



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)

REMOTE INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH JANUARY, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillors Byrom, Grace, Howard, Killen, Lewis,
Mckinley and Morris

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lappin

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brennan.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2021 would be submitted for approval to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 8 February 2022.

29. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 44 of 2 March 2021 the informal meeting of the Committee received a presentation from Andrea Watts, Executive Director (People) updating on progress of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy (the Strategy).

Ms. Watts highlighted:

- How does LCR compared with the north west and the UK in relation to internet usage within the last 3 month
- The progress to date on the CA strategy and that digital inclusion was now a priority set out in the CA's Corporate Plan; that Digital Inclusion working group had been re-established to identify areas of digital inclusion activity for the CA priorities; and that the CA's Digital Infrastructure project includes a substantial social value element that had significant ambitions towards supporting digital access and inclusion, as well as jobs and apprenticeships
- The elements of digital inclusion in respect of connectivity, equipment and skills
- The next steps and aspects relating to LCRCA Digital Inclusion Group being re-established to drive the approach; that Sefton had its own emerging Digital Inclusion Strategy (as a borough rather

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- than a Council); the links to all elements of Sefton's Digital Strategy ; and efforts to maximise opportunities to link all aspects together
- A reminder of Sefton's Digital Strategy 2021 – 23 under the headings connected Council; empowered residents; and business growth

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

- Reference was made to the Digital Inclusion Working Group and its Final Report approved by Cabinet in December 2018; and in particular, to a recommendation that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board be requested to consider the development of a Digital Skills Passport Scheme. The passport would help local employers to map digital skills to jobs for local residents; and allow the targeting of super output areas in the borough. It was acknowledged that the Working Group's recommendations had been submitted to the Liverpool City Region and that the LCR was considering its own way forward on this matter. When Sefton's own Digital Inclusion Strategy was complete it could be shared with the Committee
- It would be helpful to match digital skills to available jobs; and it was suggested that colleges needed to work with employers to match students and their skills to jobs. Members were informed that a meeting would be held shortly with Hugh Baird College and this suggestion would be raised with them
- Reference was made to the EU Leonardo programme which helped to fund vocational education and training courses across Europe and which the UK would not now benefit from; and a concern was raised that dividends that the Government indicated would be available to the UK after leaving the EU had not been used to introduce similar programmes
- Were there any groups that the Council felt they were not reaching and if so, how could this be remedied? It was stated that it was hard to map all activity in this area because there were many groups offering services, such as libraries. It was hoped that gaps would be addressed by the Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Could work be undertaken with the DWP to identify gaps? It was confirmed that the Council was working with the DWP on this

RESOLVED:

That Andrea Watts be thanked for her informative presentation.

30. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The informal meeting of the Committee received a presentation from Elena Lloyd, Corporate Communications Manager updating on corporate communications. Ms. Lloyd highlighted:

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- Information about the Council's website which had around 2,000 pages; was maintained by over 70 web editors – coordinated by Corporate Communications Team acting as gatekeepers; and that 5,032,051 unique page views were made - spending average of 1min 13secs on page
- MySefton with 319,608 unique page views spending an average of 2mins 12secs on the page
- Facebook – had 11,400 followers; up by 1,348 new followers since December 2020 that was increase of nearly 12% in a year
- Twitter - 24,010 followers (up 1,600 / 6.6% increase)
- Instagram - 4600 followers (up 18.7% on 2020)
- Linked In - 6800 followers (5.3% increase on 2020)
- That by the end of 2021, the Corporate Communications Team had issued approximately 450 press releases and dealt with over 300 incoming media enquiries; and that a high proportion of proactive work had again been based around COVID-19 and had involved continuing use of Margaret Jones' (Director of Public Health) profile as a trusted voice in releases, interviews and videos
- Other Corporate Communications activity in relation to 'boots on the ground' vaccination campaign in Derby and Linacre wards; major long-term plans such as Bootle and Crosby consultations and redevelopment campaigns; Southport's development through the Town Deal and the successful publication of the popular redevelopment of Southport Market; issues local people were facing including Universal Credit cuts and fuel poverty, as well as national education funding; May 2021 local elections; and work with Green Sefton and Children's Services concerning the recruitment of foster carers

RESOLVED:

That Elena Lloyd be thanked for her informative presentation.

31. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 25 of 12 January 2021 the informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that updated on local air quality management activities/actions in Sefton during 2021.

The report indicated that Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) was introduced under the Environment Act 1995 and that evidence had shown that certain atmospheric pollutants were linked to poor health; that the Act placed a statutory duty on all Local Authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas and produce a yearly Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) which provided a detailed account of air quality in its area; and that as a result of ongoing monitoring and assessment air quality in the majority of Sefton had been shown to be of a good standard and levels were well within the National Air Quality Standard Objectives; but

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that there were however areas in the South of the Borough, where due to high levels of traffic, and other localised sources, levels of NO₂ were above or close to the national standard. Accordingly, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) had been declared in the four locations at:

- A5036 Princess Way and Crosby Road South Junction, Seaforth
- A5058 Millers Bridge and Derby Road Junction, Bootle
- A565 Crosby Road North and South Road Junction, Waterloo
- B5422 Hawthorne Road and Church Road Junction, Litherland

The report also provided information on:

- real time automatic monitoring stations; the use of diffusion tubes to measure monthly NO₂ levels at 80 sites across the Borough; the impact of Covid-19 on NO₂ Automatic Monitoring Results and NO₂ diffusion tube results in 2020;
- particulate matter
- PM2.5 monitoring
- A summary of monitoring results in 2020
- Actions to improve air quality which included Sefton Clean Air Zone Outline Business Case, Joint Sefton/ Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Emissions Enforcement Project, Low Cost Sensor co-location project Sefton /JMU and the DEFRA grant funded domestic solid fuel behaviour change project

The report concluded that air quality in the majority of Sefton was within NAQS Objectives and that action plans were in place to work towards compliance in the four AQMA areas; that the main on-going priority in Sefton for the coming years was to fully understand the effects that the predicted increase in HGVs due to port expansion would have on air quality and how this could be mitigated; that the development of the Outline Business Case for a Sefton based CAZ under the overarching Clean Air Plan was almost complete and would aim to address these concerns in some detail; and that understanding the ongoing impact Covid would have on air quality in the coming years was also a priority.

The Committee also received a presentation from Greg Martin, Principal Environmental Health Officer that focussed on the following points:

- Local Air Quality Management
- The four Air Quality Management Areas
- Air Quality Monitoring –Automatic sites
- NO₂ Diffusion tube Monitoring including the results of the monitoring and the impact of Covid-19 on the results
- Particulate Matter¹⁰ Monitoring Results
- Actions to improve air quality including the Sefton Clean Air Zone outline business case; Joint Sefton/ Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Emissions Enforcement Project; Sefton /JMU Co-

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Location Study; DEFRA Grant funded Educational behaviour change Project; and DEFRA solid Fuel Study

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

- Available data on traffic flows/standing traffic on Moor Lane Crosby associated with the knock-on effect from Brooms Cross Road
- The impact of pollutants on patrons using the beer garden of the public house at the junction of Crosby Road North/South Road Waterloo
- What pressure could be put on Peel Ports to reduce the impact of HGV traffic movements from the dock estate
- Clean Air Zone proposals and increases in the number of electric car charging points and how this will assist with the development of a low carbon transport strategy
- Sefton had not received any Government funding for the introduction of a Clean Air Zone study so real commitment had been shown by the Council to pursue this issue from its own resources
- Some people wishing to make journeys by cycle, for work or leisure purposes, could be deterred from doing so because of having to use busy roads

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on local air quality management activities/actions in Sefton during 2021 be noted; and
- (2) Greg Martin be thanked for his informative presentation.

32. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME, COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23

Further to Minute No. 89 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 January 2022 the informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that provided details of the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22, and recommending that there was no change to the scheme for 2022/23 for working age claimants; together with an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2022/23.

Regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) the report indicated that each financial year, the Council must consider whether to revise or replace its local CTRS; and that the Council must approve and adopt the 2022/23

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CTRS by 11 March 2022, After consideration of the factors outlined in the report it was proposed that the local CTRS for 2022/23 remain unchanged for working age claimants.

Regarding the Council Tax Base the report indicated that in accordance with Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, the Council was required to set a tax base for both Sefton Council and each Parish Area for 2022/23 before 31 January 2022.

The Council Tax Base Report 2022/23 was attached as Annex A to the report.

The Committee was advised that at its meeting held on 6 January 2022 the Cabinet had resolved (Minute No. 89) that:

- (1) the contents of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22 be noted;
- (2) the Council be recommended to agree that there are no changes to the existing Scheme for 2022/23 for working age claimants;
- (3) the 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.

RESOLVED:

That the report detailing the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22, recommending that there was no change to the scheme for 2022/23 for working age claimants; together with an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2022/23, together with the decision of Cabinet on this matter be noted.

33. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2021/22 TO 2024/25 AND FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE 2020 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2021/22 INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2021/22 BUDGET - JANUARY UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 79 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 December 2021 the informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that advised of:

- (1) the current estimated financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget;
- (2) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for

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2021/22;

- (3) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2021/22; and
- (4) the monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of August 2021 relating to:
 - 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 Cabinet had resolved (Minute No. 79) that:

A. in respect of the Revenue Budget:

- (1) the current financial implications of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position, be noted;
- (2) the current position relating to the 2021/22 revenue budget be noted; and
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2021/22 revenue budget be recognised and it be acknowledged that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and to ensure that 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, as outlined within paragraph 7.1 of the report, be noted;
- (2) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 October 2021 of £17.340m (paragraph 7.5); and the latest full year forecast is £50.675m (paragraph 7.7), be noted;
- (3) the programme outputs and progress to September (paragraph 7.5), be noted;

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- (4) the supplementary capital estimates (paragraph 7.10), be approved;
- (5) it be noted that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services, to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as outlined within paragraph 7.11 of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the financial monitoring report and the decision taken by Cabinet in respect of this matter be noted.

34. "MANAGE MY REQUESTS" (ICASEWORK) SYSTEM - STATISTICAL UPDATE REPORT

The informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Head of Strategic Support that provided an update on the adoption of the "Manage my Requests" iCasework system (the system) for capturing, managing and reporting all customer complaints, representations and feedback across the Council including the number and nature of complaints by Service in the last 12-month period.

The report indicated that the system supported a 'digital by default' process, whereby all information requests and complaints were accepted, administered, responded to and archived electronically. Members of the public that did not have direct access to the internet could have their requests logged by proxy through the Contact Centre or at the One Stop Shops.

Paragraph 2 of the report provided statistical information on the numbers of complaints and inquiry management; that I-Casework showed that the Council received 1,607 representations in the 12-month financial period (1/04/2020- 31/03/2021), an increase on 52.1% on the previous 12-month period; and thAT 840 of these representations were complaints.

The report concluded that it was imperative that the system was maintained in a timely fashion to prevent drift and escalation and accordingly, The Chief Executive and the Head of Strategic Support continued to emphasise the importance for representations, complaints and MP enquiries to be responded in a timely manner to ensure statutory compliance and scrutiny. The Senior Leadership Board had also been asked to consider and discuss the position in their Divisional Management Teams with a view to:

- Improving the management of complaints and enquiries

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- Ensuring the open complaints and enquiries recorded on i-casework are actioned to required timescales
- Identifying and addressing any training or support needs

Members of the Committee asked questions/made comments on the following issues:

- the difference between an enquiry and a complaint; and whether this had any bearing on the small numbers of complaints received
- the closure time to deal with complaints, how many were resolved immediately over the telephone and the average time to resolve complaints

RESOLVED:

That the report updating on the adoption of the “Manage my Requests” iCasework system be noted.

35. ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 5 of 15 June 2021 the informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that updated on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group that was approved by Council in February 2020.

The report highlighted responses from the Head of Strategic Support in relation to a recommendation concerning the adoption of ethical procurement policy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group be noted;
- (2) It be noted that a further update report would be submitted in six months.

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

The informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the views of the Committee 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 by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; providing an update on

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the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and providing an update on the Armed Forces Covenant/Toolkit.

The report indicated that following consultation with officers two suggestions had been made for potential topics for consideration by Working Groups; and that the topics related to Corporate Communications and Covid-19 and Cyber Security.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Corporate Communications Manager and the Senior Manager ICT and Digital be requested to submit scoping documents, in respect of Corporate Communications and Covid-19 and Cyber Security respectively, to the next meeting of the Committee to enable Members to determine 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 Armed Forces Covenant/Toolkit be noted.

37. WELFARE REFORM AND ANTI-POVERTY REFERENCE GROUP - UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 24 of the meeting held on 2 November 2021 the informal meeting of the Committee considered a Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty update of the Head of Health and Wellbeing and Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

The update provided information on the latest meeting of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- Community Pantry
- Poverty Emergency and Childhood Poverty in Sefton
- Holiday Activity Fund and Summer Food Programme
- Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme
- Healthy Child Voucher Programme
- Strategic Branding and Marketing
- Requests for action

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented the update.

RESOLVED: That

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- (1) the update on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her update.

38. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2021

The informal meeting of the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented her report.

A Member of the Committee referred to the appointment of a Customer Journey Development Lead as detailed in the ICT section of the Cabinet Member report; and suggested that it would be helpful if the appointed officer could engage with elected Members on this matter

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.