



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)**

**MEETING HELD AT THE BALLROOM, TOWN HALL BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Brodie - Browne, Brennan, Grace,
Howard, Killen, McKinley and Sir Ron Watson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lappin

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lewis and Morris.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Brennan	Minute No. 14 Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations	His employer is referred to in the report

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

12. NEW WAYS OF WORKING

The Committee received a presentation from Stephan Van Arendsen, Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on "New Ways of Working".

Mr. Van Arendsen highlighted the following as part of his presentation:

- Phase 1 relating to asset maximisation, locality working and ICT transformation was completed in 2017 to 2019 which enabled the start of agile working; Phase 2 was ongoing to further develop agile working arrangements to support business need and health and

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wellbeing of staff, to take account of changes arising from pandemic and to rationalise buildings to further deliver budget savings; and Phase 3 regarding the longer term review of Bootle estate linked to Bootle Town Hall, Strand and the lease on Magdalen House for the period 2022 -2032

- Regarding the move to Phase 2 the COVID-19 pandemic had forced the Council into new ways of working and the need to think differently about the way in which the Council operated; and information was provided on the current agile working arrangements, the significant further Investment in ICT infrastructure, employees embracing the change in a challenging environment and how the Council's change in the way it used buildings with reduced occupation and COVID-19 related measures in place
- In respect of what Phase 2 would look like information was provided on new ways of working to reduce the building footprint and which linked back to the Asset Management and Climate Change Strategies; Carbon savings to be achieved through reduced electricity and gas consumption in buildings; accommodation issues; investment made in ICT kit and licensing to allow staff to work in a more agile way; new ways of working and a review of HR policies and ICT solutions; and the savings that would be generated through the new ways of working model
- To take Phase 2 forward there would be full and continual engagement with Trade Unions; a review of HR policies and ICT solutions; investment in home kit and individual health and safety risk assessments; for office workers that the data centre footprint requirement would be reduced as Council ICT servers and applications would be moved to the cloud; and that there would be a link to culture and performance management as part of the Council's 2023 work
- In conclusion there were a number of dependencies and requirements in order to successfully deliver the complex project, but the Council did ultimately see many benefits arising from the introduction of the new ways of working model, the main one being service delivery to the residents of Sefton

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- HR management of potential musculoskeletal and mental health issues associated with long-term home working; the display screen equipment assessments undertaken as part of the corporate health and safety regime; health and safety meetings with trades unions; and how managers would engage with staff via one to ones to gauge their views on home or hybrid working
- the potential for public facing staff to work from home occasionally to perform administrative tasks and how this could be facilitated whilst ensuring that business needs of the authority were

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maintained

- the welcomed reductions in the Council's carbon footprint connected with reduction of the data centre footprint requirement as Council ICT servers and applications were moved to the cloud
- any model of new ways of working should have the primary objective of meeting the business needs of the council to provide the best service possible to the public

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation on New Ways of Working be noted;
- (2) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services be requested to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee on the reduction of the data centre footprint requirement as Council ICT servers and applications are moved to the cloud; and
- (3) Stephan Van Arendsen be thanked for his informative presentation.

**13. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2021/22 TO 2024/25 AND
FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE 2020 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL
BUDGET UPDATE 2021/22 INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF
COVID-19 ON THE 2021/22 BUDGET - SEPTEMBER UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 45 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 September 2021 the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that advised of:

- (1) the current estimated financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget;
- (2) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for 2021/22;
- (3) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2021/22; and
- (4) the monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2021 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

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capital projects are also presented for approval.

The Cabinet had resolved (Minute No. 45) that:

A. in respect of the Revenue Budget:

- (1) the current financial implications of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position, be noted;
- (2) the current position relating to the 2021/22 revenue budget be noted; and
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2021/22 revenue budget be recognised and 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;

B. In respect of the Capital Programme:

- (1) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme, as outlined within paragraph 7.1 of the report, be noted;
- (2) the Council be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £1.875m for the development of Southport Town Deal projects, as outlined within paragraph 7.10 of the report;
- (3) the Council be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate of up to £2.500m for the pre-development phase of the Marine Lake Events Centre, subject to the bid to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to fund the works being successful, as outlined within paragraph 7.10 of the report;
- (4) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 July 2021 of £9.316m, as outlined within paragraph 7.3 of the report, together with the latest full year forecast of £45.475m, as outlined within paragraph 7.4, be noted;
- (5) the explanations of variances to project budgets, as outlined within paragraph 7.7 of the report, be noted; and
- (6) it be noted that capital resources will be managed by the

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Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services, to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as outlined within paragraph 7.13 of the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- the supplementary capital estimate of £1.875m for the development of Southport Town Deal projects and potential revenue implications associated with the proposals
- a concern was expressed at the governance arrangements of the Southport Town Deal Board in relation to Southport elected Member involvement
- the large reduction in capital spending from £46.1m in 2021/22 to £7.4m in 2023/24
- the expenditure on the essential repairs at Dunes Splashworld and the Southport Market development
- it was acknowledged that the majority of the Capital Programme would be funded via grants
- the financial pressures on the Children's Social Care budget associated with the cost of Placements and Packages
- in respect of Adult Social Care the report did not mention the impact of Brexit associated with labour shortages in the care sector nor in the delivery of the capital programme or some issues in the revenue budget
- in respect of the Operational In-House services capital programme information was sought on which of the existing flood management/coastal defence schemes related specifically to Maghull bearing in mind the recent flooding issues in the area; and what schemes were in the pipeline and how would they be funded
- the progress in the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant and ensuring statutory compliance with regulations

RESOLVED:

That the financial monitoring report and the decision taken by Cabinet in respect of this matter be noted.

14. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 17 of 20 October 2020 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

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A table attached to the report set out each recommendation and an accompanying update on the action taken to implement each recommendation.

Members of the Committee Asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Reference was made to the Working Group's recommendation requesting the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to consider the development of a Digital Skills Passport which would include literacy, language and numeracy; that literacy, language and numeracy skills in south Sefton were poor and often intergenerational; and that this was the reason for the request to LCRCA. It was therefore considered important to highlight the Council's concerns to LCRCA about the lack of literacy, language and numeracy in a Digital Skills Passport and proposes that these skills are embedded as part of any digital skills training. If such a scheme was introduced an evaluation could be undertaken to ascertain whether the interventions had been successful in improving skills in the south Sefton area. The Committee would also request an update on the LCRCA's stated commitment to developing an overall strategy for the development of literacy, language and numeracy within the Liverpool City Region
- the dialogue between the Council and LCR relating to LCR devolving sufficient funding to Sefton to appoint a project worker to undertake work to implement specific Working Group recommendations

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted; and
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to write to Liverpool City Region expressing the Committee's concern regarding the progress made in the development of a Digital Skills Passport and including literacy, language and numeracy.

**15. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS
AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2021/22; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and providing an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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The report also provided an update, further to Minute No. 5 (2) of the meeting held on 15 June 2021, on Sefton's Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to write to all Members of the Committee seeking the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s);
- (3) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (4) the Chief Planning Officer be requested to submit a report to Committee regarding Sefton's Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document once direction from Government has been received as to changes to the planning system, part of which will provide clear guidance on the role of planning in achieving social value.

**16. WELFARE REFORM AND ANTI-POVERTY REFERENCE GROUP
- UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 7 of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 the Committee considered a Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty update of the Head of Health and Wellbeing and Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

The update provided information on the latest meeting of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- Community Shop
- Poverty Emergency and Childhood Poverty in Sefton
- Holiday Activity Fund and Summer Food Programme
- Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme
- Welfare benefits team recruitment

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented the update.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- the work of the Welfare Benefit team was applauded in resolving a constituent's universal credit problem and thereby avoided the eviction from their home

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- the respectful and sustainable model of the community pantry approach to meet the needs and breadth of access required across the borough

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her update.

17. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - AUGUST 2021

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented her report.

A Member asked a question/commented on the following issue:

- Energy management, climate emergency and the COP 26 conference

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.