



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL,  
SOUTHPORT  
ON TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor John Sayers (in the Chair)  
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Brough, Dowd, Halsall, Lewis, Myers,  
Robinson, Sathiy and Thomas

### 27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marshall and Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills.

### 28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 30. REVIEW OF SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing that detailed the results of an exercise to review the Social Housing Allocations policy and procedure; that provided information on the findings, recommendations and next steps arising from the review; and which sought the Committee's comments on the review.

The report indicated that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, on behalf of the 5 Local Authorities who participate in Property Pool Plus (PPP), a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings social housing allocation scheme, and St. Helens Council (who operated Under One Roof -U1R), had commissioned Neil Morland & Co (NM&Co) to carry out a review of how social rented housing was allocated across the city region; that the PPP service went 'live' in July 2012 following the introduction of a suitable IT system; and that the local authorities and participating housing associations wished to ensure that the future allocations policy was fit for purpose and supported strategic City Region wide aspirations around access to housing.

To achieve the aim referred to above the principal drivers for undertaking such a policy review included requirements that the policy:

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

- was legally compliant with relevant Government legislation, in particular the recent introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, Codes of Guidance, statutory obligations and also has regard to best practice and current case law
- incorporated aims and principles which remained appropriate and relevant
- helped support and deliver good customer service and outcomes and ensured that any proposed changes improved the customer journey
- supported wider system change for homeless people, maximising the number of people in housing need who were successfully housed
- was informed by housing association partner organisation's operational and business needs, in order to promote current and future co-operation and participation in the allocation scheme

The report concluded that NM&Co had completed stage 1 of the review exercise and their report on the findings of the review were attached as an appendix to the report; and the Committee's comments on the review were sought. Neil Morland, NM&Co presented the report findings to Committee.

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

- the re-establishment of a post to coordinate the activities of Property Pool Plus and the potential financial implications to the Council for doing this; and procedures that could be put in place, maybe across the Liverpool City Region, to ensure continuity of service provision if there was a point of failure in one particular authority
- the inconsistent treatment of housing applicants by registered social landlords, particularly in relation to eligibility to joining the housing register where there may be a history of rent arrears but applicants have overriding needs to merit rehousing (for example due to severe health needs)

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the exercise to review the social housing allocations policy and procedures be noted; and
- (2) the Head of Economic Growth and Housing be requested to take into account the comments of the Committee as a new policy and new procedures are developed further.

### **31. WINTER SERVICE OPERATION**

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

The Committee received a presentation from Jerry McConkey, Service Manager – Transportation and Highway Infrastructure on the Council's Winter Service Policy.

Mr. McConkey indicated:

- That the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 and 58 clearly stated that the Highway Authorities had a statutory duty to maintain the highway and must at all times take reasonable care to ensure that the highway was not dangerous and that the standard of maintenance was appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic; that it must also ensure that a competent person must supervise maintenance work, having received proper training with regard to the highway; and provided information on statutory guidance that must be adhered to including the release of 5 new documents in March 2018
- That in response to the statutory guidance the Council had procured a new Winter Contract; had a state of the art gritting fleet; that the gritting fleet was tracked; that the Council had a purpose built Winter Facility in Netherton; and had a long term strategy to meet the statutory requirements
- Provided information on gritting statistics which included 10 carriageway gritters covering 8 carriageway routes; that 35 tonnes of salt per call out was used covering 291 miles of carriageway; the salt storage facility for 3500 tonnes, the salt restocking agreement, and the 8 snow ploughing routes and grit bin locations
- Historical data on the number of grits per financial year
- The Policy and Operational Plan and that in the event of a major disruption a regional co-ordinating arrangement would be put in place via Gold Control, chaired by Merseyside Police with senior officer input from the Council
- Technical information relating to spreading rates; and examples of forecast summaries

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

- How temperatures were predicted in areas of Sefton using thermal mapping
- Operational matters at the Bentham's Way weather station
- The relationship and performance satisfaction with the Council's contractor undertaking winter service operations

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Jerry McConkey be thanked for his informative presentation; and
- (2) the Service Manager – Transportation and Highway Infrastructure be requested to make arrangements for members of the Committee

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

to undertake a visit to his service area to find out more information on the winter service operation.

### **32. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

The Committee considered the joint report of the Head of Corporate Resources and Executive Director that advised that at the Council, at its meeting held on 18 July 2019, agreed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency and this was attached as Appendix A to this report; that in accordance with the terms of the Council motion, work had progressed on developing a programme structure, strategy and initial implementation plan for delivery of the motion and its objectives; that in order to further inform this work, a baseline position was required across the Council of work that was currently underway or planned that could contribute to the Council achieving the aims of the motion; and that the report provided a summary of work undertaken to date and the exercise that was required to be led through each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to establish that baseline position.

The report also advised that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to lead an immediate piece of work for completion by the next cycle of meetings that:

- (1) conducted a stock take of all activity in relation to carbon emissions that would inform a comprehensive council wide baseline position;
- (2) Identify all projects that were currently taking place across the council that would support the delivery of the Council's Strategy; and
- (3) Identify potential long-term issues that would need to be addressed for the Council to meet the objectives within the Council motion.

The report concluded that the output from the work referred to above should be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in March/April 2020 and be led by the respective Heads of Service in conjunction with the Committee members and Cabinet Member; and that necessary support would be available from the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Service, the Head of Corporate Resources and the Executive Director in addition to the Council wide officer working group.

The Committee also received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources and Andrew Walker, Head of Locality Services, on the background to climate change and the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration which included information on:

- Sefton's target of net zero carbon by 2030; and the establishment of a working group and its commencement of work on a strategy, action plan and partnership working

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

- How Sefton quantified its emissions using the scope of the “Greenhouse Gas Protocol”
- Next steps which included most departments having now received information on the issues associated with the Climate Emergency Declaration, had been tasked with completing an initial scoping exercise and to consider further options

Mr. Walker advised the Committee that in order for the Council to meet the objectives within the Council motion each Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to lead an immediate piece of work for completion by the next cycle of meetings (end of April 2020) that:

- (1) Conducted a stock take of all activity in relation to carbon emissions that would inform a comprehensive council wide baseline position; and
- (2) Identified all projects that were currently taking place across the Council that would support the delivery of the Council’s Strategy; and Identified potential long-term issues that would need to be addressed.

and that Heads of Service were on-going with this work on behalf of the Committee.

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

- The suspension of the food waste collection service
- Methods to ensure that the Council’s vehicle fleet is efficient as possible to reduce carbon emissions
- Sanctions that could be applied to road haulage companies using Sefton’s highways for the pollution that their vehicles produce; and how the introduction of Clean Air Zones in Sefton could help with this
- The scope for obtaining energy from more green friendly, renewable sources
- difficulties in assessing the Council wide carbon emission baseline position
- what government funding had been provided to help the Council in achieving its climate emergency targets; and the acknowledgement that the Council had been proactive in pursuing and self-funding this agenda

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council’s agreed approach to delivering the objectives as set out in the Council motion that declared a climate emergency be noted;
- (2) the activity that will take place within the first 12 months of the

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

programme be noted;

- (3) the important role of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in delivering the Council's objectives as set out in the agreed motion and the initial work that is required to be carried out in each area of the council's activity by all Heads of Service, in order to form an initial baseline position; and that this initial work will be reported back to the next meeting of this Committee, be noted;
- (4) the Head of Corporate Resources be requested to make a further presentation to the next meeting of the Committee on the scientific background and context to climate change and the climate change declaration;
- (5) the Head of Locality Services be requested to circulate to Members of the Committee briefing papers on the introduction of Clean Air Zones; and
- (6) Stephanie Jukes and Andrew Walker be thanked for their informative presentation.

### **33. BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2020**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director advising that Sefton would be the Liverpool City Region's Borough of Culture for 2020 and that an outline programme and business plan had been developed for the year following consultation and engagement with partners and communities across the borough; that this feedback recommended a focus on local history and the environment as the two priority areas for the programme, with emphasis in all events, activities and initiatives on participation (inclusive of all communities), permanence (assets, activities and relationships lasting beyond 2020), partnerships (working with partner organisations and communities across the borough), and on engendering local pride in Sefton.

Members of the Committee made reference to the following which could be included in the Borough of Culture programme:

- Alan John Percivale Taylor FBA, a British historian who specialised in 19th and 20th-century European diplomacy; was a journalist and a broadcaster and who became well known through his television lectures, who was born in Birkdale
- the Labour Party Conferences held in Southport in 1930's, at the former Garrick Theatre (now the Mecca bingo hall) that supported a motion for the establishment of the National Health Service
- Dan Dare, a British science fiction comic hero, created by illustrator Frank Hampson who also wrote the first stories. Frank Hampson was educated at King George V School, a grammar school in Southport

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2020

- Formby's Viking connection and any assistance that could be gained in this respect from the production company responsible for the HBO series "Vikings"

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council's agreed approach to delivering the objectives of the Borough of Culture 2020 programme be noted;
- (2) the activity proposed to take place during the year, and beyond in relation to the Borough of Culture be noted; and
- (3) the Executive Director be requested to provide feedback in respect of future updates to the Committee if necessary.

### **34. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2019/20, the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee and the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and which provided an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report also updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Town Centre Commission.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the presentation on the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan be deferred to the meeting to be held on 10 March 2020;
- (3) bearing in mind that the Government has decided not to take forward the proposals for any changes to permitted development rights for non-hydraulic fracturing shale gas exploratory development at this time, updates on the Government position and Good Practice and Expectations Document be removed from the Work Programme;
- (4) in relation to (3) above, if the Government's stance changes in respect of non-hydraulic fracturing shale gas exploratory development, then the Head of Economic Growth and Housing be requested to report further to the Committee; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**35. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - NOVEMBER 2019 TO JANUARY 2020**

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), Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update report from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton), Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted.