

North Northamptonshire Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At 7:00 pm on Thursday 28th January 2021

Held as a virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: -

Shadow Members

Councillor M Pengelly (Chair)
Councillor H Harrison
Councillor A Davies
Councillor J Hakewill
Councillor P McEwan

Councillor C Brown
Councillor L Lawman
Councillor G Titcombe
Councillor A Lee
Councillor A Mercer

Officers

J Gotts – Director of Finance
A Wylie – Monitoring Officer
P Goult – North Northamptonshire
Democratic Services
M Dickinson – Kettering BC
M Hammond – Kettering BC

L Hyde – Director of Transformation
G Hammons – East Northants Council
B Smith – North Northamptonshire
Democratic Services
S Darcy – BC Wellingborough
D Watts – Director of Adult Services

Also in attendance: - D Lewis-Creser, D Dell, E Fedorowycz, M Lyman, J Padwick & A Holland.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Perry.

2. Notifications to address the meeting

The committee noted that five members of the public had requested to address Committee on the Climate Change Group agenda item, one on the Blueprint Group agenda item and one on the Budget Group agenda item.

3. Members' Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any matters of interest on items to be discussed during the meeting. No declarations were made.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2020 had been circulated. It was noted that Councillor Henley was in attendance and this had not been recorded in the list of attendees. The apologies of both Councillor Harrison and Councillor Brown had been submitted prior to the meeting by email and needed to be recorded.

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th December 2020 (as amended) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Chair's Announcements

Councillor Pengelly (Chair) thanked all officers and Members involved in the work of the Task and Finish Groups. It was noted that demands on officer time were great and it was appreciated that officers had been able to support the work of the Groups.

6. Task and Finish Group Updates

6.1 Climate Change

Mr Dell addressed the Committee. Mr Dell welcomed the work of the Group to date. He noted that there had been a number of public submissions and that the deadline date for submissions had been extended, this was welcome. Mr Dell hoped that there would be wider notification of this through the Authority's Communication Team. Mr Dell also noted in the report that the Group had struggled to obtain testimony from subject matter experts. Mr Dell reminded the Committee that there were a number of local subject matter experts, whose expertise could be utilised. In conclusion, Mr Dell hoped that the Group engaged as many people as possible when discussing the improvements to transport infrastructure and built on local initiatives as recently implemented by Kettering BC.

Mr Lewis-Creser addressed the Committee. Mr Lewis-Creser stressed the importance of ensuring that there were convenient routes planned-in for both pedestrians and cyclists. It was important that there was connectivity constructed between towns and villages, such as improved cycleways which were safe to use by the public.

Ms. Fedorowycz addressed the Committee. Ms. Fedorowycz welcomed the work and investigation conducted by the Group to date. Ms. Fedorowycz noted there were obviously some good discussions being held by the Group across the various topic headings and suggested that the profile of the Group's work could be enhanced by ensuring that one action point was agreed and progressed from each Group meeting. It may be a relatively minor action but would ensure that the wider public could see some action was being undertaken. Examples were provided such as resurfacing of cycleways, filling in potholes, planting trees etc. In relation to tree planting, Ms. Fedorowycz reminded Members that there were a number of community volunteers willing to assist with tree planting, if land was made available. Grants for tree planting were available, but land needed to be identified and permission granted.

Mr Lyman addressed the Committee. Mr Lyman highlighted the important role local businesses had in tackling the Climate Emergency. It was important that local businesses were encouraged to tackle the problems of climate change by ensuring sustainability, reduction of waste and working towards operating in a carbon neutral manner. Mr Lyman suggested that the Authority could offer incentives to local businesses to reduce carbon waste and utilise renewable energy sources. Incentives for those businesses achieving targets could be given, and the Authority could advertise and promote good practise, possibly through a ratings scheme. In addition, the Authority could sanction bad practise and penalise those businesses who were not working towards reducing their carbon footprint. Mr Lyman felt that there was an important role for the Authority in working with local businesses on this issue.

Mr Padwick addressed the Committee. Mr Padwick welcomed the extension of time for public submissions to the Group. It was important that as many members of the public could contribute. Mr Padwick hoped that the Group were considering best practise from other local authorities. He noted that only Daventry DC were acknowledged on the LGA Climate Emergency Hub Group and questioned why local councils were not recognised. Mr Padwick hoped that the work of the Group would feed-in to local planning strategy, to ensure the commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency was considered. Mr Padwick also championed the creation of local citizen assemblies or groups to work with the Authority towards tackling the issues around climate change. In conclusion, Mr Padwick reminded Members that as an outcome of the pandemic, and the creation of the unitary council, there was an opportunity to look at things anew and adopt new practises to assist in tackling climate change.

The Chair thanked all the public speakers for their contributions.

(All public speakers were removed from the virtual meeting at this point).

Councillor L Lawman, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the report. Councillor Lawman welcomed the contribution from the public and was pleased that there had been an extension to the public consultation. There had already been a number of submissions and hopefully more would be received for consideration by the Group.

The report set out that the Group were part way through their evidence gathering and consideration of the issues inherent in devising a climate change strategy, and they needed more time to complete the task.

A revised timetable was set out for the Committee's consideration. The report also summarised the work that has been done so far and proposed an outline shape for the strategy itself.

The Climate Change Task and Finish Group was established at the October meeting of the committee, at the request of the Shadow Executive. It comprised 8 members and was chaired by Cllr Lora Lawman. It had met seven times so far. It had been supported by a small team of officers drawn from sovereign councils and the Joint Planning Unit and had drawn on expertise within the local government family to provide evidence.

The original intention was that it would report back to this meeting with a draft strategy for the committee to consider and which, if agreed, could be sent onto the Executive Committee and subsequently for public consultation.

Since October, changes had been made to the overall meetings timetable, to better accommodate the budget consultation process, and this meant that the earliest opportunity for the strategy to be submitted to the Executive Committee would be 4th March, which, in turn, meant it was unlikely that any consultation could sensibly be launched before purdah comes into effect on the 24th March 2021.

More critically however, the Task and Finish Group had found the task greater than anticipated. The subject areas covered have elicited more discussion and taken more time than planned, so not all subject areas had been covered at this time. Furthermore, it had proven difficult to secure subject matter expert time to attend meetings, which had further slowed down progress. In January, the twin impacts of lockdown and local flooding had also taken officer and subject expert time away from evidence provision.

The Group had therefore agreed to seek further time to complete their work. Further meetings had been timetabled in for 4th February and 18th February, with a final session after that to agree the wording of the strategy. If the Committee was happy to agree this timetable, then a report to the Committee on the 11th March 2021 could be achieved.

Councillor Hakewill also welcomed the public contributions. Councillor Hakewill agreed that the Authority should be proactive in planting more trees. He welcomed the idea of working with local businesses to promote "green" commercial practises. Councillor Hakewill agreed that the new council through its planning procedures should be enforcing and/or encouraging an eco-friendlier approach. Councillor Hakewill also promoted the idea that the new council should establish an advisory body to assist in promoting measures to tackle climate change.

Councillor Titcombe highlighted the role that the new council could have in tackling problems of flooding, and development on flood plains. Councillor Mercer agreed that development on flood plains needed to be addressed, and the new council should work with relevant agencies to ensure that the risk of flooding was minimised.

It was noted by the Committee that Government support was required on some issues, and the new council should seek to work with local representatives to highlight the issues and seek changes where required e.g., through the planning process.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the new timetable be agreed with a final report due to be submitted to the Committee on 11th March 2021 and to the Shadow Executive Committee on the 25th March 2021; and
- (ii) To note the progress made to date and the likely shape of the strategy.

6.2 Blueprint

Mr Padwick addressed the Committee. Mr Padwick queried how the new council would perform its role as the local Planning Authority. He wondered whether the governance would include local planning committees, or that there would be just one covering the whole area. Mr Padwick felt that it was important that local people could easily engage in the planning process and that local knowledge and opinions considered.

The Chair thanked Mr Padwick for his contribution.

(Mr Padwick was removed from the virtual meeting at this point).

Councillor Harrison (Chair of the Task and Finish Group) introduced the report and the key areas highlighted by the Group for consideration by the Shadow Executive Committee. Councillor Harrison thanked the other Members on the Group for their contributions.

This committee established the Blueprint Task and Finish Group, to give members insight and assurance that the blueprint agreed by the Shadow Executive was realistic, was being implemented effectively, and to make any proposals it saw fit to recommend changes to any part of the blueprint or any aspect of the implementation stage. The Group's membership comprised Cllr Harrison as chair, and Cllrs Henley, McEwan, Perry, and Rowley. Other members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also entitled to attend as observers.

The Group met four times, initially to agree its work programme, and then to work through three subject matters it had selected for detailed review. These subject matters were: Housing standards in the public and private sector, Waste collection and disposal - harmonisation and integration, and Public Health and how it was enabled to influence all aspects of the work of the new council. These service areas were selected because they were thought to affect most of the population in North Northamptonshire and would be amongst the first to raise public concerns should transition not go well.

Subject matter experts from existing councils made presentations in each instance and the following conclusions are drawn from the debate which followed each set of presentations. The Task and Finish Group were grateful to those officers who prepared and gave presentations to the group, at a time when there was pressing business for their teams to attend to.

Findings and Conclusions

In broad terms, the Task and Finish Group were assured that good progress had been made across all three subject areas, and that the aspirations as set out in the blueprint were being reflected in the work underway by the cross-authority teams that had been dealing with both aggregation and disaggregation challenges. There was good evidence that officers were working well together and problem solving. The fact that the Shadow Executive had now

received reports on service readiness and harmonisation in all three of the subject matters selected was further proof that joint working had been harmonious and productive.

One of the blueprint principles was that there should be no reduction in service on Day One of the new authority and the Task and Finish Group found no evidence that this was a risk; indeed, opportunities had been taken to improve service delivery, by “levelling up”, where this could be done without additional costs.

Housing Standards

The Group looked at standards both in the private sector and in Council housing. Whilst it was noted that the blueprint talked about a fallback position of ensuring all services on the 1st April would be ‘at least as good as’ what went before, the new Council should aspire to levelling up in the first instance and improvements in service delivery over time. It was noted that some of this levelling up was already intended as part of the work to harmonise policies across the area.

The Group’s main conclusions were: -

- 1. Emphasis needed to be placed on integrated working across services, that is between housing and other functions of the Council, but in particular on making collaborative connections with Public Health; as an example, the delivery of better insulation in people’s homes reduced health inequalities and, in saving money for individuals, reduced poverty as well.*
- 2. There is a lack of baseline data for council owned properties on their energy efficiency performance, because this has only been collected when a house becomes vacant; the new Council should prioritise developing baseline data for all its stock.*
- 3. The delivery of future capital programmes for council housing should rely on up to data about housing standards to identify priority areas for investment, and some of this data was currently lacking.*
- 4. The Council can help drive up standards across the whole of the area and within all sectors, by investing in, or partnering to deliver, innovative schemes which deliver more energy efficient, cheaper to run, and adaptable homes, which model what is possible and encourages developers to do the same.*
- 5. Such projects already existed and the learning from them and the application of features should be more widely disseminated and used in the design of new publicly owned homes as well as existing stock.*
- 6. High speed electric charging points should be built into new public housing developments as a matter of course. The 2035 target for the ending of gas central heating networks will also put pressure on the Councils’ capital expenditure plans which needed early attention as part of an overall approach to energy management in its stock.*
- 7. The Council should extend and deepen its communications about energy efficiency to its residents and tenants and landlords.*
- 8. The continued demand for disabled facilities grants (DFGs) and the delays in addressing referrals was a system wide problem and should be addressed by the new Council as a priority. It was noted that £1 investment in DFGs produced a £7 saving on average in health and social care costs.*

Waste

Members were sighted on the proposals due to be taken to the Shadow Executive Committee on waste collection harmonisation and on the other “moving parts” within the waste service area, notably, the need to harmonise green waste charging, extend food waste collection, to replace the current contract for collection in Wellingborough when it expired in February 2022, and the long-term shortfall in waste disposal capacity for the county. The contracts for household waste centres expired in 2025. Members noted that final budgets had not yet been allocated to this service area and expressed concern that the service was unsighted on what its’ exact budget would be; but assured that this was in hand. Members had also noted that the pandemic had created potentially long-term changes in the profile of waste collected, with more food and other recyclates being collected from homes. At the same time, the value of recyclates in the market had declined as volume had increased, and the disposal costs of recyclates was now closer to the disposal costs for residual waste. Finally, it was noted that recycling credits would cease to exist when the unitary council was in being.

The main conclusions were: -

- 1. That the principal risk for the new Council was the lack of waste infrastructure and there was a critical need to develop plans, probably as joint ventures with West Northamptonshire and others, to ensure long term and sustainable provision was developed soon.*
- 2. The proposed harmonisation of waste collection practices was supported, with its objectives of reducing residual waste, improving the ability to communicate with residents, and gradually levelling up standards, as well as allowing for synergy in enforcement procedures. It was vital that the right communications were readied to advise residents about the changes and that the changes did not involve the wholesale replacement of waste containers.*
- 3. The creation of a unitary authority was an opportunity to take more creative approaches to recycling, and to develop a more competitive commercial refuse offer.*
- 4. In assessing the costs and benefits of charging for green waste, account needed to be taken of the differing demographics between large parts of East Northamptonshire and the rest of the new council area.*
- 5. The current county waste partnership should end on 1st April, but that a continuing relationship with West Northamptonshire Council was important to address waste infrastructure needs.*
- 6. The Council should review its waste budget early in 2022 to ensure it remains fit for purpose, especially in the light of changed waste patterns as a result of the pandemic.*

Public Health

Members were sighted on the approach to public health being taken now, and in the future, which was to embed public health considerations in every area of service delivery, recognising in particular the inter-dependencies between public health outcomes, tackling inequalities generally and climate change action plans. The range of public health measures and intended outcomes meant that it was a “whole system” feature for how the Council would operate in future. It was noted that some opportunities for improvement would have a broad span across the county whereas others would be more ward specific. The challenges thrown up by the pandemic could also provide an opportunity to tackle public health with the benefit of much greater public awareness and engagement. The focus moving out of the pandemic would be to look at catching-up in those service offers that had taken a back seat and the steps taken to even out inequalities. It was noted that, in other countries, the combination of both GDP and

Wellbeing trackers had a positive impact in that an increase in GDP tended to result in an increase in wellbeing markers and this was reflected in the reverse cycle. Increased wellbeing increased GDP.

The main conclusions coming from this session were: -

- 1. The importance of the new Council developing a culture whereby all strategy and policy work properly addressed the public health, inequalities and climate change implications of its subject matter and carried out thorough assessments of each, as a matter of course and without having to rely on in house experts to do that for them*
- 2. That the community hubs being developed for adult services should be broadened to incorporate public health and health and wellbeing activities to benefit their communities.*
- 3. That the proposed structure for the public health team, which retained expertise and capacity in a shared service between the two authorities and the NHS, but included a dedicated team for each authority, to deepen local knowledge, responsiveness, and aid connectivity, be fully endorsed.*
- 4. That greater reliance needed to be placed on the gathering and use of local data sources, because of the time lag in national datasets being provided*
- 5. That unintended barriers to the access and use of leisure facilities, country parks and other settings where people can improve their health needed to be considered, including parking charges.*
- 6. A wellbeing measure should be developed to measure progress with initiatives and to develop greater awareness of localities that had fallen behind, or to expand on areas of success, and that the conclusions from the application of such a measure should help direct future investment.*
- 7. That the voluntary sector should be supported to take up a significant role in public health promotion and service delivery.*

The Committee noted the outcome of the Group's discussions. The Chair thanked Councillor Harrison and the Group for their work and the report.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) That the report be noted.

It was agreed that Councillor Harrison present the Committee's comments to a future meeting of the Shadow Executive Committee.

6.3 Budget

Ms. Holland addressed the Committee. Ms. Holland welcomed the budget consultation process and the ability for the public to contribute views on the budget proposals. Ms. Holland was particularly interested in the area of public transport. Ms. Holland questioned where the transport and highways budget appeared in the proposals. This was an important issue. Ms. Holland felt that it was important that the public fully understood the level of proposed spend and priorities for transport and highways, as this would have a significant impact across many services and impact on local residents and businesses. Ms. Holland noted some recent good practise in investing in sustainable transport initiatives and hoped these would be rolled-out across the new council's area.

The Chair thanked Ms. Holland for her contribution.

(Ms. Holland was removed from the virtual meeting at this point).

Councillor Henley presented the report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 10th December 2020 to the formation of a Budget Task and Finish Group to assist in considering the draft Budget Proposals for 2021/22 approved for consultation by the Shadow Executive Committee at its meetings on 7th December 2020 and 7th January 2021.

The Task and Finish Group membership appointed consisted of Councillors Mark Pengelly, Adam Henley, Andy Mercer, Sandra Naden-Horley, Lloyd Bunday, Martyn York, and Ray Beeby (acting as substitute for Mark Pengelly where required). The Group was supported throughout by the Director of Finance, senior finance officers from sovereign councils, and service-specific officers where appropriate. The Chair of the Committee thanked Councillor Henley for chairing the Group's meetings.

The Group met at a scoping meeting on the 22nd December 2021, and agreed to focus on four key areas for scrutiny, including three of the most significant areas of expenditure. These included the Housing Revenue Account (Revenue and Capital) on 13th January 2021, Children's and Educational Services on 18th January 2021, Adult Services on 21st January 2021 and Fees and Charges held on 26th January 2021.

Relevant finance officers from sovereign councils and service-specific officers attended each session. Presentations were made to the Group detailing the key elements of expenditure and income within each of the respective service areas. A summary note from each of the sessions is included within the appendices to this report.

During the sessions, several questions were asked regarding the detail of the budget proposals. The appendices accompanying the report included the areas of discussion and questioning from each of the sessions.

The report before Committee detailed some of the key areas of debate. These included: -

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- The HRA currently consisted of two Neighbourhood Accounts for Corby Borough Council (CBC) and Kettering Borough Council (KBC) and the amalgamation of these accounts was a priority for future years. This could present opportunities for transformation, service improvement and cost efficiencies. It was noted that general management costs for CBC were higher than for KBC.
- Significant capital funding for development and new build, but currently there was a lack of programme detail regarding the timing of the build and therefore this was not yet reflected in the proposed revenue budget. This would be made clear in the final HRA report.
- Differential void times between CBC and KBC, due to the type and nature of the units involved. This would continue to be monitored closely.
- Concern over the level of bad debt provision and collection rates with reference to direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19 pandemic.
- CBC and KBC had different strategies for repayment of HRA borrowing. Both systems were working, and no current risks were identified. As with any borrowing, the impact of interest rates needed to be monitored.

Children's Services

- The two new Unitary Councils for North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire respectively would need to review and negotiate the contract with the Children's Trust for 2022/23 onwards.
- The impact of COVID-19 on children's services would need to be continually monitored. It was noted that £720k had been retained by the Council as a specific contingency.
- Clear governance structure in place for dispute resolution and consideration of in-year budget changes.
- The importance of training for new Members was emphasised.

Adult Services

- Through redesign, Adult Services had achieved significant savings over recent years. Within the budget these savings were forecast to continue from 2021/22 under North Northamptonshire Council. This was included within the budget assumptions.
- The opportunity for cross-service/agency working, particularly with Public Health and NHS/CCG, provided opportunities for greater efficiency and service improvements.
- NCC Adult Services scored 25th out of 26th in the Budget Benchmarking Group for 2018/19 with other County Councils relating to spend.
- The impact of COVID-19 was noted. The service continued to monitor impact.
- The Target Operating Model (TOM) had been established and to date had been successful.

Fees and Charges

- Standardisation of pre-application Planning fees was welcomed.
- There was significant concern expressed regarding the harmonisation of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees from 1st April 2021, and that trade organisations had not been directly consulted. The question whether the proposed fee increases were lawful was also raised as a concern. There was a strong recommendation that this element of the Fees & Charges proposals be reviewed.
- It was noted that in relation to cemetery fees and charges there would be a negative impact for Corby Borough residents and that in general Corby's fees and charges across several service areas were historically lower than other Councils within North Northamptonshire.
- The impact of increased bulky waste charges needed to be closely monitored, alongside the levels of fly tipping and associated costs to NNC.

General Comments

- The impact of COVID-19 during 2020/21 and into the new financial year was noted in all cases. Provision had been made but this needed to be closely monitored and trends identified.
- There were significant challenges in future years to ensure the Council maintained a balanced budget.
- There were significant opportunities for transformation, efficiency, and innovation within services. Opportunities for "joined-up" service delivery existed to maximise value for money and efficiency.

- The need for robust budget monitoring and scrutiny were of utmost importance. Even minor percentage variations in expenditure and/or income could have significant impact, particularly within service areas such as Adult Services and Children's Services.
- There would be legacy issues i.e., contracts which would need to be considered, and options identified for the future arrangements.
- There was a need to ensure that the Council Members received appropriate training and information to fulfil their role in the new authority.
- Throughout the year the financial position would be monitored and reported identifying any forecast movements from the budget. Looking ahead there would be a developed, approved budget-setting process for 2022/23, which would include the involvement of the public, Overview and Scrutiny and the wider membership.

Councillor Henley recognised the potential risks relating to Children's Services and Adult Services and the need to ensure appropriate budget monitoring and the need for appropriate scrutiny of the service. Concerns had been raised regarding whether contingency funding allocated in the budget for each service was adequate.

Councillor Henley stressed the concern around some of the proposed Fees & Charges and queried whether the proposals were as transparent to the public. This view was shared by other Committee members, with reference to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees. It was felt focused consultation was required with the trade.

Councillor Hakewill raised concern over the viability of Chester Farm and the fragility of the proposed budget. Councillor Hakewill also raised concern regarding the risks regarding social care, and concern over what he regarded as a relatively low contingency funds for Children's and Adults. In conclusion, Councillor Hakewill also raised concern, previously noted, regarding the potential of double taxation for some town & parish councils.

Councillor Mercer raised concern regarding the medium- and longer-term risks arising from COVID-19, for both clients and staff. It was difficult to assess the impact and needed to be itemised in the Risk Register. Councillor Mercer felt that the proposed contingency funding was too low.

Councillor Mercer also supported the proposal for the Hackney Carriage trade to be directly consulted on the proposed increases to fees. Councillor McEwan supported this proposal.

Councillor McEwan requested more information regarding the level of increase for the proposed charges across the service areas.

Councillor Pengelly raised concern regarding the adverse impact on citizens in Corby by the proposed fees & charges. In most cases Corby citizens would see a significant increase if the proposals went through unamended. Councillor Pengelly expressed concern that the budget consultation material was difficult for the public to follow and in certain areas e.g., fees & charges needed to be more transparent for greater understanding of what was being proposed.

Councillor Pengelly recognised that there were no proposed cutbacks, and recognised the work undertaken by officers in compiling the budget proposals for the new unitary council. He further noted that there had been no examination of assets at this time not or the potential impact of the yet unaudited accounts of sovereign councils.

The Director of Finance confirmed that the proposed budget for 2021/2022 was balanced, and the Shadow Executive Committee had received an update at its meeting of 7th January 2021.

The Director acknowledged the concerns expressed regarding Fees & Charges and the other comments arising from the Budget Group sessions. These comments were noted and would feed into future discussions by the Shadow Executive Committee during determination of its final budget proposals.

The Committee thanked members of the Group and officers for the report, recognising the tight deadlines required to enable discussion of the points raised in the report.

The Committee supported the comments included within the report.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The summary notes from the Budget Task and Finish Group as attached as Appendices A-D be noted; and
- (ii) That the comments detailed in section 5 of the report “Issues and Choices” be communicated to the Shadow Executive Committee together with the comments made by the Committee at this meeting.

It was agreed that Councillor Henley present the Committee’s comments to the Shadow Executive Committee as part of the budget consultation process.

7. Programme Status

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Transformation dated January 2021.

This included a Programme Status Summary, an update on Change Management, Communication and Engagement, and details on Critical Deliverables.

Also included within the presentation were updates since this presentation was provided to the Shadow Executive Committee on 7th January 2021; these covered areas including Adults, Children’s, Corporate, Customer and Digital, ICT, Finance, Place North and Change Management.

Councillor Lee suggested that it would be of assistance to Members for any documentation circulated be clearly designated as open or confidential, as Members did not want to circulate information that was private or sensitive but wanted to keep the public as fully updated as possible.

Councillor Lee also queried whether there had been any determination as to where meetings would be held, and Member facilities located. The Director of Transformation informed the meeting that no proposals had yet been agreed.

Councillor Davies welcomed the presentation and update. It was important that council services were seamless for the public during the Vesting Day period, and this seemed on course to be achieved.

Councillor Hakewill sought clarification regarding the RAG ratings indicated in the report. Councillor Hakewill felt that it was unusual there were no RED ratings indicated. The Director of Transformation confirmed that if a RED rating were required it would indicate that a service could not operate in a safe & legal manner from Vesting Day. Currently there were no services indicating this concern.

Councillor Hakewill also queried why Elections was not indicated as a risk, given the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Director of Transformation informed the Committee that the conduct

of elections fell outside of the LGR Programme and were the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

Councillor Pengelly raised that some staff in sovereign councils had concerns regarding their roles after Vesting Day, this included where they were likely to be located. The Director of Transformation understood that some staff may have concerns but reminded Members that currently only Tiers 1-3 were under review. There was limited transformation at this stage, but this would accelerate after Vesting Day and going forward.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The presentation be noted.

8. Forward Plan of Decisions December 2020 – March 2021

A copy of the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2020 – March 2021 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Forward Plan of Decisions be noted.

9. Work Programme

It was noted that the Climate Change Task and Finish Group would report back to the Committee on 11th March 2021.

No new items of future business were proposed by the Committee. It was noted that there were limited officer resources and time prior to Vesting Day to instigate any new major pieces of work. The Chair requested that should Committee members have issues that they wish to be considered at future meetings, that they contact him, and the Vice Chair (Councillor Perry) and any suggestion would be considered.

10. Exempt Items

There were no exempt items discussed.

11. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items discussed.

12. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 9:15 pm.