centre which means a more accessible and visible landlord. We are looking at investment in the city as a destination experience which also supports retail eg. Great Bath Feast.

Councillor Duguid asked about the Post Office, the level of service means people are not attracted into the city for this purpose. The officer explained that this is a leased provision, a sub-let within a commercial setting. It is difficult to influence a commercial operation although we could do some intelligence on the lease break.

Councillor Warrington stated that, sadly, some companies may fail – is there flexibility over leases for pop-ups to help with cash flow. The officer responded that this will continue and commented that sometimes pop-up shops have allowed businesses to get a toe hold into the market. The officer stated that he could provide the monitoring results to Panel members (regarding short term tenants converting to long term).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Panel note the presentation.

96 **ADL BUSINESS PLAN**

The Panel, having been satisfied that the public interest would be better served by not disclosing relevant information, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, **RESOLVED** that the public shall be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business and the reporting of the meeting be prevented under Section 100A(5A), because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended.

97 **PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel noted the future workplan

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or, Democratic Services . A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website.

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
9TH MAY 2022				
9 May 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Customer Contact Strategy	Amanda George	Director of People and Policy
9 May 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Customer Complaints Process	David Langman Tel: 01225 477013	Director of People and Policy
11TH JULY 2022				
11 Jul 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Emerging Digital Data	Jeff Wring Tel: 01225 477323	Chief Operating Officer
11 Jul 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Equality Improvement Plan	Louise Murphy	Director of People and Policy
11 Jul 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Updated Corporate Risk Register	Jeff Wring Tel: 01225 477323	Chief Operating Officer

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
11 Jul 2022	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Procurement Policy Annual Update	Richard Howroyd Tel: 01225 477334	Chief Finance Officer (S151)
26TH SEPTEMBER 2022				
28TH NOVEMBER 2022				
ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED				
Page 13	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Parish Charter	Dave Dixon	Director of People and Policy
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

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