

CABINET

**REMOTE MEETING HELD
ON THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY, 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Cummins, Fairclough, Hardy,
John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Moncur and Veidman

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Sir Ron Watson viewed this meeting
remotely

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Atkinson.

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Veidman declared a personal interest in relation to Minute No. 79, Provision of Council (Social Rented) Housing at Buckley Hill Lane, Netherton. The nature of his interest was in relation to his capacity as Chair of the Planning Committee and as such Councillor Veidman left the meeting for consideration of the item.

75. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

76. INFECTION CONTROL FUND

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health in relation to the proposal of utilising the discretionary funding from the Department of Health and Social Care Infection Control Fund.

Decision Made: That:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the proposals for the use of the 20% discretionary Infection Control Fund, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (3) the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing be granted delegated authority to make decisions on specific amounts from the discretionary element of

the fund (and potentially any remaining funding from the initial 80% of the fund) to be allocated to each proposal, in accordance with the limits included in the Financial Procedure Rules, be approved; and

- (4) the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing be granted delegated authority to allocate any funding from the discretionary element of the fund (and potentially any remaining funding from the initial 80% of the fund), in accordance with the limits included in the Financial Procedure Rules, to any subsequently identified proposals arising following further engagement with Providers and Stakeholders, be approved.

Reason for the Decisions:

To agree initial proposals on the use of the remaining 20% of the Infection Control Fund and any amounts unallocated from the initial 80% of the fund.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The following option was considered and rejected;

Not utilising the 20% of the fund and also returning to DHSC and unallocated amounts from the initial 80% of the fund

This option was considered and rejected as the full use of allocation Sefton has received from the national Infection Control Fund should be used to deal with issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and to support Providers and other sectors in order to then ensure that they can continue to safely deliver services to vulnerable people in Sefton.

77. PARKHAVEN COURT MAGHULL - AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF EXTRA CARE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health in relation to approval of a Direct Award Contract for the provision of Care and Support at Parkhaven Court Extra Care Scheme.

Decisions Made: That:

- (1) it be noted that Parkhaven Trust were successful in their bid to access the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS) for the provision of care and support which members approved in March 2018;

- (2) the award of a contract using the LCR PDPS Purchasing System which allows for the direct award of a contract in exceptional circumstances for the period of 2 years, with an option to extend for 1 further year, commencing on the 1st April 2021, to Parkhaven Trust for the provision of Care and Support at Parkhaven Court Extra Care Housing Scheme, be approved;
- (3) the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority in relation to the making of decisions with regards to the specification, contract terms and referral processes, such decisions will be made prior to the award; and
- (4) the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority in relation to the making of decisions with regards to the 1 year extension.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The land and buildings where the Parkhaven site sits are owned by the Parkhaven Trust, a charity going back many years in the area. Your Housing Group are the Landlord for the Extra Care Housing.

The site is dedicated to people living with Dementia and in addition to Extra Care housing the site has a day service, a brand-new nursing home, offices and a purpose-built respite unit. Parkhaven provide all the care and support across the whole site and provide the housing management function related to the Extra Care Scheme under an exclusive arrangement with the Landlord.

The LCR PDPS allows direct award of a contract to a provider on the PDPS in exceptional circumstances such as those described above, including “If the provider has a genuine existing exclusive arrangement with the landlord of the scheme” and “where the provider is already providing other services at the premises and it is impracticable / not commercially feasible for another provider to be appointed to the Individual Contract”. Parkhaven have a place on the LCR Extra Care PDPS and this was awarded through a competitive tendering exercise.

As part of the development of the Councils Strategic Approach to Extra Care Provision, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing have approved an Extra Care Prospectus. This document will set the baseline and direction of travel for the development of Extra Care provision in the Borough and how we will seek to work with Extra Care Housing providers including any new schemes to be developed alongside existing schemes. This will ensure we enable consistency in our commissioning, alignment of specifications, contract terms, processes, pathways and utilise an agreed yet to be developed housing allocations policy. The Services at Parkhaven Court would be considered as part of this work and any future commissioning

and procurement needs developed in accordance with the strategy developed.

The Prospectus recognises however that there will be different models and provider configurations which will require different commissioning and procurement approaches to ensure that communities in Sefton benefit from the opportunities these provide.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

An open procurement process was considered for the contract for Extra Care services at Parkhaven Court but was rejected due to the need to ensure stable provision on site whilst further consideration is given to the longer-term arrangements for the provision of Extra care in the borough.

78. KICKSTART JOBS SCHEME

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in relation to the Government's Kickstart job creation scheme for young benefit claimants.

The Head of Economic Growth and Housing reported that the Government had announced its job creation scheme for workless young people aged 16 – 24 during the summer of 2020, as part of the Plan for Jobs. The new scheme, called Kickstart, would provide wage subsidies to employers that create new work experience placements and forms a key part of the wider response to economic downturn and job losses resulting from the impact of COVID-19. The report detailed how the Kickstart scheme would work and who would be eligible to join the scheme.

Decision Made: That:

- (1) the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services and associated Cabinet Members be granted delegated authority to enter into a contract with Department for Work and Pensions to act as a Kickstart Jobs Scheme Intermediary body on behalf of local employers, in order to best respond to local demand and maximise opportunities for local residents, be approved; and
- (2) the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services and associated Cabinet Members be authorised to undertake further work to allow the Council to optimise future opportunities presented by the Scheme as a direct employer of Kickstart jobs, be approved.

Reasons for the Decisions:

Sefton@Work is the Council's well-known and trusted job brokerage service which has provided quality employment programmes in Sefton for

many years. Involvement in the Kickstart Scheme will enable the Council to have assurance that the jobs created for Sefton residents are of good quality and offer possibilities to improve longer term sustainable progression and complementarity with other aspects of the service provision.

There is considerable demand from local companies seeking to enter the scheme who are not large enough to apply themselves directly. Many of these employers have already contacted the Sefton@Work service to request support to be able to create jobs for young people who are unemployed and claiming benefits, primarily Universal Credit. Given the corporate objectives on economic recovery, tackling worklessness and stimulating inclusive growth, this allows the Council to provide a very significant support to our employer base and our young people during very difficult times.

Sefton@Work funds its operations with a combination of external grants and contracts, with some additional Council revenue from the Growth budget. Acting as an intermediary for Kickstart offers the opportunity to generate an element of financial surplus which can potentially reduce the level of future funding requirements from Council budgets. The level of financial surplus for the Council will be a direct correlation with the number of places offered within each employer and each Council department, with £800 being retained for each external place and £500 for each internal place within the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The alternative option would be for the Council not to be involved in this scheme.

This option was discounted for several reasons:

- Commitment to a job creation / wage subsidy scheme was proposed within the LCR CA Economic Recovery proposals recently submitted to Government and endorsed by Sefton Council. To avoid involvement in the Kickstart scheme, which is the national youth unemployment job creation scheme would be at odds with this endorsement.
- There are clear expectations of the Council to act as a broker in this scheme and an arbiter of quality. To opt not to play this role could potentially expose our young people to low quality provision.
- Youth unemployment in Sefton has climbed to unprecedented levels during the pandemic and the Council and local employers can act on this important issue through this Scheme. In March 2020 there were 1,190 16 -24 claimants looking for work. By August 2020 this number had increased to 2,410, a rise of just over 102%. The current claimant rate for young people is 12.7%, this is more than double the 6.2% rate in March 2020, higher than the north west average and the national average.

**79. PROVISION OF COUNCIL (SOCIAL RENTED) HOUSING
BUCKLEY HILL LANE, NETHERTON**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in relation to the proposal associated with Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market through the provision of Council housing for rent. The report set out the plan in achieving the proposal.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the milestone that had been achieved in the proposals of Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market and the benefits that this would create for both Sefton Council and its residents.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Councillor Hardy referred to all the hard work that had been undertaken by Officers and Members to achieve the aspiration of Sefton Council in re-entering the social housing market and thanked Officers for all their hard work in what was an exciting and historical moment for Sefton Council.

Decision Made: That:

- (1) the strategic case for Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market through the provision of council housing for rent as set out in the report, be agreed;
- (2) authority be granted to negotiate the terms to acquire one block, comprising nine apartments, as the start of its future stock of council housing from Sandway Homes, as part of Sandway's development at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton, be agreed;
- (3) approval to register Sefton Council with the Regulator of Social Housing as a social housing provider, be agreed;
- (4) authority to apply to Homes England to become an Investment Partner, be agreed;
- (5) officers be instructed to develop a Business Plan for council housing provision which sets out greater detail for the operational requirements, including financial modelling and management arrangements, be agreed;
- (6) authority be granted to pursue the procurement of a suitable housing association to provide the required housing management services, and delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing to appoint a management agent;

- (7) the procurement and appointment of suitable consultant(s) to assist undertake associated tasks set out in this report and arising from the recommendations in this report, be agreed. The costs will be met from within the existing budget for the Economic Growth and Housing Service. The appointment of the consultants be delegated to the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, be agreed; and
- (8) note that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet setting out the terms to acquire the council housing stock from Sandway Homes, and which sets out the Business Plan and proposed operational arrangements.

Reason for the Decisions:

to pursue the actions and recommendations set out in this report to Cabinet approval.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The Council could opt not to provide council housing, but this would limit the opportunity to increase the pace and scale of (affordable) housing delivery. It would also rely on Housing Associations to be the primary provider of social housing. While the provision of HA Affordable Rent housing is generally welcomed, provision of council housing can offer a complimentary alternative which can maximise the use of available and ringfenced resources.

80. MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 & AZURE RENEWAL

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services in relation to the provision of Microsoft Office 365 end user licences and the Council's cloud environment; Microsoft Azure. The report also details the associated procurement route(s) available to the authority to renew these licences and services due to the current contract expiring on 30 April 2021.

Decisions Made: That:

- (1) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Customer Services be authorised to select an appropriate procurement route and conduct a procurement exercise to renew Office 365 licences used by end users (staff) and also licences for the Council's cloud environment Microsoft Azure (which is used to store some Council data and also run a number of cloud migrated software applications) with a view to entering into a contract for a maximum period of 4 years comprising an initial 2 year period with an option to extend for up to 2 periods of 12 months; and

- (2) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Customer Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be granted delegated authority to award the Contract resulting from the procurement exercise and any subsequent contract extensions.

Reason for the Decisions:

To ensure that end users can continue using Microsoft Office 365 applications and that software applications and data stored within the Councils cloud environment (Microsoft Azure) are still available for use upon the expiry of the current contract.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There are no alternative options being considered.

81. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME, COUNCIL TAX BASE 2021/22

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services in relation to the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21. The report also provided details of an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2021/22.

Decision Made: That:

- (1) the contents of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21, be noted;
- (2) Council be recommended that there are no changes to the existing Scheme for 2021/22 for working age claimants; and
- (3) Council be recommended to approve the relevant Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish Area as set out in Annex A to the report.

Reasons for the Decisions:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Each financial year, the Council must consider whether to revise or replace its local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council must approve and adopt the 2021/22 Council Tax Reduction Scheme by 11 March 2021, as set out in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017.

The report provides an update on key aspects of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. After consideration of the factors outlined later in the

report it is proposed that the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22 remains unchanged for working age claimants

Council Tax Base

In accordance with Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, the Council is required to set a tax base for both Sefton Council and each Parish Area for 2021/22 before 31st January 2021.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was last revised in 2018/19 following a public consultation process. The changes introduced then continue to address the Council's priorities to minimise the impact on vulnerable residents, by striking a balance between dealing with Council priorities. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation assess the impact of those changes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. No alternative options have been considered for 2021/22.

82. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2020/21 TO 2023/24 AND FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE 2020 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2020/21 INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2020/21 BUDGET JANUARY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Customer Services and advised of:

- (1) the current estimated financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget;
- (2) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for 2020/21;
- (3) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2020/21; and
- (4) the monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of November 2020:
 - the forecast expenditure to year end;
 - variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members;
 - updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services referred to the recent Government Spending Review Announcement and reported that Officers were working through the detail in relation to the impact on the Council and as such would report back accordingly.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maher referred to the lack of Government Funding and the burden this has left on the Council in addressing the significant short fall from the impact of the Covid pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services, Councillor Lappin referred to the un-even approach of taxation which has been applied across the board without any consideration of the less financially able.

Decisions Made: That:

(A) in respect of the Revenue Budget:

- (1) the current estimated impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position, be noted;
- (2) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2020/21 revenue budget and the material variations that are to be expected to the current estimates contained in this report be recognised, and it be agreed subsequent reports provide updates and where appropriate remedial actions plans as appropriate;
- (3) the current forecast revenue outturn position for 2020/21, be noted;
- (4) it be acknowledged that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved; and

(B) in respect of the Capital Programme:

- (1) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 6.1.1) be noted;
- (2) the latest capital expenditure position as at 30 November 2020 of £11.530m (paragraph 6.2.1) with the latest full year forecast of £31.147m (paragraph 6.3.1) be noted;
- (3) the explanations of variances to project budgets (paragraph 6.2.3) be noted;

- (4) the additional School Condition Grant of £0.680m for inclusion in the capital programme (paragraph 6.4), be approved;
- (5) the additional Highways Active Travel Tranche 2 Grant of £0.700m and the School Streets allocation of £0.030m (section 6.5) for inclusion in the capital programme, be approved;
- (6) the additional Disabled Facilities Grant allocation of £0.572m for inclusion in the capital programme (paragraph 6.6), be approved; and
- (7) the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services will manage capital resources to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraph 6.7.3), be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the forecast outturn position for the 2020/21 Revenue Budget as at the end of November 2020, including delivery of a remedial action plan, and to provide an updated forecast of the outturn position with regard to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

To keep members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2019/20 and agreed allocations for future years.

To progress any changes that are required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme.

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

83. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair of the Cabinet, Councillor Maher reported that Agenda items 11. Exclusion of Press and Public, 12. Land at Grange Farm, Lunt, 13. Re-Admit Press and Public and 14. Land at Grange Farm Lunt be removed from the Agenda.

Decision Made:

That Agenda items 11. Exclusion of Press and Public, 12. Land at Grange Farm, Lunt, 13. Re-Admit Press and Public and 14. Land at Grange Farm Lunt be removed from the Agenda, be agreed.