



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE BALLROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 29TH JUNE, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor John Sayers (in the Chair)
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D'Albuquerque, Cluskey, Hansen,
Chris Maher, Myers and Page

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor John Sayers welcomed Members to the first physical meeting of Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) in the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Sayers indicated that to mitigate risks associated with the transmission of the Covid-19 virus, could Members and officers remain in their allocated seats during the meeting, wear a face covering, provided they weren't exempt from doing so, and use the hand sanitizers; and requested that Members and officers refrained from gathering together following the Meeting.

Councillor Sayers made a special welcome to Councillors d'Albuquerque, Cluskey, Hansen Christine Maher and Page who were new members of the Committee; and also offered his thanks to Councillors Brough, Dowd, Halsall, Killen and Lewis for their help and support on the Committee during 2020/21.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robinson and Sathiy and Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

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

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the draft 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 scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan; updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and updated on the progress of items that have previously been considered by the Committee.

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

- In respect of the update on United Utilities and surface water charges contained in the report a brief explanation was given that this matter was first brought to the Committee's attention by officers from the Council's Energy and Environment Team; that it was found that schools in the north-west of England were being financially disadvantaged compared to schools in the south-east due to the imposition of much higher surface water charges; in addition, local authority assets such as parks and cemeteries faced large increases; that the Committee had requested that representatives of DEFRA and OFWAT appear before the Committee to answer questions on the discrepancies in surface water charges; and that as a result, charging structures were changed and Local Authorities and schools in Sefton and across the north-west had aggregately saved millions of pounds in charges. This had been a great success story for the Committee because with cross-party support, Sefton had led on this proposal to push for a reduction in surface water charges with the resultant financial benefit to Sefton schools.
- Quoracy issues associated with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Topics considered by Working Groups appointed by the Committee

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the up to date position regarding the Committee's two Working Groups relating to Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity; and Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People be noted;
- (3) it be noted that the Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2020, agreed that no new Working Groups be established until the completion of one of the current Working Groups referred to in (2) above;

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- (4) bearing in mind Sefton Council's operation of its self-supply licence, supported by an experienced managing agent, Waterscan, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, no further reports be submitted to the Committee relating to surface water charges and associated issues unless significant developments materialise on this matter;
- (5) the thanks of the Committee to the Council's Energy and Environment Team be placed on record for their work in helping to secure aggregate savings of millions of pounds to Sefton and north-west schools associated with surface water charges; and
- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

6. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JUNE 2021

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED:

That the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted.