



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON TUESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Dowd (in the Chair)
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Corcoran, Harvey, Lloyd-Johnson,
Christine Maher, McKee, Catie Page and
Sir Ron Watson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson and Hardy

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Webster (and her substitute member Councillor Anne Thompson) and Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

21. BOOTLE REGENERATION STRATEGY - PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Stephen Watson, Executive Director of Place, that updated on the Bootle Regeneration Strategy (the Strategy). Mr. Watson highlighted the following issues:

- Introduction and context relating to the site; and the Phase 1A-C site plan.
- The vision statement that the repurposing of the Strand would catalyse development of a more sustainable and resilient town centre that provided improved opportunities for local communities, residents and businesses; and that it would increase pride and raise ambition across Bootle whilst improving perception and brand beyond Bootle. The principles of "people first", "connected", "resilient" and "green" were referred to along with the outcomes of improved resident wellbeing, inclusive growth, a connected and integrated town centre and a sustainable repurposed asset. A framework for success (including principles to test options and

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shape evaluation criteria against) were also described relating to economic, social, environmental and commercial activity.

- Scheme design overview which included retail being the main focus of the centre; the waterside regeneration; phase 1 demolition; the Salt and Tar operation; and future phases of development/activity
- Stakeholder engagement and consultation. Details were provided on activity and events at the Information Centre, the Stakeholder Engagement, Communications and Consultation Plan, and that the consultation process would be ongoing. The positive results of the demolition planning application consultation were also detailed and which included engagement with occupiers, residents and the community
- Key milestones relating to the demolition planning application being finalised and submitted in early October 2023; and the anticipated planning decision regarding the main works application being approved in July 2024.

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

- A concern was raised that the Council was progressing with the scheme in which the full financial consequences were not known and how key outturn revenue costs would be identified and addressed.
- The people first approach and how the use of spaces and accessibility could better connect with the town centre to other assets.
- How the business engagement consultation included market traders.
- Views received from constituents was wholly supportive and that the scheme proposals were very much welcomed.
- High streets were currently struggling and the Strand was in effect Bootle's high street; and that as part of the ambitious proposal there was a need to anticipate market and trading conditions in the long-term.
- The potential for positive educational impacts to arise from the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That Stephen Watson be thanked for his informative presentation.

22. FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) advising that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 previously required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion

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risk management functions; that following the cessation of this requirement, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that an annual Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management review be submitted to it.

The report indicated that the Annual Review covered the 12-month period from September 2022-2023 and detailed the following key areas:

- Information on flooding & erosion incidents experienced over the last year.
- Work progress relative to our legislative responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Riparian Owner and Coastal Authority.
- Work progress relative to our own actions set out in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2022-2030.
- Overview of annual finances

The report indicated that in January 2023, the government announced its decision to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England to better control flooding and wastewater discharges; that sections 18 and 19 of Schedule 3 stated that the SuDS Approval Body (SAB's) adoption duty did not apply to a drainage system which had been designed for a single property or publicly maintained roads; that currently, no further guidance on funding arrangements, dates of enactment etc had been published; and that this would require additional resource within the Council to undertake the various aspects of this role, though it was unclear what level was required and where funding would come from to support this.

The report sought the views of the Committee on:

- the need for future annual reports to be submitted as it was no longer a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010; and
- comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing.

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

- the implementation in Wales of Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010; and could lessons be learned from Welsh authorities on its implementation and commercial implications.
- Flooding issues in Ince Blundell and the alleged poor response from the Council's contact centre when dealing with residents' requests for help.
- The involvement of developers in ensuring that drainage approval was sought from a SuDS Approval Body before construction on their projects commenced.

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- The use of water butts as a simple but effective way to store rainfall to help to protect drainage systems; and how this could be promoted with residents.
- funding to deliver the Crosby Flood and Coastal Defence Scheme.
- The large number of Risk Management Authorities the Council had to engage with and was this overly bureaucratic.
- The number of riparian owners in Sefton.
- The reasons why Maghull seemed particularly badly affected by flood reports and the continuing work to investigate this problem.
- The 'Merseyside Partnership Quick Win' fund and recommended projects made by Sefton.
- Birkdale allotment flooding issues.
- Gully cleansing activity to help resolve highway drainage issues.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report be noted;
- (2) the future potential need for additional resources if Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 is implemented be noted; and
- (3) annual reports be no longer submitted to the Committee as it is no longer a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 but that instead, the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services be requested to submit an annual summary.

23. GREEN SEFTON ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) that provided an update on the progress of Green Sefton's operational delivery over the last year, and setting out the strategic work programme, in line with the new Service Vision 2030, and updated Service Plan for the next year.

The report concluded that the service had performed well under ongoing challenging circumstances over the last couple of years, as resources available clearly did not allow for service delivery to meet public, Councillor, nor the Services own expectations; that notwithstanding this, the Service had achieved many successes during the past year; and that the Service Vision, Service Planning and new key performance indicators, together with the workload matrix system detailed in the report, were all proving a useful tool to manage priorities.

The Committee was requested to review the proposals contained in the report and Annual Review and consider the submission of comments to the Cabinet Member - Health and Well Being and the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

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A copy of the Green Sefton Annual Review 2023 was attached as an appendix to the report.

Mark Shaw, Green Sefton Service Manager, made a presentation to the Committee and highlighted the work undertaken by his service during the past year which included:

- Undertook major consultation for Botanic Gardens Improvements and adopted Orrell Mount Park masterplan.
- Delivered the Parks Levelling Up scheme.
- Delivered the Coast Visitor Action Plan and continued to work in partnership with other landowners and emergency services.
- In Bloom success.
- Enacted the Coast PSPO.
- Contributed to the Climate Change Working Group.
- Responded to extreme weather events, climate changes, and other (e.g. bird flu).
- Successfully bid for external funds, developed and delivered improvement projects.
- Hesketh Park Legacy scheme approved.
- Developed concessions.
- Adopted a refreshed Service Vision, and Service Plan.

Mr. Shaw also identified activity to be undertaken in 2024 which included:

- Develop new funding bids, such as Botanic Gardens Heritage Lottery.
- Deliver further improvement schemes, such as Crosby coastal defences (interim works).
- Increase staff capacity, apprenticeships and training.
- Adopt the Tree, Allotment, Action Plan Nature Conservation Strategies.
- Start replacement of fleet and machinery.
- Continue to develop the Coastal Gateways.
- Support the development of the SCLP Board and contribute to wider regional activities.
- Publish the standards of what can be achieved within resources available.
- Promoting changes to overall Landscape Management including BNG, LCR works, Trees for Climate and more.
- Develop a Strategic Vision for our places in the future.
- Lead of key aspects of the Climate Action Plan.
- Update key performance indicators to track performance.

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

- The Green Sefton service was a service provided by the Council that had a direct impact on all communities.

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- Community activity and involvement associated with improvements to Poet's park.
- The marketing and PR around the bold move to rebrand the Green Sefton service.
- How the Green Sefton service publicised its many good new stories via social media and a dedicated corporate communications team member.
- How successful was the consultation and engagement with public, coastal landowners and partners in the development of the Coast and Visitor Areas Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).
- Problems associated with waste and refuse at the Formby National Trust site.
- Natural Alternatives, Green Sefton's own long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the Green Sefton Annual Review 2023 be noted; and
- (2) Mark Shaw be thanked for his informative presentation.

24. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24, 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 Work Programme for 2023/24; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that updated on arrangements for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre; and updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that since the preparation of the agenda Merseyside Recycling and Waste authority had been in touch indicating that they could facilitate a visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre on Monday, 15 January 2024.

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

- Concern was expressed that reports were not submitted on time in accordance with the Committee's work programme; and particularly in respect of reports about Southport Market and Sandway Homes.
- Mention was made of Cabinet's recent approval of amendments to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol which should ensure that strategies and plans were submitted to Overview and Scrutiny prior to consideration by Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the

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report, be agreed;

- (2) (A) the reports on the Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies; Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy); Southport Market; and Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 January 2024; and
- (B) the Committee's concerns be placed on record that the reports referred to in (A) above were not submitted in accordance with the work programme timescales and that the Committee expects that the reports will be submitted to the next meeting;
- (3) approval be given for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and informal meeting of the Committee to be held on Monday, 15 January 2024; and
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

25. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2023 TO NOVEMBER 2023

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.

Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Sefton Council Economic Growth and Housing service being nominated for the team of the year at the Institute Economic Development Annual Awards 2023.
- Salt and Tar music festival being nominated in the the Best New Festival and Best Small Festival categories at this year's UK Festival Awards

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

- Reasons for the poor attendance at the 'Getting Back into Work' event held on 13 September 2023.
- A comment was made that the Visitor Guide should have been ready for print and circulation in October 2023 rather than January 2024.

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- Success for Ukrainian learners achieving ESOL Speaking and Learning Entry Level 1.
- Issues associated with Southport Pier including structural reports; ongoing work with regards to detailed cost and survey work; the appointment of a contractor following the procurement process; the contract specification and terms and conditions; and when would information be known on funding gaps to deliver required works.

Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- The success of the neighbourhoods team and partners in respect of “Operation Banger” during the bonfire night period.
- The Christmas light switch on and the Mayor’s toy appeal.

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

- The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and its impact on the supported housing and the older person’s housing sector.
- Funding streams for Christmas lights.
- Deadlines for donations to the Mayor’s toy appeal; and how personal donations could be made to the appeal.
- The Hate Crime Joint Action Group; and the great work undertaken by Hate Crime Community Ambassadors to promote hate crime awareness.

A Members of the Committee indicated that he wished to ask questions of the Cabinet Member – Locality Services who was not in attendance at the meeting. The Chair, Councillor Dowd advised that the Member could email the Cabinet Member directly seeking responses; and such responses could then be circulated to Committee members either via email or by inclusion on the next agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (2) Councillors Atkinson and Hardy be thanked for her attendance at the Committee.