



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE BALLROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor John Sayers (in the Chair)
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D'Albuquerque, Cluskey, Hansen,
Chris Maher, Myers, Page, Robinson and Shaw

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson, Ian Maher, Moncur and Morris

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sathiy and Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interest were made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon:

| Member | Minute No. | Nature of Interest |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Councillor D'Albuquerque | Minute No. 23 - Southport Walking and Cycling Consultation and Active Travel Tranche 2 | Personal – had a previous interest in a business on Hoghton Street that may have been affected by the proposals contained in the report |
| Councillor D'Albuquerque | Minute No. 23 - Southport Walking and Cycling Consultation and Active Travel Tranche 2 | Personal – has publicly stated his opposition to proposals contained in the report |

22. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

23. SOUTHPORT WALKING AND CYCLING CONSULTATION AND ACTIVE TRAVEL TRANCHE 2

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that provided the results of the consultation recently completed on the Southport Cycling and Walking proposals for which funding had been secured from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2.

The report indicated that the Council had received a formal funding offer from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to deliver Tranche 2 of proposals within the Active Travel Fund; that these proposals showed an extension of the implemented Tranche 1 proposals to both the north and south of the existing proposals thus providing a north-south cycle route through the centre of Southport; that unlike Tranche 1 of the proposals, which were delivered without consultation to meet the funding deadlines, the Tranche 2 funding was dependent upon consultation having been completed; that this report provided the findings of the consultation completed to date; and the Committee was invited to provide comments for consideration by the Cabinet Member - Locality Services as part of the decision-making process.

Appendix A to the report set out the Sefton Communications Plan associated with the Southport Walking and Cycling Route – Summary of Engagement;

Appendix B to the report provided detailed responses to the Your Sefton Your Say (YSYS) survey; and Appendix C to the report highlighted a graph showing the age range of respondents to the YSYS proposals.

Peter Moore, Head of Highways and Public Protection presented the report and started by placing the consultation and proposals in context. Mr. Moore indicated that as set out in the Key Messages within the Communications Plan (Appendix A) increasing "active travel" through improved walking and cycling infrastructure contributed to:

- Improved Air Quality
- Sefton's Vision 2030
- LCR Travel Strategies
- Government Policy
- Climate Change Emergency - the Council's declaration on which recognised the need for "rapid and far reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities"

Mr. Moore also referred to the Council's Core Purpose which included:

- Demonstrating Place Leadership
- Being Drivers of change and reform
- Creating a Cleaner and Greener borough

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and that part of this included creating the infrastructure that enabled people to change to low-carbon, cleaner, greener, healthier transport

Mr. Moore then referred to previous surveys (referred to in the report) including:

- Extensive consultation on Sefton Vision 2030
- Bikelife Survey
- Highways Annual satisfaction Survey
- Southport Town Deal

and that the surveys highlighted that:

- people wanted to be able to walk and cycle more easily and more safely
- People thought that more cycling would make their area better
- Cyclists were currently dissatisfied with the number and safety of cycle routes in Sefton

Mr. Moore continued that the Government Funding through the Active Travel Fund, that would fund the proposals, was aimed at:

- Supporting Covid-19 recovery by helping people move around
- was focused on short journeys
- was allocated through LCRCA - consequently the routes put forward were those that fit with the LCR Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Mr. Moore concluded by indicating that implementation was subject to demonstrating broad support for the proposals; that the Consultation Plan was developed (Appendix A), published and implemented; that consultation was started and then extended to enable as many people as possible to comment; and that findings were attached for comment and that such comments would feed into the consultation process.

Councillor Ian Maher, Leader of the Council, indicated that he was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services; and that he would feed back to Councillor Fairclough the comments made by Members during the meeting.

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

- the introduction of temporary cycle lanes had in some instances made people have to travel further in their vehicles; and that the introduction of the proposed measures could lead to more traffic at a standstill with engines running. This could have the adverse impact of reducing air quality in the local areas
- the survey results provide a contradiction in that some respondents wanted a reduction in negative issues such as poor air quality and a

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noisy environment but were not in support of improving cycling measures that could help bring this about

- reference was made to an alternative north/south proposal that had been put forward. It was suggested that this would need to be consulted upon and may therefore exceed the funding timescales for implementation of the proposal
- the potential of funding reductions to local authorities for not participating in active travel schemes
- “Gear Change”, the Department for Transport’s vision for cycling and walking, and “Gear Change” One Year On.
- in-principle favour was expressed for cycle schemes but detailed consultation needed to be undertaken with ward councillors; and that the consultation needed to take place as early as possible to allow elected Members’ local knowledge to spot potential difficulties, for example with parking issues
- where proposals aimed to prevent through traffic more consideration should be given to the introduction of hammerhead turning in affected roads
- schemes should “go back to the drawing board” to allow detailed consultations with ward councillors
- had consideration been given to the introduction of two-way cycle lanes (similar to the proposal at Hesketh Park) in other areas rather than introducing single lane cycle paths on both sides of the carriageway
- how emergency services were consulted on the Preston New Road proposals
- concern expressed that the scheme proposed for Preston New Road could not be implemented due to the carriageway width

Councillor Maher on behalf of Councillor Fairclough, offered for Councillor Fairclough to meet with ward councillors affected by the issue before making his final decision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the findings of the consultation on Southport Cycling and Walking consultation exercises be noted; and
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services be requested to:
 - (a) take into account the comments raised by Members above as part of his decision-making process; and
 - (b) have continuous dialogue with appropriate ward councillors on the progression of any approved schemes.

24. CONSIDERATION OF CONSULTATION RESULTS - CROSBY COASTAL PARK PROPOSED CYCLEWAY AND FOOTWAY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that detailed the results of the recent consultation regarding the proposed cycleway and footway through Crosby Coastal Park prior to the scheme being reviewed and modified ahead of the submission of a planning application.

The report indicated that the main purpose of the proposed new cycleway and footway was to provide improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in the Coastal Park, that were suitable for use at all times throughout the year and made it easier for people of all abilities to enjoy the Park; and that the introduction of the scheme would support the Council's stated 2030 Vision for the Borough, would support the Council's climate emergency commitments and ensure that infrastructure was fully accessible for all and therefore the Council would comply with its Public Sector Equality Duty.

The report also indicated that the scheme was being funded through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority using grant funding from the European Union Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) (Low Carbon and Environment and Resource Efficiency) Fund.

Appendix A attached to the report provided information from smart distribution solutions with details of the GPS tracking of all the deliveries; and Appendix B set out the overview of findings from the Crosby Coastal Path – new cycleway and footway consultation.

Peter Moore, Head of Highways and Public Protection presented the report and started by placing the consultation and proposals in context. Mr. Moore indicated that increasing "active travel" through improved walking and cycling infrastructure contributed to:

- Improved Air Quality
- Sefton's Vision 2030
- LCR Travel Strategies
- Government Policy
- Climate Change Emergency - the Council's declaration on which recognised the need for "rapid and far reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities"

Mr. Moore also referred to the Council's Core Purpose which included:

- Demonstrating Place Leadership
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and that part of this included creating the infrastructure that enabled people to change to low-carbon, cleaner, greener, healthier transport.

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Mr. Moore continued by detailing the background to the proposed route as referred to in paragraph 1.7 of the report; and that the desire for an additional route through Crosby Coastal Park was previously agreed as a transport priority by Members in 2016 and confirmed in 2018; that the funding for this scheme was from LCRCA and utilised European Union Sustainable Urban Development funding; that a consultation Plan was developed and implemented; and that findings were attached for comment and that any comments would be submitted to the Cabinet Member for consideration.

Councillor Ian Maher, Leader of the Council, indicated that he was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services; and that he would feed back to Councillor Fairclough the comments made by Members during the meeting.

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

- The build-up of wind-blown sand on the Promenade
- A document (submitted by a local residents' action group) was referred to in which a suggestion was made of an offer by the private sector to clear the sand from the revetment free of charge or at low cost, provided they could retain the sand for recycling. It was noted that a Mineral Extraction Notice would be required for such an activity and that if this scheme was to be pursued, then the Council would have to follow its own procurement and tendering procedures. A Member commented that this operation would in effect introduce a sand winning operation with the resultant need for heavy plant and machinery being used in public areas; and that a public area would be turned into a private sector business area. This would have the potential to seriously damage Crosby Coastal Park.
- modifications being incorporated into the design plans were referred to and it was noted that comments had been invited on such modifications and that they would be referred to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services
- a comment was made that the three Blundellsands ward councillors were unhappy with proposals and whether the Cabinet Member – Locality Services would be prepared to consult further with them

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the findings of the consultation on the proposed cycleway and footway through Crosby Coastal Park be noted; and
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services be requested to:
 - (a) take into account the comments raised by Members above as part of his decision-making process; and

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- (b) have continuous dialogue with appropriate ward councillors on the progression of any approved schemes.”

25. SEFTON ECONOMIC STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing that updated on the ongoing work and progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (Dec 2019), the associated Covid-19 Recovery plan and plans to refresh and update the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022.

The report provided information on the work underway to update and refresh the SES Action Plan which included:

- Reviewing its 7 Priority Actions Areas (PAAs), and consideration as to whether they were still fit for purpose and met the Council's overall vision and strategic objectives
- Merging PAAs where there was crossover and alignment of activities
- Introducing a New PAA - Health & Wellbeing
- Taking stock of new LCR Combined Authority economic data sets including job furlough, GVA, Productivity and business openings/closure information for Sefton. Reviewing emerging LCR Prosperity Plan.
- Reviewing economic data gaps for Sefton e.g. granular data for town centres to inform recovery actions; sector data; commercial market demand data etc
- Sefton Import & Export performance (link to emerging Freeport opportunity)
- Covid dashboard monitoring
- Alignment with Sefton Economic Tracker and labour market data
- Agreeing evidence required to provide robust evaluation of SES Action Plan
- Future reporting; format and frequency
- Embracing Climate Change and net zero action plan ambitions.
- Further alignment with Sefton's Digital Strategy;

the work undertaken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic which included a series of emergency measures to help support Sefton's residents, communities and businesses throughout various lockdowns and associated Government tiers of control and the establishment of an Economy Cell led by the Head of Economic Growth and Housing; and the Strategic Recovery Plan, the main purpose of which was to provide leadership and highlight opportunity and corral our many stakeholders into collective and collaborative action at a borough level.

The following appendices were attached to the report – the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (December 2019); the Sefton Economic Recovery Plan; and the Sefton Economic Recovery Plan (Appendices).

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

- staff were thanked for their work during lockdown by delivering and administering grants and business rates support to help the local economy
- the fantastic offer provided to residents and visitors by the redevelopment of Southport Market

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan approved by Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Housing in December 2019 and the associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan be noted; and
- (2) work underway to refresh and update the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022 be noted.

26. FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of 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 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; and that included with the review this year was the draft Local Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2022-2030) and Business Plan which was currently out for public consultation.

The report indicated that the Council's delivery of duties under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 related to:

- Duty to have an up-to-date Local Flood Risk Strategy
- Duty to co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities
- Undertake duties as a Riparian owner
- Maintain a register of assets – features that have a significant effect on flooding in the area
- Undertake statutory consultee role - Respond to major planning applications checking the SUDS design
- Duty to investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results

The report also provided information on flood and coastal erosion events; progress made in relation to:

- Resilient Communities

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- Asset inspections
- Capital schemes
- Annual Grant in Aid refresh submissions
- Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme
- Antony Gormley's Another Place
- National Flood Risk Management Plans
- Sefton Strategic Flood Resilience Working Group
- Maghull Flood Planning Officer's group
- Use of Digital Technology
- Climate Emergency;

and the priorities for the next year relating to delivery of actions set out in the draft FCERM strategy; better use of digital technology to automate processes and improve recording and reporting; support of the review and development of an operational flood response plan; Sefton Council's Climate Emergency Declaration

The report concluded by seeking the Committee's comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing relating to the new draft strategy and business plan.

The New Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategy and the New Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management business plan were attached as appendices to the report.

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

- The priorities for dealing with, and alleviating flooding to, internally within properties, Council owned assets, key highway networks, greenspaces and undeveloped sites
- The removal of the Essex Road Birkdale Flood Alleviation Scheme from the Annual Grant in Aid refresh submissions
- The impact of water drainage from two golf courses in the Birkdale and Hillside areas into the local watercourses and drains which may cause flooding issues for local residents; and the liabilities of the Golf Clubs to introduce measures to alleviate such problems, for example by the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and swales (a shallow drainage channel with gentle side slopes in the ground where water running off a site can collect and soak away)
- The significant rainfall associated with Storm Christoph in January 2021 was referred to which caused severe flood warnings to be issued to 433 properties because modelling suggested that river levels on Dover's Brook would exceed the flood warning threshold by more than a metre. The fantastic team effort of the work undertaken by Sefton Council staff and elected Members, Maghull Town Council staff and Town Councillors, Environment Agency and United Utilities who worked with emergency responders to help local residents was praised
- The Environment Agency's responsibility for managing the River Alt

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- Funding bids submitted to resolve flooding issues in the Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and the annual Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management review be noted.

27. GREEN SEFTON ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Operational In-House Services that provided an update on the progress of Green Sefton's establishment and development, its current operational delivery over the last year, and setting out the strategic work programme, in line with the Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan for the next year.

The full Annual Review was attached as appendix 1 and included other background information including the current Service Plan updates for the three service areas, and examples of the Green Sefton communications, newsletters etc were also embedded.

Tables within the report provided a summary of progress against the Service Plan actions, and the headlines actions/ priorities as agreed in 2020 with a summary of progress in 2021 and outlined actions planned for 2022. The headlines detailed in the tables had been populated in an 'importance/ urgency' matrix in order to inform the work programme of officers in the coming year.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Members for Health and Wellbeing and Locality Services.

The Committee watched a short video that provided a review of the Green Sefton highlights during 2020/21; and also received a presentation from Mark Shaw, Service Manager, Green Sefton. Mr Shaw highlighted aspects of the work undertaken by the Green Sefton service relating to the following categories:

- Community working partnerships
- Delivery of the Bootle golf driving range
- Land Management team operations
- Visitor action plan
- Response to storm events
- Publication of Coast Plan Position Statement and mapping sessions for the coast gateways
- Development of income through innovation and business case approaches
- Performance tracking and the service plan
- Contributions made to the Climate Change Working Group

In respect of the year ahead Mr. Shaw commented on:

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- Development of communications plan and customer satisfaction surveys
- Increase staff capacity via apprenticeships and training
- Adoption of the Tree, Allotment, FCERM, Playing Pitch/Football Development and Nature Conservation Strategies
- Setting of standards of what can be achieved within resources available
- Development of the Coastal Gateways and normalisation of the Visitor Action Plan
- Development of a vision and investment at Southport Golf Course
- Planning for replacement of the vehicle fleet
- Promoting changes to overall Landscape Management
- Addressing resourcing and capacity issues, and continue to Innovate: Business case approach

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

- The prompt resolution of problems associated with overhanging trees on the highway and the emptying of refuse bins in coastal locations was praised
- The unacceptable abuse of Green Sefton staff, especially on the evening shifts on the coast, was condemned
- Green Sefton's work at Botanic Gardens was praised and particularly the Natural Alternatives, Green Sefton's own long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the progress of Green Sefton's establishment and development be noted; and
- (2) Mr. Shaw be thanked for his informative presentation.

28. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the Work Programme for 2021/22; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and updated Members on the progress of items that have previously been considered by the Committee.

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A Member of the Committee suggested that the topic of investigating ways to reduce the problem of dog fouling could form the subject of a Working Group review.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to contact appropriate Heads of Service whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee seeking their ideas on the selection of a topic for a Working Group review;
- (3) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (4) the update on the unadopted highways in the borough be noted.

29. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2021

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

Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing presented his report and thanked members of the Committee for their positive feedback upon consideration of the Green Sefton Annual Report earlier in the meeting. Councillor Moncur also referred to the operational challenges faced by the Green Sefton service during the last year whilst performing their day to day duties during the pandemic as many staff members were off ill with Covid-19 or had to self-isolate. Furthermore, front-line Green Sefton service staff were also called off their duties to help out with other priority services across the Council. Both these issues had an impact on the Green Sefton service delivery.

Councillor Moncur also detailed the work of the Green Sefton service staff in relation to:

- Flooding incidents
- The huge increase in visitor numbers to the Sefton coast
- Developments to enhance service provision such as the Bootle Golf Course driving range and the food offer at locations along the coast

Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills presented her report and expressed her strong disappointment that both the Bootle and Crosby Levelling Up bids were unsuccessful, particularly bearing in mind all the hard work that had gone into the preparation of the bids. Councillor Atkinson also referred to the following:

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- Thanked staff in her portfolio for their great work during lockdown by continually delivering essential services and administering grants and business rates support to help the local economy
- Positive feedback received in relation to Southport Market
- Developments associated with the Bootle Canalside event and activity space

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and
- (2) Councillors Atkinson and Moncur be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.