

**CABINET**

**REMOTE MEETING HELD  
ON THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Maher (in the Chair)  
Councillors Atkinson, Cummins, Fairclough, Hardy,  
John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Moncur and Veidman

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Sir Ron Watson viewed the meeting  
remotely

**45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal  
interests were received.

**47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Decision Made:**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2020 be approved  
as a correct record.

**48. PLANNING WHITE PAPER**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Planning Officer in relation  
to the recently published, for consultation, Planning White Paper "Planning  
for the Future". The report set out the implications of the Planning White  
Paper on future Planning Services.

**Decision Made:** That:

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member  
for Planning and Building Control be requested to submit the  
Council's response before 31 October 2020.

**Reason for the Decisions:**

To allow Cabinet Members to express views on the Council's draft response to the Planning White Paper.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**49. ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chair, Councillor Maher left the meeting.

Vice Chair, Councillor Fairclough in the Chair.

**50. SOUTHPORT TOWN DEAL**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director in relation to the recent progress of the Southport Town Deal, the Town Deal Board and the Town Investment Plan of which will be submitted to Government at the end of October 2020.

The report set out that Southport was one of the 100 towns across the country invited to bid for £25 million in funding as part of the Government's Town Fund. Further guidance received included the opportunity to pursue up to £50 million of funding and that this would be subject to greater level of scrutiny.

In order to secure a share of the funding and in line with the guidance, a Town Deal Board was established with the responsibility of developing and agreeing an evidenced based Town Investment Plan; developing a clear programme of interventions and coordinating resources and influencing stakeholders.

The report also set out Membership details of the Town Deal Board, the Consultation and Engagement processes undertaken and the Town Investment Plan Approval Process.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills, Councillor Atkinson thanked the Town Deal Board Members for all their hard work, commitment, passion and vision and paid tribute to the sterling work of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, Mr Rob Fletcher and Mr Andrew Booth.

Councillor Atkinson also paid tribute to the hard work of Sefton Officers and emphasised how their commitment had played a pivotal role in driving the bid forward.

The need for Government Funding to be made available to all Town Centres across the Borough was also highlighted.

**Decision Made:** That:

- (1) the work undertaken by the Town Deal Board, be noted;
- (2) Sefton Council will undertake the role of Accountable Body for the submission of the Bid at the end of October 2020; for negotiation of Heads of Terms; agreement of the Town Deal and the administration of grant funding thereafter, be agreed;
- (3) the submission of a Town Deal bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the end of October 2020, in accordance with the Town Deal bid process, be agreed;
- (4) the Head of Terms and the Town Deal, and in turn the formalisation of the role of Accountable Body, will require Cabinet and Council approval during the twelve-month period following submission, be noted; and
- (5) the Executive Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills be granted delegated authority for the finalisation of the bid and Town Investment Plan, for submission at the end of October 2020 on behalf of the Town Deal Board.

**Reasons for the Decisions:**

Southport is one of 100 towns identified as potential recipients of Town Deal funding, for which a bid submission and Town Investment Plan (TIP) is required. The process requires leadership of a Town Deal Board, with a private sector Chair, but the Council is required to undertake the role of Accountable Body for the bid (which in the case of Southport will be submitted at the end of October), and for the subsequent negotiation of Heads of Terms, agreement of the Town Deal, and to be the organisation through which funding will flow.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

The alternative of not undertaking the role of Accountable Body for the bid, or not submitting a Town Deal bid, is rejected given the significance of the funding opportunity, the quality and quantity of project opportunities emerging, and the importance of such funding to the economic recovery in Southport given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the town and its economy.

**51. GAS CONTRACT RENEWAL 2022 - 25**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services in relation to the award of the gas supply contract to North-East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) Gas Framework for a three year plus one year contract, in order to secure value for money and excellent customer service.

**Decision Made:** That:

- (1) Sefton Council remain on the North-East Purchasing Organisation framework contract for the supply of gas to cover the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2025 with the option to extend for one year to 31 March 2026;
- (2) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be granted delegated authority to award an extension; and
- (3) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services be granted delegated authority to approve purchasing decision.

**Reasons for the Decisions:**

Sefton have recently reviewed its options across 4 of the largest public sector buying organisation procurement frameworks, including Crown Commercial Services (CCS), North-East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO). NEPO were able to demonstrate value for money, excellent customer service and consistency of gas supplier. Remaining on the NEPO framework will also minimise disruption to services and minimise impact on staff resourcing.

Given the recent volatility in gas prices, a consortium approach to purchasing will bring the most benefit to Sefton.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Option 1

Do nothing – In order to comply with EU and UK Procurement Rules, and due to the 12-18 month lead in times, it is necessary to now either re-procure the above contract directly to market by Sefton Council via the prescribed European Journal (OJEU) route, or receive a supply contract available from an EU compliant Energy Procurement Framework with a Central Purchasing Body (CPB). Therefore, this action was rejected.

Option 2

Delay this decision - The lead time for making a change to our current gas supply arrangements is significant, so any delay in making a decision would shorten our window for purchasing gas in advance. This would reduce our options and increase the risk associated with market conditions during that time. Therefore, this action was rejected.

Option 3

Adopt a different procurement strategy – for example purchasing all gas supplies at a fixed price. Whilst Sefton has used this strategy in the past and made savings from it, it does internalise the risk associated with

achieving the best prices, increases staff workload and given current volatility in the wholesale gas market increases the risks associated with achieving a competitive price. Therefore, this option was rejected.

**52. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2020/21 INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2020/21 BUDGET**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Corporate Resources and Customer Services that advised of:

- (1) the current estimated financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget;
- (2) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for 2020/21;
- (3) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2020/21; and
- (4) the monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of August 2020 relating to:
  - the forecast expenditure to year end;
  - variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members;
  - updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.

**Decision Made:**

That:

- (A) in respect of the Revenue Budget:
  - (1) the current estimated impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position, be noted;
  - (2) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2020/21 revenue budget and the material variations that are to be expected to the current estimates contained in the report be recognised, and it be agreed that subsequent reports provide updates and where appropriate remedial action plans as appropriate;

- (3) the current forecast revenue outturn position for 2020/21 be noted;
- (4) it be acknowledged that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved; and

(B) in respect of the Capital Budget:

- (1) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved Capital Programme (paragraph 6.1.1 of the report) be noted;
- (2) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 August 2020 of £5.417m (paragraph 6.2.1 of the report) with the latest full year forecast of £36.871m (paragraph 6.3.1 of the report) be noted;
- (3) the explanations of variances to project budgets (paragraph 6.2.3 of the report) be noted;
- (4) The proposal to upgrade Sefton's Community Equipment Store and replace the current vehicle fleet at a cost of £0.335m funded from the Disabled Facilities Grant (paragraph 6.4.2 of the report), be approved;
- (5) the outcome of the approved procurement process for the replacement fleet for the Cleansing Service (paragraph 6.5 of the report), be noted
- (6) the most favourable tenders received for the required Cleansing Services vehicles (paragraph 6.5 of the report), be accepted;
- (7) the Head of Highways & Public Protection and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be authorised to enter into contracts with the successful tenderers for supply of the required Cleansing Service vehicles (paragraph 6.5 of the report);
- (8) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.610m in the 2020/21 programme for phase two of the Bootle Strategic Acquisitions scheme (paragraph 6.6.2 of the report), be approved;
- (9) subject to approval by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority of a request for further funding for phase two of the Bootle Strategic Acquisitions scheme,

an additional supplementary capital estimate of £0.040m in the 2020/21 programme (Paragraph 6.6.3 of the report), be approved; and

- (10) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services will manage capital resources to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraph 6.7.3 of the report), be noted.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the forecast outturn position for the 2020/21 Revenue Budget as at the end of August 2020, including delivery of a remedial action plan, and to provide an updated forecast of the outturn position regarding the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

To keep Members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2019/20 and agreed allocations for future years.

To progress any changes that are required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme.

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**53. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2020/21 TO 2023/24 AND FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE 2020 - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 TO 2023/24**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Corporate Resources and Customer Services that advised of the latest position regarding Government funding announcements for 2021/22; and provided an update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2021/22 to 2023/24 taking account of the most up to date information available.

The Cabinet Member for Regulation, Compliance and Corporate Services, Councillor Lappin commended and thanked staff within the Corporate Resources team for all their hard work in working under difficult circumstances with very little information from Central Government in relation to the Local Government Financial Settlements.

**Decision Made:**

That the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2021/22 to 2023/24 including any assumptions made, be approved.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

In February 2020 Council approved a one-year budget plan for 2020/21. As part of this report, an indicative budget gap of £19m for 2021/22 to 2022/23 was reported. The MTFP for this period has subsequently been updated to reflect the latest information available and to include extend the MTFP to 2023/24. In approving the recommendation laid out in this report, the Council will continue to ensure resources are well managed and reflect the key priorities of the residents of Sefton.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.