

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)**

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE  
ON TUESDAY 4TH JULY, 2017

Overview  
& Scrutiny



**PRESENT:** Councillor Sayers (in the Chair)

Councillors Bliss, Carragher, Dan T. Lewis, Michael O'Brien, Pullin, Roche, Weavers and Bill Welsh

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills,  
Councillor Atkinson

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Webster and her Substitute Member Councillor Bradshaw.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) held on 14 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4. SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

The Vice-Chair, Councillor O'Brien referred to the recent promotion of the Senior Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Ruth Harrison, to the position of Democratic Services Manager and on behalf of the Committee placed on record it's congratulations and appreciation for all her hard work and support over the years in her capacity as the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

**5. VERBAL UPDATE - UNITED UTILITIES - INCREASE IN SURFACE WATER CHARGES TO SCHOOLS**

In relation to Minute No. 42, OFWAT – Increase in Surface Water Charges, the Energy & Environmental Management Officer, Mr. Jon Williams updated the Committee on the progress made in relation to securing a reduction to drainage of surface water to Schools.

Mr Williams reported that the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Sayers and Councillor Weavers had met with a Member from Halton Council and

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representatives from United Utilities some time ago. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the cost for the drainage of surface water to schools and more specifically the comparison of the charges imposed on North West Schools to that of Schools in the South East.

It was reported that United Utilities had agreed a 50% reduction for Schools across the North West that equated to £15 million across the North West. Mr Williams stated that whilst the reduction was an excellent outcome, schools, governors and the Forums from across the North West had expressed concerns that the North West would still be more expensive than other regions. The sentiment from the wider campaign group was that United Utilities should still address this.

It was therefore requested that Officers be authorised to continue to work with United Utilities to explore a fairer solution that achieved parity in the North West when compared to the South East in terms of surface water drainage charges to Schools.

Members of the Committee paid tribute to the hard work and determination of Officers in working with United Utilities to secure a reduction in surface water drainage charges, in the first instance to Parks and Cemeteries and more recently to Schools.

Members of the Committee requested that United Utilities and Water Charges remain of the Committees programme of work in order that the Committee receives annual updates, at the very least.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) Officers be thanked for their hard work and determination, in working with United Utilities to secure a reduction in surface water drainage charges, in the first instance to Parks and Cemeteries and more recently to Schools;
- (2) the item "United Utilities – Update on Surface Water Charges" remain on the programme of work for the Committee;
- (3) Officers be requested (via a letter from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regeneration and Skills) to explore a fairer solution with United Utilities in seeking further reductions to Schools for surface water drainage charges; and
- (4) Written responses to be sent to DEFRA and OFWAT informing them that United Utilities solution whilst is welcome, not a fair solution and to express disappointment that community assets such as Parks, Cemeteries & Schools are still not recognised in the Concessionary scheme and that there is unease that United Utilities could retract its policies at any point.

## **6. PEER REVIEW WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance in relation to the Final Report of a review undertaken by the Peer Review Working Group.

Councillor Dan. T. Lewis, Lead Member of the Peer Review Working Group commended the report to Cabinet for approval. He thanked his colleagues Councillor O'Brien, Councillor Carragher and Councillor Anne Thompson for all their hard work and support whilst undertaking the review. He also thanked Mrs Ruth Harrison, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Mr. Ian Willman, Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Service Manager for all their hard work in completing the work.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) approves and commends the Peer Review Working Group – Final Report with its' recommendations to the Cabinet for its approval.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that included the most recent report from the following Cabinet Members:-

- Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing;
- Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing (parks element only);
- Cabinet Member – Locality Services;
- Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills; and
- Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member update reports be accepted.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance in relation to the Committee's programme of work. A number of Key Decisions within the latest Key Decision Forward Plan fell under the remit of this Committee and Members were reminded of their right to pre-scrutinise such items.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Ruth Harrison, referred Members to Appendix 1 to the report detailing the programme of work for the Committee for this Municipal Year 2017/18. It was reported that the

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item in relation to “United Utilities – Surface Water Charges” would remain as a regular item on the Committees programme of work.

The Chair, Councillor Sayers referred the Committee to Appendix 3 to the report setting out suggested topics to review. The Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Ruth Harrison reminded the Committee that it had one outstanding review to complete in relation to Parks and Greenspaces.

Members requested that a draft scoping document be prepared in relation to Economic Growth and suggested that it be circulated to Members in advance of the next Meeting scheduled to take place on 19 September 2017, in order that the Committee may determine if they wish to proceed and review Economic Growth after it has completed the review in relation to Parks and Greenspaces.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed, subject to the inclusion of a regular update regarding “United Utilities – Surface Water Charges”;
- (2) the Committee acknowledges that it has one review outstanding relating to the Parks and Greenspaces;
- (3) the Committee requests that the Head of Regeneration and Housing in consultation with the Executive Director drafts a scoping document in relation to Economic Growth, to be circulated to all Members of the Committee in advance of the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (4) the Committee notes items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan for period 1 July to 31 October 2017;

### **9. TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK ACTION PLANS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regeneration and Housing in relation to the Town Centre Framework Action Plans for Bootle, Crosby and Southport.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills, Councillor Atkinson referred to a Meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2017, in relation to the decision of the Cabinet being “called in” regarding the Southport Development Framework, Minute No. 23 refers, and stated that within her presentation at that meeting she had undertaken to present the Action Plan to a future meeting of the Committee. Councillor Atkinson referred to the publication of the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework and the Southport Development Framework in October 2016 and also referred to the publication of the Crosby Development Strategy which was approved by the Cabinet in November 2015.

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Councillor Atkinson reported that the Frameworks provided a high level vision for future investment in the borough's major Town Centres and that they outlined a direction of travel for each of the Town Centres. It was emphasised that the Frameworks were not a prescriptive list of projects and that the Authority's role, in taking will be to stimulate, facilitate and enable the regeneration of each of the Town Centre with developers, other agencies and stakeholders with the intention of providing investment opportunities.

It was reported that the Action Plans, as detailed in Appendix one to the report, for Bootle, Crosby and Southport Town Centres where an illustration of the work streams/themes that would be progressed and that they would link to initiatives highlighted in the published Framework reports. It was also reported that although the Action Plans had a similar look they presented a different style with different priorities in order that the needs of each individual Town Centre could be addressed. It was reported that the Action Plans were a long-term living document and would evolve as new opportunities and developments emerged.

### RESOLVED:

That the Bootle, Crosby and Southport Town Centre Framework Action Plans be noted.