

**CABINET**

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT  
ON THURSDAY 18TH JULY, 2013**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P. Dowd (in the Chair)  
Councillors Cummins, Fairclough, Hardy, Maher,  
Moncur and Tweed

**ALSO PRESENT** Councillors Ashton, Ball, Brodie – Browne, Shaw and  
Welsh

**18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**20. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Decision Made:**

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

**21. PUBLIC PETITIONS**

The Chair reported that three public petitions had been submitted for consideration at the meeting. Two of the petitions were in relation to Minute No. 22 below and the third petition was in relation to Minute No. 27 below.

(1) The Cabinet heard representations from Mr. T. Durrance of Birkdale on behalf of a deputation who had submitted a petition containing the signatures of 26 residents of the Borough, which stated:

"We the undersigned, would ask the Sefton Council Cabinet Members to reject the report from Council Officers to curtail library services at Birkdale Library."

(2) The Cabinet then heard representations from Councillor Brodie – Browne on behalf of a deputation who had submitted a petition containing the signatures of 42 residents of the Borough, which stated:

"We the undersigned, call on Sefton Council to retain a comprehensive Branch Library Network in Southport."

During his representations, Councillor Brodie – Browne requested the Cabinet to amend recommendation 2 in the report under Minute No. 22 by the addition of the following text:

“subject to the requirement that Sefton CVS review their business plan for the Birkdale Library, so that up to 50% of the floor space was made available for library use.”

(3) The Cabinet then heard representations from Ms. J. Edgar of Crosby on behalf of a deputation who had submitted a petition containing the signatures of 25 residents of the Borough, which stated:

“We ReClaim and the residents of Sefton:-

1. Note the updated Welfare Reform Report being presented to Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013. This report fails to comment upon the ‘anti-bedroom tax movement’ in Sefton and across Merseyside and the support tenants are receiving through this grassroots movement.
2. We urge Sefton Council and HA’s of Sefton to recognise that they have specific roles in decisions affecting Sefton residents and have a range of discretion e.g. in deciding what is a bedroom, who is awarded a Discretionary Housing Payment!
3. We also again demand that Sefton Council exerts pressure on the 23 housing associations within its area, to adopt a policy of ‘No Evictions for ‘Bedroom Tax’ arrears.’
4. We also suggest that the Labour Group works with ReClaim in adopting a motion concerning the powers that Sefton Council has to mitigate the effects of welfare reform, particularly the bedroom tax and the benefit cap.”

**Decision Made:**

That the petitions be noted and taken in account during the consideration of the reports submitted under Minute No’s 22 and 27 below.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the representations made by the petitioners to be taken into account during the consideration of the reports submitted by Officers.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None

## 22. LIBRARY REVIEW - ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY PROPOSALS

Further to the representations made under Minute No. 21 above and Minute No. 4 of the meeting held on 23 May 2013, the Cabinet then considered the report of the Director of Older People which provided details of the Officers' assessment of the alternative proposals submitted by four community groups to run library services in locations where closure had previously been agreed by the Council, based on the assessment criteria for evaluating community proposals, approved by the Cabinet Member - Children's, Schools, Families and Leisure.

The report was arranged in a number of sections and annexes as indicated below:

	<b>Section</b>	<b>Annex</b>
Background	1	
Assessment Criteria	2	
The Assessment Gateway	3	A
Assessment of Community proposals	4	
Consultation with the Trade Unions	5	
Update on other Library Review issues	6	

The Chair enquired about the additional information sought from community groups during the assessment of their proposals. The Head of Health and Wellbeing indicated that on 29 May 2013, officers had sought further information from the ABC Group and the Birkdale Library Action Group on a number of issues in relation to their proposals e.g. What would be the difference in roles and responsibilities of volunteers and paid staff? No responses had been received until the publication of the report when the ABC group provided further information. The response received did not affect the outcome of the assessment process.

The Chair reiterated the view that all proposals had to be feasible and sustainable, meaning that the proposals would not have recourse to funds from the Council in the medium and long term.

He expressed concern that some of the proposals submitted by community groups, assumed that the Council would continue to provide revenue support for staffing costs and equipment, although the Council had previously agreed that an illustrative saving of £400k had to be saved on the Library Service during the period of 2013/14 to 2014/15. He also indicated that the Council would have to produce and agree further budget savings options for 2015/16 and onwards, following the recent statements by the Government regarding reductions in public expenditure, the impact of which would need to be assessed in due course.

Both the Chair and Councillor Moncur commented that the representations made under Minute No. 21 about the amount of floor space to be made available for library use at the Birkdale Library Building were a matter for discussion between the Seton CVS and the Birkdale Library Action Group

when they hold a further meeting on 19 July 2013 and the Council would not be able to place any pre-conditions on the proposals submitted by the Sefton CVS.

The Chair commented that Officers would continue to consider any new proposals from community groups/organisations that may come forward, provided that any such proposals come forward at least two months before the proposed date of closure of the library in question. He also indicated the Officers were currently assessing the nomination under the Community Right to Bid provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of the Carnegie Library, Crosby.

**Decision Made:**

That :

- (1) the Officers' assessment of the Community proposals at the first gateway be approved, and the proposals submitted by the ABC Group and Birkdale Library Action Group be rejected;
- (2) the Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Aintree Library Action Group proposals pass the first gateway and Officers be authorised to carry out an in depth assessment of those proposals;
- (3) any future decisions relating to the Sefton CVS and Aintree Library Action Group proposals be delegated to the Cabinet Member - Children's, Schools, Families and Leisure;
- (4) the consideration of any new proposals that may come forward be delegated to the Cabinet Member - Children's, Schools, Families and Leisure, provided that such new proposals come forward at least two months before the proposed date of closure of the library in question;
- (5) the receipt of a nomination under the Community Right to Bid provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of the Carnegie Library, Crosby be noted; and
- (6) community groups/organisations be thanked for their efforts in submitting community proposals for the libraries and that the hard work and commitment made by them be recognised.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To determine the Community proposals for the provision of alternative library services.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

The Council at its meeting on 28 February 2013 stated that it would consider proposals from Community groups/organisations to run

alternative library services subject to them being sustainable and feasible. The report set out the community proposals received to date, and the Officers' assessment of their viability.

### **23. PROPOSAL TO REVIEW THE OPTION OF A COMBINED AUTHORITY FOR THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined the proposal to review the option of a Combined Authority for the Liverpool City Region in order to access national funding opportunities that would be devolved from Central Government.

The Chief Executive indicated a further detailed report on the proposed governance structure for the Combined Authority would be submitted to the Cabinet and Council for consideration in the near future and that if necessary, additional meetings would need to be convened.

#### **Decision Made:**

That:

- (1) support in principle be given to the agreement by Liverpool City Region Council Leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool to conduct a review into the Combined Authority model across the sub-region; and
- (2) it be noted that the outcome of the review would be considered by full Council prior to any final decision to proceed was taken.

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

Consultation had taken place with the Liverpool City Region Leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool who had requested agreement in principle from individual local authorities to conduct a review into a Combined Authority at sub-region level.

Further consultation and engagement would take place with Elected Members regarding the final proposed model to establish a Combined Authority.

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

Other options considered, included the creation of a 'Supervisory Board' - a formal joint committee of Council Leaders intended to provide democratic oversight to funding allocated to a Local Enterprise Partnership area, and the creation of a Liverpool City Region or Conurbation Mayor.

The Liverpool City Region Leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool had identified the Combined Authority as the preferred option.

#### **24. 2013/14 BUDGET UPDATE**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT on the current position in respect of the achievement of the approved budget savings for 2013 - 2015.

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

That:

- (1) the progress to date on the achievement of approved savings for 2013 - 2015 be noted; and
- (2) approval be given to the establishment of a Transformation budget for 2013/14 of £0.180m, to be financed from the Modernisation Fund.

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

To ensure the Cabinet was informed of the latest position on the achievement of savings for the current financial year and to facilitate the achievement of the savings targets for 2014/2015

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

None.

#### **25. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS 2013/14**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT which provided details of the latest capital projects that had been recommended for inclusion within the Capital Investment Plan for 2013/14 by the Strategic Capital Investment Group, including proposed schemes to be funded from the Capital Priorities Fund.

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

That the Council be recommended to give approval to the inclusion of the proposed capital schemes, detailed in Appendix A of the report, in the Capital Investment Plan, to be funded from Single Capital Pot resources and the Capital Priorities Fund.

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

To seek the inclusion of projects in the Capital Investment Plan for 2013/14.

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

None.

**26. ADULT SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT SERVICE - AWARD OF CONTRACT**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Public Health on the outcome of the re-commissioning and tendering exercise for the provision of an Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Service for Sefton.

This was a Key Decision and was included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

**Decision Made:**

That the contract for the provision of an Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Service be awarded to Lifeline Project Limited of Manchester, for a 2-year period, with an option to extend annually for up to a further three years, commencing on the 1 October 2013.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To secure integrated, recovery-orientated, treatment services for substance misusing adults in Sefton.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**27. WELFARE REFORM UPDATE**

Further to the representations made under Minute No. 21 above, the Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Members Welfare Reform Reference Group which provided an update on the impact of the implementation of Welfare Reform legislation so far; work that partners and the Council were doing collectively, around the mitigation of impact where possible; and the preparatory work for further Welfare Reform legislation impacts.

Members of the Cabinet referred to the assistance given to Sefton residents as detailed in the report and to the additional financial support given to Sefton Citizens Advice Bureau to enable them to fund the recruitment of additional volunteers, to enable more assessments to be undertaken during extended opening hours.

The Chair commented that the Government would amend the regulations, if it was seen that local authorities were using 'loop holes' to provide discretionary housing payments to local residents and he indicated that the Council would continue to work with partners to try and mitigate the impact of the Governments welfare reform legislation as far as possible.

This was a Key Decision and was included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

**Decision Made:**

That:

- (1) the incredible energy and commitment from partners and within the Council to mitigate the impact wherever possible be noted and encouraged;
- (2) the timeline for the implementation of Welfare Reform legislation as set out in Appendix A of the report be noted;
- (3) the progress to date on the Partnership Action Plan themes as set out in Section 2 of the report be noted;
- (4) the update on the Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme as set out in Section 3 of the report be noted;
- (5) the emerging issues and proposed mitigation measures as set out in Section 4 of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (6) Priority short term support wherever possible, be offered to families most affected by the Benefits Cap and that the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy be amended to include this priority as set out in paragraph 4.2 (d) of the report.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To ensure that the Cabinet was fully informed of the emerging impact of Welfare Reform; enable the Council to focus efforts and capacity in the most appropriate ways in order to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform wherever possible; and to put into place any mitigating actions if possible and work with partners to do so

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

The proposed mitigation measures had been developed in partnership with key organisations such as JobCentre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau, One Vision Housing and the voluntary, community and faith sector. Various options had been discussed and suggested at the vibrant and well attended partner workshops as well as internal workshops. All of these had been considered for deliverability and viability. The options put forward were those that were considered to have a practical and realistic outcome