

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 13 JULY 2020 - 1.30 PM



**PRESENT:** Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor M Humphrey

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD), Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Anna Goodall (Head of Governance and Customer Services), Phil Hughes (Head Of Leisure Services), Paul Medd (Chief Executive) and Mark Saunders (Chief Accountant)

## **OSC1/20    APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Miscandlon, seconded by Councillor Purser and resolved that Councillor Mason be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

Cllr Mason thanked the Panel for the confidence bestowed upon him and paid tribute to Cllr Miscandlon for being an excellent Chairman during the past years, he had been a delight to work with and a lot had been done under his leadership. He also thanked Cllr Hay for all her efforts as Vice Chairman during that period.

Councillor Mason then welcomed members of the public and press watching the livestream of the Cabinet meeting via YouTube due to Government guidance on social distancing. The meeting was held in accordance with the provision set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and with Fenland District Council's Virtual Meeting Protocol.

## **OSC2/20    APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Mason and seconded by Councillor Skoulding that Councillor Miscandlon be nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

Cllr Miscandlon thanked the Panel and said he would do his best to support the Chairman this coming year.

## **OSC3/20    PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of 8 June 2020 were confirmed as correct.

## **OSC4/20    UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.**

Members were provided with an update on the status of actions raised at previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

1. Councillor Booth said that he does not think Action 1 relating to rent charged by the County Council to early years providers should be marked as completed. They state they are looking at a payment holiday for the rents but he believes there is an issue regarding affordability. One of the preschools in his village has expressed concern about future sustainability because of their tight budget and so he believes we need to keep a watching brief on this item.
2. Councillor Booth said that although he appreciates the time taken by Inspector Lombardo to respond to Action 2 regarding road safety and police enforcement of speed limits, he is concerned that speeding is still a big issue. Both he and Councillor Bligh's efforts to contact the police regarding speeding in their wards have remained unanswered, so he looks forward to the new email being set up as suggested. When the roads were quiet they were being abused by the minority even more and this became a national issue to the extent that some counties prioritised speeding. Therefore as the last action has not yet been delivered, he would like this issue to be marked as ongoing.

Councillor Miscandlon agreed with Councillor Booth but said that having spoken to the Police and Crime Commissioner on this issue within his ward, he was advised that if the speeding is considered to be legally dangerous then the advice is to call 999. Report on 101 otherwise. Police will respond to 999 where the situation is life threatening to other road users and pedestrians. Councillor Booth said he would still like the item left open to monitor for the future but he was thankful for this useful information. Councillor Purser also agreed as did Councillor Cornwell, who added that it should score quite heavily on the consultation that is out currently. Councillor Wicks said speeding in villages has been endemic for years and he has long campaigned over this. He agreed that we need a positive police response, but he had noticed that the villages had been amalgamated with the market towns so as to dilute the information presented in the survey.

## **OSC5/20 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Members considered the Council Tax Support Scheme report presented by Councillor Boden.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Mason said that we belong to the ARP as equal members but partner rates are set at 8.5% whilst ours is 14% and he asked Councillor Boden the reason for this. Councillor Boden said the decision to change was made in 2013/14 because 8.5% was felt to be not financially viable within Fenland. He added that each partner within ARP has the right to set whatever rates they wish.
2. Councillor Booth said that although Councillor Boden mentioned there is an impact on other authorities he felt the report lacks their thoughts on the scheme; although we are the setting authority we need to have a better understanding of the actual impact of the scheme on them. County Council gets the prime share of council tax we collect but it would be interesting to know the effect on other authorities particularly for future years. Councillor Booth said he also raised the issue of the percentage variance last year and would particularly like to know the implications regarding administration.
3. Councillor Boden said it is correct that we do not take into account or consult the other precepting authorities and agrees that is inappropriate, therefore Cabinet would welcome such a recommendation from the Panel.
4. In respect of Councillor Booth's comment regarding administration, Councillor Boden said the difficulty lies in making changes, which are always technical, but once put in place then the administration is relatively straight forward. If it is just having a difference in the discount rate, that is easy to administer. Councillor Boden added that he has already started talking to other council leaders regarding 2022/23 because all are now increasingly aware of the importance of getting this right. Additionally, with our system not having fundamentally changed for seven

years, we are out of step with a number of other authorities, Peterborough City Council being one. They have a very different scheme with different allowances and rules and a different discount rate. It will be inappropriate to look at this for 2021/22 because of our attention on COVID-19.

5. Councillor Booth said he agreed that a recommendation regarding consultation should be put forward to Cabinet and also he takes on board Councillor Boden's comment regarding administration. We need to think about the socio-economic impact of changing the rate. For example, where does paying council tax lie in budgeting as a priority for people on limited budgets? This has got to be part of future consideration as it may be a lower priority for some than paying the rent and will impact on our collection rates.
6. Councillor Miscandlon said he supports the recommendation to talk to other partners in the ARP group. Quoting paragraph 2.4 of the report, he asked Councillor Boden what has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of claimants in Fenland?
7. Councillor Boden said that the number of working age claimants in Fenland has increased significantly but all councils have seen this increase and had we not made changes then the impact would be worse. However, this may change once the furlough scheme ends.
8. Councillor Miscandlon asked Councillor Boden why Fenland and the other partners within ARP had not worked together before in terms of making the percentages cohesive. Councillor Boden agreed there was a difference regarding the discount but it was relatively minor in terms of the administration of the scheme; however the impact of COVID-19 could now be the trigger for us to ask more fundamental and difficult questions regarding the whole scheme. However this review really needs to be for 2022/23 and not 2021/22 because officers are extremely busy right now. Councillor Miscandlon agreed that the impact of COVID-19 had been difficult for us all to deal with.
9. Councillor Yeulett said the recipients of council tax support would be the worst impacted financially as highlighted by Councillor Booth and asked if at the end of the current situation there would be a whole rethink of the scheme. Councillor Boden replied it is not for us to structure council tax support as we are constrained by central Government. He agreed that although we have to be aware of the effect on individuals' lives, it is also important to remember that it is other council tax payers who pay for the council tax support scheme. Therefore it is a matter of balancing the best interests of everyone.
10. Councillor Booth said he would like to recommend that a working group be set up to look at the complex set of options on offer and to consider the socio-economic impact and matters such as collection rates and how they will be impacted by any of the options being looked at. He said that realistically we cannot make any decisions today as we do not have the data in front of us and this is such a complex matter.
11. Councillor Mason said that a sub-committee was set up last year to review ARP and perhaps Councillor Booth's suggestion could be incorporated within that.
12. Councillor Boden responded that there is a very tight timetable about the setting of the council tax support scheme for next year and as part of that the purpose of O&S is take make a recommendation to Cabinet who are meeting in early August. Today is the opportunity for the Panel to give their input into the decision that Cabinet needs to make. A working party, although a fine idea, is difficult to tie in with the process we are talking about here, which is to determine what should be done about consultation and how we should consult, and that needs to be done at the beginning of August.
13. Councillor Booth said that he is not proposing the group look into the council tax scheme for this year; we do not have the information to make an informed decision for this year's scheme so it needs to stay as it is at the moment but the working group should be set up to look at the following year.
14. Councillor Count said that the partners have a different discount rate to us and that reflects on the ability to pay. People on Universal Credit are deemed by the system to have enough money to live on so the less they pay in council tax from one area compared to another would expect that it would mean that a greater percentage could be collected from people because they can afford it. Unfortunately, the reality is that human nature sometimes causes a reprioritising of spending habits which eventually results in non-payment. Therefore to be able

to inform our decision we certainly need to look at our collection rate and how that performs against other statistically comparable authorities.

15. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Count for the interesting and helpful comment. The discount rate will have an effect on the collection rate but there is not a direct correlation. Unfortunately there is a relative lack of good quality research at national level to answer that question and we must make up our own minds based on our own experience. Undoubtedly one of the things we would need to take into account is the different collection rate but a lot depends on the effort put in by the collecting authority itself and in order to administer a council tax discount scheme which has a lower amount that is paid it is necessary to spend more money in order to get the collection rate back up.
16. Councillor Count said mention has been made of the timetable of when we have to make a decision; he has not seen this but when Cabinet come to look at this if they have a representation of that timetable which is written in stone, as opposed to that which can be flexible, then he would suggest they see if they can have more flexibility in their decision making so the information comes through as late in the calendar year as possible.
17. Councillor Boden said he would be happy for the O&S Panel to make that a recommendation to Cabinet as it is common sense. There are few actual fixed dates in this. We have not been in this position before and so we are uncertain about what the next year will bring and Councillor Count is correct to say we need to give ourselves as a council the maximum amount of flexibility so we have the greatest amount of knowledge we can have about the effects upon both the council and our tax payers of the decisions we make. There are few fixed dates in this but if we are proposing to make changes then by law the council tax support scheme must be set by 28 February 2021 and if not, then they have to be set by 11 March 2021. The Cabinet Office has suggested that if councils are going to propose a minor change they can have a shorter period of time than 12 weeks for consultation, but we would like to follow the full 12 weeks to ensure we are following the law properly.
18. Councillor Count said part of the discussion earlier was around what our partners think. As leader of the County Council he would suggest that the fairest way of taxation is to spread it across the fairest amount of people and Councillor Boden is quite right to suggest that the people who pay the council tax discount are the council tax payers themselves; it does not come out of our pockets. There has to be nuances and there are specific ideas coming forward for 2022/23 and he thinks additionally we should consider a council tax discount rate for buildings that are bought back into use, so would like to see that incorporated within the list of ideas.
19. Councillor Boden agreed that is a valid point for the record but it is more about council tax and how it is applied rather than the council tax support scheme. In view of Councillor Count's other comment this is the time to contact the other council leaders with a view to seeing if there is a widespread feeling that it may be helpful for us to work together collectively to re-examine these things for 2022/23 rather than piecemeal by FDC.
20. Councillor Count said it seems to him that a lot of people go onto Universal Credit than the council tax support scheme; one of the main considerations of Cabinet will have to be its affordability. He thinks that will be a major consideration for Cabinet when they are able to put a best estimate of what that might look like.
21. Councillor Booth suggested that as Councillor Boden said there have been no studies on the council tax support scheme it may be worth approaching a debt management company such as Step Change. They may have some evidence of how people prioritise the bills they have to pay. Are we going to make a situation worse by changing the discount rate?
22. Councillor Boden said there is a lot of data out there about the council tax support scheme and collection rates but there is not a rigorous and accepted analysis of that data to give correlation between the council tax support scheme discount and the collection rate. So yes, the data is available from those who give support to claimants and is important but we ourselves give information and we try and assist those individuals who have difficulty paying their council tax whether they are in receipt of the discount or not. He would not understate the amount of internal knowledge we already have.
23. Councillor Miscandlon said that as the data is available and there are a lot of statistics, so

would it be appropriate for the ARP Board to authorise a study within the area so we all have a better understanding of what is going on. It would be advantageous to Fenland and all other members of the ARP to have that data and he is sure County Council would also appreciate having it available.

24. Councillor Boden said we are talking about an organisation that is spread out over five different collection authorities and three county councils. Also, the four other councils are not our statistical neighbours so some of this data would not be directly attributable to us. If we wish to have a proper study that would have statistical significance, then it would have to be done with statistical neighbours rather than across ARP. It is an academic exercise more than anything and it should be central Government pushing strongly for this.
25. Councillor Miscandlon said therefore would it not be appropriate for the various councils to speak to the MPs and ask them to raise it with Government. Ultimately their access to data is greater than local councils and they could produce figures far more quickly and have facilities we not.
26. Councillor Boden agreed this was a sensible suggestion and said this would have far more resonance in six months' time when local councils begin to realise the potential implications the council tax support scheme may have on their budgets and on their council tax payers next year and possibly years to come.
27. Councillor Mason said he was getting the feeling that the proposal of no change to the current scheme should be recommended and upheld but maximum flexibility on decision making for future years to be applied. Also we would recommend that there is more communication with authorities and ARP in order to plan forward for 2022/23. He added that he would personally like to see that the work of the O&S ARB subcommittee continues and would be happy to take forward any further recommendations.
28. Councillor Count said his view in recommending that Cabinet looks at how much they can shrink the timetable by in order to come to a decision would be to allow them more flexibility for this year. We have to have trust in the Cabinet and allow them maximum flexibility as we are not in a position to make a recommendation either for a change or not and would just prefer the recommendation to be to say that we have noted the report, it is too early for us to come to a solid recommendation and we ask Cabinet to use its flexibility to the fullest extent.
29. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Count and said that he was referring to the year 2022/23.
30. Councillor Booth thinks we should be saying no change for this year. He cannot see how we can get all this information although letting Cabinet have flexibility. But if we are talking a 12-week period for consultation and it has to be before the end of February and trying to gather all that information, it is probably unrealistic to achieve it. We will not know the impact of the furlough scheme until October. Therefore we continue with it as is at the moment but start working out now what we need to do for the following year.
31. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Booth and said that is the point he was trying to make.
32. Councillor Cornwell said he fully supported Councillor Mason's summary. Remember we are making a recommendation not a decision. It is up to Cabinet, if circumstances change they should at least have the flexibility, which he thinks they still have but it is actually for them to make a firm decision before they come back to us again. He added that he has learned more during this session than many other sessions relating to council tax support over the years and found it to be an extremely good debate with very clear explanations.
33. Councillor Wicks said he agreed with Councillor Mason's approach; we are in an emergency situation and have no idea what the end game is. To keep it as it is at the moment and give Cabinet maximum flexibility to do what they have to do is the way forward.
34. Councillor Count said that it sounds like there is some confusion over what we are recommending. On the one hand we are saying to give maximum flexibility to Cabinet but on the other hand we are recommending a no change scenario for next year and those two statements are incompatible. His recommendation was to accept that we are not in a position, and whilst Cabinet may not be in a position in August, there is a possibility they are going to look at seeing if they can move that to perhaps a month later down the line or further. But the point is even if it is August they will have more information than us today so he is not sure if we can move the formal recommendation as there seems to be some disagreement. We are not

the decision makers, Cabinet will be. But if it is not a formal recommendation then he would like to put that forward and as a recommendation and propose that Cabinet be given full flexibility to make their mind up at their meeting.

35. Councillor Mason said his proposal was that we recommend no change to the current scheme at the present time but give Cabinet maximum flexibility for the decision making for future years. Councillor Booth seconded the proposal.
36. Councillor Booth said that if Councillor Count wished to amend the proposal he would have to do it now.
37. Councillor Count said he can only make an amendment if it does not substantially change the original motion. The original motion is for no change and his is for maximum flexibility so it is not an amendment but a different proposal.

**Proposed by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Booth and AGREED that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommend no change to the Council Tax Support Scheme at the present time and that Cabinet be given maximum flexibility for decision making in future years.**

Councillor Boden said with the agreement of the Chairman he would listen carefully to the contributions from everyone at today's meeting and take it all into account. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Boden.

*(Councillor Count reported a conflict of interest as Leader of the County Council saying this item will have major implications for the County Council. However, as it is a non-pecuniary interest he will be able to debate fully and will remember which hat he is wearing today).*

## **OSC6/20 COUNCIL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

Members considered the Council Response to COVID-19 - Future Implications report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden said it is unprecedented for local Government to be so unsure about what the future holds either financially or otherwise. We face significant challenges in managing our finances and setting our budget next year. However many other local authorities are in a worse financial position than we are and more financial support is required from central Government. The position will be made worse if there is a second or even third wave of COVID-19, not just for this Council but for the economy of the country. Councillor Boden apologised for the negativity of the report but he needed to stress the scale of the issue and uncertainty we face. He added that officers have been working exceptionally hard to mitigate the issues we are facing and continue to do so in a fast-changing environment.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. On behalf of all members, and as Chairman of FDC, Councillor Miscandlon thanked all FDC staff for going above and beyond to make the pandemic as bearable as possible for all the residents of Fenland.
2. Councillor Topgood concurred with Councillor Miscandlon's comment; local traders had told him it had been a pleasure dealing with FDC in regards to the grant aid on offer.
3. Councillor Mason agreed and thanked officers for chasing up those businesses who had not applied for grants.
4. Councillor Wicks complimented FDC staff for being so proactive with businesses and community organisations; they did not wait for the applications to arrive but went out and openly encouraged them to apply for grants.
5. Paul Medd said it cannot be underestimated the effect that positive feedback will have following the impact on staff of nearly 5 months of delivering day to day services along with key projects.

He will ensure the Panel's comments are fed back to staff. However, we would not have been able to do this without strong and supportive political leadership from Cabinet, Councillor Boden and all members.

6. Councillor Count echoed all the positive comments that had been expressed. However, he has just received the unsettling news that Fenland is now above the national average for coronavirus; it may be that this is in part due to the outbreak at the Princes Factory and he is currently waiting analysis on this but we had been fairly confident that we had previously been in a low coronavirus area. However, even if it was still low we have to work on the assumption that it is prevalent in our communities. The number of asymptomatic carriers is higher than estimated. He cannot stress how strongly he feels that public health information and messages must continue as a priority to get out the message that the virus is still amongst us and shows no sign of going away.
7. Councillor Count added that it is encouraging to read in the report the work undertaken with the homeless. He gave his compliments and thanked staff for their work on that issue.
8. Councillor Booth said that as we move towards providing more online services we must not forget that there are still a lot of people in our area who do not have access to the internet. We must be able to provide them with suitable alternative options to be able to contact the Council.
9. Paul Medd responded to Councillor Count's comment regarding the increase in coronavirus cases within Fenland. He said that the Council constantly monitors the local data and the position changes frequently. However, it highlights the importance of the local outbreak control plan that was recently adopted by the Health Protection Board and the importance of track and trace and practical interventions that we will implement locally to ensure that if there is a local case outbreak, for example the Princes Factory, we can reduce those numbers and the impact as quickly as possible. We are becoming more accomplished at identifying and intervening where local outbreaks are identified. Councillor Mason agreed that we are all learning all the time.
10. Councillor Miscandlon commented regarding Zoom meetings. Fenland needs a better internet infrastructure to support working remotely. It is the future and we need to be part of it and not left behind.
11. Councillor Wicks said that in respect of the statistical increase in coronavirus cases within Fenland, this news should be communicated to the public to reiterate that the virus has not gone away and they still need to be vigilant. He added that in respect of Councillor Miscandlon's comment, it is not only the internet that needs improving within Fenland but also mobile phone coverage.
12. Councillor Wicks said that he understood that because of the virus FDC had to make changes to the way that staff worked and he was sure risk assessments and analysis had been undertaken in respect of the maximum number of staff allowed to work in all FDC buildings. He asked Paul Medd whether CMT were looking at the viability of the buildings and if so, could he give an insight into how that is going.
13. Paul Medd thanked Councillor Wicks and agreed that the public do need to be aware of the latest situation, given that the virus has not gone away despite the lifting of restrictions. There continues to be an ongoing communication's campaign from Government, Public Health England, local public health colleagues and this council in terms of making it clear to residents that they need to continue to stay alert. Regarding another way of working, he added that Councillor Wicks made a valid observation but we have been exploring new ways for the past decade in response to austerity. We are continually reviewing that as we continue to be customer focussed and deliver member priorities. Under our recovery plan we are reflecting on the percentage of people home working now out of necessity, and what percentage might we choose to continue working from home but in a way acceptable to the council and how we deliver services, instead of rushing to repatriate all staff to council buildings. It is not safe or appropriate at present but we are reviewing it. If we do take everyone back when safe to do so we will then assess our accommodation. Assuming we identify extra space, we can look to rent that out or consider if the buildings are fit for purpose. This will take some time but is something that he discusses regularly with the Leader.
14. Councillor Wicks thanked Paul Medd for his comprehensive response.

15. Councillor Mason asked if distance working would create implications for South Fens and the Boathouse in respect of small businesses not returning. Councillor Boden said that we have lost a small number of businesses which are no longer trading, but we also have some new ones coming in. There is actually a greater percentage of the Boathouse in occupancy now than at the start of COVID-19 but we do not know how the future will look.
16. Councillor Boden responded to Councillor Miscandlon's comment about internet connection and said that thanks to the county wide programme in general, Fenland does actually benefit from a reasonable and reliable high speed internet service across the district. Unfortunately there are pockets in the area to which that does not apply hence Councillor Miscandlon's comment. Continued rollout of the fibre network across the district is helping to ensure that Fenland remains competitive. FDC continues to work with Connecting Cambridgeshire in connecting "not spot" locations in the district and seeks to address those, and it is the same with mobile phone coverage. Part of the answer to that is in our hands and we need to look carefully at future planning applications for mobile phone masts which previously might have been treated more negatively.
17. Councillor Boden said that he agreed with Councillor Booth's comment regarding internet access. Channel Shift is not a matter of pushing people towards the internet and with our new appointments system at the customer service centres we are trying to design this so that those people who do not have internet access get a better service than they did before. He agreed that there will always be people who do not interact with the internet.
18. Councillor Boden referred to Councillor Count's comment regarding Fenland having above national average COVID figures and said that this is a marginal figure only; they are only slightly above average. All the numbers are available on the internet. However, we must continue to reiterate the messages regarding social distancing and handwashing and as councillors we are all in a position to spread that message in our local communities.
19. Councillor Yeulett added his thanks to all at FDC for their work during this pandemic and also thanked Councillor Boden for his stark presentation on the economic situation. He wanted to highlight concerns raised in the national media regarding the lack of income from commercial agreements that councils have and asked if we are experiencing similar problems and what effect that may have on our future investments.
20. Councillor Boden responded that we are not in the same situation as many other local authorities. Our level of commercial income from third parties whilst small has largely been preserved. All conferences have stopped so we are not getting that income in our business centres but we are not losing income, say, from car parking charges as we do not charge for this. In that sense we are far stronger for not going down that route and previous decisions on car parking have therefore stood us in greater stead. Therefore however bad our financial position currently looks, so many other councils are in a far worse position than we are. Our position, with the exception of the conferences, has been largely stable.
21. Councillor Booth said he was concerned that the report lacked detail of where extra costs have come from and where income has been lost. It would therefore be useful for future reports to contain budget headings.
22. Councillor Boden said the difficulty with this is that there are some items where confidentiality is involved but will endeavour to make details clearer in future meetings. He could say that just over half of our additional costs are to do with housing in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping. Also, in respect of income the main reductions are due to the reduction of business rates and council tax that we may be able to collect this year. We do not know how far under budget we will be as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, but also remember we are collecting not on our own behalf but of other precepting authorities, hence the shortfall looks enormous.
23. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Boden and said that he too, as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel would like to express his thanks and appreciation to the staff of FDC.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Panel AGREED to note the content of the Council Response to COVID-19 – Future Implications report.**



Members considered the Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Miscandlon as the previous Chairman, plus Councillor Hay and all who contributed during the past year towards the content of the report.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Booth said that although he broadly agreed with the draft report, his only comment would be in relation to the call-in at Section 6 of the report. The majority talks about the process but there is little actual wording around the debate that took place in relation to the call-in and he feels it would be useful to expand paragraph 6.7 to include this. Although the Panel decided not to refer the matter back to Cabinet, Councillor Boden subsequently made changes to the Scheme of Delegation for the Investment Board and it would be useful to capture that. It would show that the Panel played a role in relation to that and feedback was taken on board by the Leader.
2. Councillor Boden said that although it was for the Panel to decide what to include in the report, he could understand Councillor Booth's suggestion.
3. Councillor Miscandlon said that in co-editing the report he wished to express his personal thanks to Councillor Ann Hay as his Vice-Chairman during his tenure as Chairman and everyone, be they officers, members or external agencies and local residents, who contributed to the Panel's work last year and for a sterling job.
4. Councillor Cornwell said there was confusion as to whether Overview & Scrutiny was called a Committee or Panel and asked that one term only be used going forward.
5. Councillor Booth said he wished to move a recommendation that the Panel adopt the report but on basis we amend Section 6.7 as he had highlighted.

**Proposed by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Wicks that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel approve the annual report for forwarding to Council on the basis that there be an amendment to Section 6.7.**

**A vote was taken on the proposal which was defeated.**

**Proposed by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Connor, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel AGREED to approve the annual report for forwarding to Council.**

## **OSC8/20 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members discussed the Future Work Programme.

1. Councillor Mason said that he endorsed concerns Councillor Wicks had previously expressed that Clarion are not coming to a Panel meeting this year. They had been due to attend an earlier meeting that had been cancelled due to the lockdown. Councillor Mason said that it could be two years before they came again. Anna Goodall said there had been a discussion around this and if members are in agreement they can be invited to the December meeting.
2. Councillor Booth said that December would be far too late and that this would be almost two years anyway. He felt an earlier date should be agreed; particularly given issues that have previously arisen around winter time.
3. Councillor Mason said this could be discussed further but we have to consider that we also need to accommodate a meeting with Freedom Leisure.
4. Councillor Miscandlon said that he had previously discussed with Anna Goodall and Councillor Hay the possibility of having an extra meeting for sensitive items as we lost two meetings early on in lockdown.
5. Councillor Mason agreed that was an alternative and he would discuss this with Anna Goodall in due course.

6. Councillor Mason said it had been previously discussed that Anglian Water may be asked to attend a meeting. Anna Goodall said that they are under no legal obligation to attend an Overview and Scrutiny meeting but is sure they would be willing if approached.
7. Councillor Wicks said that with the evolving situation there could be other subjects that come up in the near future. Councillor Mason asked that they be submitted for future consideration.

Councillor Mason ended the meeting with his thanks for everyone attending today.

3.35 pm

Chairman