



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 27TH JUNE, 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor Dowd (in the Chair)
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Corcoran, Harvey, McKee and
Catie Page

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson and Hardy

1. WELCOME

The Chair, Councillor Dowd, welcomed Members to the first meeting of Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) in the 2023/24 municipal year; and especially welcomed Councillors Harvey, Lloyd-Johnson and McKee as newly appointed members of the Committee; and expressed her thanks to Councillors Myers and Dodd and former Councillor Sathiy for their help and involvement on the Committee during the previous year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lloyd-Johnson, Christine Maher (and her Substitute Member Councillor Grace), Sir Ron Watson (and his substitute member Councillor Prendergast) and Webster (and her substitute member Councillor Anne Thompson).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the draft Work Programme for 2023/24; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee or by informal meetings of the Committee; the identification of items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; sought a potential date

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for an informal meeting of the Committee to consider a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the borough; sought a date for a visit by Members of the Committee to the Recycling Discovery Centre at Gillmoss; consideration of the views of the Assistant Director Place – (Highways and Public Protection) on the separation of parking offences and environmental offences, currently undertaken in a dual enforcement role by Civil Enforcement Officers; sought approval to cease the submission of update reports on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group; and provided an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In respect of refuse and recycling, Councillor Dowd suggested:

- that this year the Committee continue with the arrangement of holding informal meetings to undertake short reviews of services; and that the first review be on the topic of refuse and waste recycling.
- suggested that a date in August 2023 be selected for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre; that the visit take place in the morning and that in the afternoon on the selected date, an informal meeting of the Committee be held to discuss issues associated with refuse and waste recycling. If agreed, then this informal meeting would negate the need to arrange the informal meeting about the strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the borough as referred to in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7 of the report.

In respect of pre-scrutiny Councillor Dowd highlighted the fact that often strategies and plans were included on the Forward Plan but that rarely were they submitted to Overview and Scrutiny for comment prior to their submission to Cabinet/Council; and suggested that Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fell within the remit of this Committee, should seek the views of the Committee on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it was not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committee to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon.

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

- regarding the comments of the Assistant Director Place – (Highways and Public Protection) on the separation of parking offences and environmental offences, information was sought on a breakdown of the different offences for which the 34,000 penalty charge notices had been issued; and explanation was sought on comments made in the report regarding the reduction in time civil

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enforcement officers would spend patrolling if the parking and environmental enforcement functions were split

- pre-scrutiny and best practice employed by other local authorities
- the potential to hold more informal meetings to consider plans and strategies to meet dates imposed by report submission deadlines to Cabinet or Council

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme be approved;
- (2) the first review be on the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter a visit be arranged to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre in August 2023 and that an informal meeting of the Committee be held following the visit;
- (3) Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fall within the remit of this Committee, be requested to seek the views of the Committee on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it is not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committee to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) no further update reports be submitted on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group; and
- (6) the views of the Assistant Director Place – (Highways and Public Protection) on the separation of parking offences and environmental offences, currently undertaken in a dual enforcement role by Civil Enforcement Officers be noted; and
 - (a) a breakdown be provided of the different offences for which the 34,000 penalty charge notices had been issued; and
 - (b) explanation be provided on comments made in the report regarding the reduction in time civil enforcement officers would spend patrolling if the parking and environmental enforcement functions were split.

6. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - MARCH 2023 TO JUNE 2023

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 element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and

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Skills; and that provided an update on information requested at the last meeting of the Committee held on 7 March 2023.

Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills presented her report and following a request from a Member provided additional information on a food trailer business primarily based in Southport that specialised in Caribbean food.

Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Sefton Council recently winning the Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness category at this year's Northern Housing Awards for its Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Service
- the number of topics included on the Committee's work programme that fell within the remit of her portfolio
- Sefton's Culture Strategy

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

- the fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service was welcomed
- the action being taken with local businesses and residents to tackle the consistently received complaints regarding black sacks being placed out along South Road on non-collection days. The on-going work was noted and that consultations were being undertaken with the Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control regarding refuse storage facilities associated flat conversions; and the responsibility of both landlords and tenants as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes was noted
- the potential inclusion of Crosby Leisure Centre and the Formby Pool Trust as part of the Holiday Activity Fund
- the consultation exercise to be undertaken regarding the new Crosby Library Project; and whether local groups could be involved in the consultation process. It was noted that extensive public/local Councillor consultation would be undertaken; and that the form of the consultation exercise would be determined by the Council's Public Engagement and Consultation Panel
- a recent New Beginnings LGBTQ+ Youth Group event held in Southport
- information was sought on the results of the proposals for stakeholder engagement, that were presented to the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in early November 2022, in respect of the Council's walking and cycling network and the local cycling and the walking infrastructure plan that was being developed
- the disappointing response of schools to engage in the School Street pilot schemes was noted and what actions were being taken to improve interest in the pilot

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- in respect of building cleaning operations, the problems being experienced with the very difficult recruitment of staff in certain parts of the Borough with some posts receiving no applications, causing operational difficulties
- the impact on the Highway Development Control team processing large numbers of planning applications, despite the ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources, increased by the fact that no suitable applications were received for the vacant senior highway development engineer post
- problems experienced with external agencies not adequately undertaking their duties and the knock-on impact on the Council having to resolve such issues
- the detrimental impact on the environment due to National Highways not undertaking adequate cleansing operations on their major roads in the borough
- a review of the policy of grass cutting on the Formby by-pass was required
- whether the Winter Maintenance Policy should be submitted to the September or November 2023 meeting of the Committee
- additional information was sought on the grounds maintenance of the borough's cemeteries
- bye laws in respect of dogs in the borough's cemeteries and the recently introduced Public Space Protection Orders
- did Sefton have a Supplementary Planning Document in relation to telecommunications masts and associated equipment; and if so, could a copy be provided to all Members of the Council for information
- information was sought on the 6 conservation areas to be removed from the National Heritage at Risk Register

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (2) the information requested at the last meeting of the Committee held on 7 March 2023 and as referred to in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.5 of the report be noted; and
- (3) the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) be requested to provide an update to Members on the proposals for stakeholder engagement, that were presented to the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in early November 2022, in respect of the Council's walking and cycling network and the local cycling and the walking infrastructure plan that was being developed;
- (4) the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) be

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requested to clarify whether the Winter Maintenance Policy should be submitted to the September or November 2023 meeting of the Committee; and the Work Programme be updated accordingly;

- (5) the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) be requested to provide an update on the provision of grounds maintenance of the borough's cemeteries;
- (6) the Chief Planning Officer be requested to advise whether the Council have a Supplementary Planning Document in relation to telecommunications masts and associated equipment; and if so, provide a copy to all Members of the Council for information;
- (7) the Chief Planning Officer be requested to identify the 6 conservation areas to be removed from the National Heritage at Risk Register;
- (8) the Assistant Director of People (Communities) be requested to submit a report on Sefton's Culture Strategy to the Committee prior to formal approval by Cabinet; and the Committee's work programme be accordingly updated; and
- (9) Councillors Atkinson and Hardy be thanked for their attendance at the Committee.

7. HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE – MIGRATION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) that updated on the recent changes to migration related schemes following the final report of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group that was approved by this Committee in September 2022.

The report provided information on the undermentioned different migration related programmes that had been introduced to support refugee and asylum seeker populations:

- Local Authority Housing Fund
- Caseworker and relocation support funding
- Find your own accommodation (FYOA) pathway
- Flexible Housing Fund
- Exceptional costs
- Homelessness Assistance Fixed Tariff
- Temporary Integration Tariff
- Homes for Ukraine

Members of the Committee praised the work of officers providing support to the migration related programmes and particularly relating to the Homes for Ukraine programme.

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RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the recent changes to migration related schemes be noted; and
- (2) reports on any future changes to migration related schemes be submitted to the Committee.