

**THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2023. MINUTE NOS 146, 149 AND 150 ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL - IN."**

## **CABINET**

### **MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 6TH APRIL, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ian Maher (in the Chair)  
Councillors Cummins, Doyle, Fairclough, Lappin,  
Moncur and Roscoe

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Sir Ron Watson

#### **143. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkinson, Hardy and Veidman.

#### **144. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **145. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

##### **Decision Made:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **146. CORPORATE PLAN, WORKFORCE PLAN & EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive which presented the draft Corporate Plan, Workforce Plan and the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for consideration and subject to comment, submission to Council for approval.

The report indicated that as part of the Council's response to the feedback to the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Revisit in April 2022, the draft Corporate Plan contains the Council's five priorities for the next three years:

- Children and Young People
- Health and Wellbeing
- Adult Social Care
- Working for Our Communities Every Day
- Inclusive Growth

The Corporate Plan will run for a three-year period and the progress on its delivery will be reported to the Cabinet on an annual basis. Delivery of the plan will be monitored through existing mechanisms and plans such as the Children's Improvement Plan and Service Plans. The next Corporate Peer Challenge is planned for 21 to 24 November 2023.

The draft Workforce Plan outlined the vision for the Council, values and behaviours, and the priorities to be focused upon to achieve the vision. It demonstrated the value, skills and flexibility of the Council's workforce; and highlighted that the next few years will present a different set of challenges and opportunities for Sefton and the Council's workforce and set out how the Council is planning to respond to the following seven key objectives:

- Increased awareness and engagement across the whole organisation
- Increased engagement with our partners and communities
- Consistent and targeted training and development
- Strengthened support for staff
- Maximise effectiveness and inclusivity in our HR processes and procedures.
- Improved monitoring and measurement of progress
- Establish and strengthen monitoring and governance structures

The draft Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to make the Council a more inclusive and diverse place for people to work, recognises the need to work with partners to remove barriers for under-represented groups across Sefton and demonstrates the Council's commitment to improve inclusivity in Sefton. The draft Strategy reaffirms the Council's commitment to recognising care experience as a protected characteristic and it recognises the work the Council needs to prioritise internally. The Strategy would also help to deliver the seven key objectives set out in the draft Workforce Plan.

The Chief Executive praised the work been undertaken by the following staff networks:

- Sefton Council Christian Workplace Group
- Sefton's Black and Ethnically Diverse Staff Group
- Sefton LGBT+ Staff Network
- Sefton Disability Staff Network
- Sefton Women's Network

The Chief Executive also reported that members of staff had been nominated for the Municipal Journal Awards 2023 in the following categories:

- Care and Health Integration – Sefton Health and Wellbeing Across the Lifecourse; and
- Rising Star – Lizzie Todd – Sefton Library Service

**Decision Made:**

- (1) the Council be recommended to approve the draft Corporate Plan 2023-2026;
- (2) it be noted that the next Corporate Peer Challenge is planned for 21 to 24 November 2023;
- (3) the Council be recommended to approve the draft Workforce Plan 2022-2026; and
- (4) the Council be recommended to approve the draft Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

To agree the draft Corporate Plan, Workforce Plan and the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the next three years and these are underpinned by achieving financial sustainability, the Workforce Plan, the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and living our values.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**147. DETERMINATION OF PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE AGE RANGE AT WATERLOO PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education which sought the determination of a proposal to expand the age range at Waterloo Primary School.

**Decision Made:**

That approval be given to the proposal as detailed in the statutory notice to change the age range from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 at Waterloo Primary School with effect from July 2023, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

The local authority had the power to consider all options including expanding a maintained school following the statutory process detailed in the report.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare places to enable parents to work. These childcare places need to be accessible, affordable, and delivered flexibly in high quality settings. Local authorities must ensure that the needs of children and families in each local area are

met, by influencing and shaping provision through local partnerships, and by identifying gaps and developing the market.

#### **148. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING 2022/23 - QUARTERLY MONITORING UPDATE**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education which provided details of:

1. The monitoring position of the High Needs budget position on 1 February 2023 as per previous agreement to provide regular updates on:
  - The forecast expenditure to year end based on current / anticipated SEND support required during 2022/23; and
  - Provisional High Need budget forecast for the 2023/24 financial year based on announced funding levels and estimated High Needs demands.
2. An update on the current Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review / Sufficiency Programme aimed at bringing High Needs expenditure pressures back into a more manageable financial position in the future.

The Chief Executive reported that the Government had published the SEND and Alternative Provision Plan Right Support, Right Place, Right Time document in March 2023 in response to the SEND Green paper published in March 2022, which proposed a number of reforms to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the details of any Government resources to address the fundamental cost and demand issues faced by local authorities were awaited. The Cabinet was also advised that Sefton Council was one of the 55 local authorities in the second tranche of the Department for Education's 'safety valve' and 'Delivering Better Value in SEND' Programme.

#### **Decision Made:**

##### Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Budget

- (1) the current forecast position relating to the 2022/23 High Needs Budget be noted;
- (2) the forecast accumulative deficit position of the High Needs Budget be noted;
- (3) the provisional potential deficit position facing the 2023/24 High Needs Budget be noted;

##### Update on the 2022/23 SEN Review / Sufficiency Programme

- 4) the continuing work being undertaken through the SEN Review/ Sufficiency Programme be noted; and:

- 5) the capital projects raised in Section 5.4 of the report be noted.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

To provide an update on the 2022/23 High Needs budget financial position and a provisional update of the potential deficit budget forecast against the High Needs budget in 2023/24.

To ensure that the SEND Review / Sufficiency programme can progress to provide sustainable and effective SEND support for Sefton pupils within the available resources allocated through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**149. SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE REPORT DOMESTIC ABUSE  
NEW BURDENS FUNDING**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) which set out the supplementary revenue grant funding received by the Council from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding for the period of 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 to 31 March 2024.

**Decision Made:** That

- (1) the Council be recommended to approve a supplementary revenue estimate of £1.832m which is fully funded by Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding; and
- (2) the Assistant Director of People (Communities) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing be granted delegated authority for the future acceptance of the same grant funding and the allocation of the funding in line with the grant conditions.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

To approve updates to the 2023/24 Revenue programme so that the funding can be used by the Council to discharge its duty under part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

## **150. CLIMATE EMERGENCY PHASE 2 UPDATE**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services which indicated that Sefton Council had declared a climate emergency in 2019 and it has a target to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 for Council operations which is set out in the Climate Change Emergency Strategy to achieve this goal.

The report indicated that the Council are coming to the end of the phase 1 delivery (2020 –2023) of the strategy / action plan, and as Phase 2 begins, the strategy highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with the next stage of implementing this challenging commitment.

The Liverpool City Region climate emergency target, to reach net zero by 2040 for all sectors, requires input and collaboration on housing, energy, transport, land use and climate resilience.

### **Decision Made:**

That the Council be recommended to give approval to the implementation of Phase 2 of the Climate Change Emergency strategy / action plan and note the interim targets and the work required to meet the committed net zero targets over the next three years.

### **Reasons for the Decision:**

To meet the Council's net zero carbon commitment by 2030, significant action would be required. It is important that elected members are fully aware of the challenges of meeting that target. Supplementary reports would be brought to elected members for each of the specific actions, as well as annual reports on progress.

### **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Not to take action on the climate emergency and net zero carbon targets, would be contrary to government policy direction and increase exposure and vulnerability to climate change impacts.

## **151. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To comply with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, notice had been published regarding the intention to consider the following matter in private for the reason set out below.

### **Decision Made:**

That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in

Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

#### **152. COUNCIL HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

The Cabinet considered exempt information provided by the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) in relation to the Council Housing Business Plan. (Minute No. 154 below refers).

##### **Decision Made:**

That the exempt information be considered as part of the report in relation to the Council Housing Business Plan. (Minute No. 154 below refers).

##### **Reasons for the Decision:**

The exempt information is required to be considered with the information in the public domain in order that an informed decision may be made.

##### **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

#### **153. PUBLIC SESSION**

##### **Decision Made:**

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

#### **154. COUNCIL HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) which outlined the draft Council Housing Programme Business Plan, which set a proposal that would see approximately 46 Council owned homes acquired over the next 5 years as part of a first phase of growth to re-establish Council Housing once again in Sefton.

##### **Decision Made:**

- (1) the contents of the report be noted, and the approach that is being taken to the Council Housing Programme be endorsed;
- (2) approval be given to the adoption of the Council Housing Business Plan; and
- (3) it be noted that further reports will be presented to Cabinet relating to the purchase of properties on each site.

**Reasons for the Decision:**

The Cabinet was required to approve the Business Plan for the Council Housing Programme, Although further reports on each scheme would be brought to Cabinet separately, consideration of the report was required to ensure that the scheme proposals are developed in line with an approved plan.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Do Nothing

Sefton could choose not to become a stock holding local authority and to rely solely on Registered Providers for the provision of new affordable housing in the borough. However, as outlined in the strategic business case for the provision of new Council Housing considered by the Cabinet on 7 January 2021 (Minute No. 79 refers), and reiterated in the report, to adopt this approach would limit the availability of truly affordable social rent properties in the borough.

A Council Housing Programme would also allow the Council to make strategic decisions on the provision of housing based solely on the objective of meeting housing need in the borough. The proposal outlined in this report would establish the programme through a first phase of growth of 'general needs' properties, and this would give the authority flexibility on managing this stock. Once the programme is established consideration can be given to developing more specialist housing to complement the delivery on existing Registered Providers in the borough.