



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON WEDNESDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Howard (in the Chair)
Councillors Corcoran, Page and Webster

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowd, Hansen, Chris Maher and Myers; and Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

11. DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health) of 6 September 2022, and to Minute No. 13 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) of 27 September 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) updating on Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse, including an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act and work of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to date. The report set out the background to the matter; an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act; local authority statutory duties within the Act; the roles and responsibilities of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; links to other national/statutory guidance; and cross-partnership collaboration.

The Terms of Reference for the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board were attached to the report at Appendix A.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- Channels through which domestic abuse could be reported.

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- Services provided by the voluntary sector and the wider banner of safeguarding for different scenarios.
- Further to Minute No. 36 of the Council meeting of 14 July 2022, queries were raised regarding whether the Council motion raised on Sexual Violence was fulfilled.
- With regard to the protections contained in the Domestic Abuse Act, as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report, it would be helpful, for the avoidance of doubt, if confirmation could be obtained that GPs and other health professionals in general practice are not charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Assistant Director of People (Communities) be requested to seek assurances from the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board that GPs and other health professionals in general practice are not charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.

12. WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY & OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) seeking consideration of the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for approval for 2022/23.

The report indicated that the Council provided a Highway Winter Service to the Borough in accordance with the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; that officers monitored the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enacted the plan when weather conditions dictated; that the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) had inserted an additional section 41(1A) to the Highways Act 1980 which placed a duty on the Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, and stated 'In particular, a Highway Authority is under duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'; and that in addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Statutory Network Management Duty on all local traffic authorities in England requiring all authorities to do all that was reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting this duty, authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonably practicable. The Council's Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan, which has been approved by the Council, is reviewed each summer to ensure that it remained 'fit for purpose'.

The report advised that as part of the annual review and reassessment consultation was undertaken and that a consultation letter was sent to

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every Elected Member seeking their views. A copy of the letter was attached as Annex A to the report.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Access by the Council to snow ploughs in cases of exceptionally severe weather conditions.
- Co-ordination with Cleansing Services following gritting, in order for the grit not to be removed too soon.
- Claims submitted by pedestrians against the Council, following accidents due to icy conditions and whether certain groups were disproportionately affected.
- Whether there was flexibility within the Winter Plan to accommodate unforeseen emergency occurrences.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for 2022/23 be endorsed.

13. UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director – Place that provided an update on the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the potential implications of the introduction of this funding for Sefton and the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

The report indicated that the UKSPF was the government's domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme (ESIF) which the UK continued to participate in until 2023; that the ESIF programme was essential for local regeneration, employment and skills and had been routinely accessed in Sefton for many years to support a host of regeneration, community development and employment-based activities; that UKSPF was allocated to Mayoral Combined Authorities where these were in place, as in our area and that across the Liverpool City Region, a total amount of £52,775,501 was available; and that Sefton would receive 16.8% of the total amounting to £7,451,277.

The report also identified the proposed allocations and key deliverables for communities and place, supporting local businesses, and people and skills.

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

- How the Multiply national numeracy initiative monies available through the UKSPF could be spent, how it could be directed to

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target groups, and whether there was any particular profile of adults who were able to access the initiative.

- Reference was made to the nominal allocations per local authority area as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report and Sefton's receipt of 16.8% of the total allocation, in comparison with Liverpool's receipt of 33.2%.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund and the potential implications of the introduction of this funding for Sefton and the Liverpool City Region be noted; and
- (2) with regard to the nominal allocations per local authority area as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report, Sefton's representatives on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to seek clarification from the Combined Authority on the funding formula resulting in Sefton receiving 16.8% of the total allocation, in comparison with Liverpool's receipt of 33.2%.

14. HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 16 of 21 September 2021 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group and approved by Cabinet and Council.

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

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group and approved by Cabinet and Council be noted; and
- (2) a further update report be submitted in six months.

15. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 15 of 21 September 2021 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the

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Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group and approved by Cabinet and Council.

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:

- In respect of the recommendations on “a very significant increase in uniformed enforcement officers be established to tackle the problems of littering, fly-tipping and rear entry dumping”; and “a high-profile publicity campaign be introduced to highlight the increased enforcement activity to be undertaken”, concern was expressed at the update responses that there was currently no budgetary provision to implement such recommendations; particularly bearing in mind that the Working Group's Final report recommended that funding be provided from the £500k that had been identified to tackle street scene problems from the Council's 2021/22 budget.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group and approved by Cabinet and Council be noted;
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be requested to give further consideration to the implementation of the recommendations referred to above and report their findings to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) a further update report be submitted in six months.

16. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought the views of Members on the Work Programme for 2022/23; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S).

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

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- The submission of a report updating on Southport Market to the Committee. This was anticipated to be included on the agenda for the next formal meeting of the Committee on 8 November 2022.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed; and
- (2) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

17. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JUNE 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2022

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 (Green Sefton element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and
- (2) any questions to Cabinet Members be emailed to them directly.