



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor Hart (in the Chair)
Councillor Corcoran (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Cavanagh, Hinde, Killen, McKee, Morris,
Sammon and Webster

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Doyle, Harvey and Lappin

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McGinnity, Councillor Dowd, Cabinet Member – Communities and Partnership Engagement and Councillor Veidman, Cabinet Member – Highways and Housing

9. 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 Members concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

| Member | Minute No. | Nature of Interest |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Councillor Corcoran | Minute No. 15 – Cabinet Member Communities and Partnership Engagement report in relation to the partnership project with the Plaza cinema | Member of the advisory board of the organisation "At the Libraries" |
| Councillor Doyle | Minute No. 15 - Cabinet Member Housing and Highways report in relation to the Homelessness Update | Trustee and Chair of the Bosco Society Limited |

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

11. MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING AND WASTE AUTHORITY – SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25

The Committee considered, and received a presentation from Ian Stephenson, on the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority Service Delivery Plan 2024/25 (the Plan). Mr Williamson indicated that the Plan had four aims as detailed below:

1. Delivering efficient and effective services – waste contracts were detailed that delivered front line services that met the expected standards and agreed terms and conditions; and information was provided on:
 - overall recycling rates in Sefton
 - food waste collection
 - residual waste reduction
 - deposit return scheme
 - proposed simpler recycling methods
 - behaviour change campaigns
 - zero waste community fund
 - management of MRWA’s estate and facilities;
2. Continually improving services to meet changing demands – zero waste strategy and actions plans were consistent with the LCR zero waste framework and set the ambition for the delivery of future services;
3. Collaboration with partners to develop and deliver strategies and services – MRWA led and supported the LCR Waste Partnership, including development and delivery of the LCR Zero Waste Strategy;
4. Development of a framework for environmental performance and social value relating to sustainable development goals, carbon footprint and biodiversity.

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

- the reason for the delay in the introduction, to October 2027, of the Deposit Return Scheme to reduce litter from drinks containers
- the frequency of collections of food waste caddies when introduced in 2026

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- concern was expressed at the low 33.2% overall recycling rate in Sefton; information was sought on the reasons for the low rate; and could this be improved by instigating a fresh advertising campaign to advise residents about the recycling service
- information was sought on the Liverpool City Region Zero Waste Strategy
- information was sought on a breakdown of the kerbside collection figures
- the potential for smaller and less packaging on products having an impact on recycling rates in Sefton
- information was sought on the recycling contamination rates in Sefton
- reasons why recycling contamination rates were worse at different times of the year
- stakeholder involvement in the new contract, to be awarded in 2029, for the waste management and recycling contract

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority Service Delivery Plan 2024/25 be noted;
- (2) Mr. Stephenson be requested to provide members of the Committee with additional information on:
 - the Liverpool City Region Zero Waste Strategy
 - data associated with Sefton's the kerbside collection statistics
 - data associated with the recycling contamination rates in Sefton; and
- (3) Mr. Stephenson be thanks for his informative presentation.

12. WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY & OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection seeking consideration of the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for approval for 2024/25.

The report indicated that the Council provided a Highway Winter Service to the Borough in accordance with the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; that officers monitored the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enacted the plan when weather conditions dictated; that the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) had inserted an additional section 41(1A) to the Highways Act 1980 which placed a duty on the Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, and stated 'In particular, a Highway Authority is under duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'; and that in addition, the Traffic

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Management Act 2004 placed a Statutory Network Management Duty on all local traffic authorities in England requiring all authorities to do all that was reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting this duty, authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonably practicable. The Council's Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan, which has been approved by the Council, is reviewed each summer to ensure that it remained 'fit for purpose'.

The report advised that as part of the annual review and reassessment consultation was undertaken and that a consultation letter was sent to every Elected Member seeking their views. A copy of the letter was attached as Annex A to the report.

One response to the consultation exercise was received requesting the addition of the footways in Birkdale village to the current gritting routes; and as the policy states that footway gritting should be targeted towards shopping areas as these are the locations of the highest footfall, it was proposed to include Liverpool Road, Birkdale, between the railway station and Bolton Road, in the designated footway routes for the forthcoming season.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways.

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

- Evaluation of the impacts of severe weather on road safety
- Information was sought on the schedule of highways and pavements to be gritted as part of the Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for 2024/25 be endorsed; and
- (2) the Assistant Director – Highways and Public Protection be requested to provide the Committee with the schedule of highways and pavements to be gritted as part of the Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan.

13. LCR LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS TOWARDS APPROVAL OF DRAFT LNRS

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing seeking consideration of the approval of the role of the Council as a 'supporting authority' in the preparation of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the next steps

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in the preparation of the LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the submission of views to Cabinet or Council.

The report had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Executive/Scrutiny Protocol that indicated that the views of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be sought on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council.

The report indicated that the 2021 Environment Act set out a requirement for the preparation of LNRSs across the country, to be approved by March 2025, to:

- Agree priorities for nature's recovery
- Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- Map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals;

that the LCR Combined Authority was the 'responsible body' for preparing and approving the LNRS for the region; that like the other LCR districts, Sefton Council was a designated 'supporting authority' with a specific role in this preparation process; and that the LCR were intending to approve a draft LNRS for public consultation in autumn/winter 2024/5, and the final LNRS in spring 2025 in line with Government's deadlines.

The report also set out the LNRS linkages and benefits; the emerging LNRS priorities for nature recovery; the emerging LNRS mapping of the most valuable existing areas for nature; and the emerging LNRS mapping of specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

The report concluded that as a designated 'supporting authority' for the LNRS, Sefton Council approvals were necessary before the Combined Authority as 'responsible body' for the LNRS could approve the draft and final Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Attached as an appendix to the report was a copy of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Member Briefing Note prepared by the Combined Authority (July 2024).

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

- "Making Space for Water", the natural flood management schemes
- The ongoing wider stakeholder engagement on the Strategy which involved one-to-one sessions with landowners
- The size of habitat land banks and were they the same size across different local authorities; and could the burden for such banks be borne more heavily in Sefton
- Sefton's liaison with other landowners such as the National Trust at Formby

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- The Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership and proposals for interconnected and dynamic coastal habitats
- The removal of trees from sites to enable developments to take place; and what could be done to mitigate such practices
- How local community groups could get involved in and potentially take ownership of projects
- The potential for biodiversity projects, as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, having a negative impacting on the viability of affordable housing within developments

RESOLVED:

That the role of the Council as a 'supporting authority' in the preparation of the LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the next steps in the preparation of the LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy be approved.

14. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2024/25; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; seeking formal approval of decisions taken at the informal meeting of the Committee in respect of the provision of housing for former looked after children who are now care leavers; and which updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

- The potential for holding an informal meeting to review the cleansing service and which could also include recycling operations. Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member – Cleansing and Street Scene advised the Committee that a review of such a wide-ranging topic may be premature at this point in time due to the current vacancy for the post of cleansing service manager and that a new post of waste minimisation officer was shortly to be filled. It was suggested that further consideration be given to this matter in Spring 2025
- Information was sought on the review of weed control that took place in 2021/22 by a Member Reference Group
- Information was sought on the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group
- Updates on the closure of the White House, located in Southport's Municipal Golf Links; and work on the Marine Lake Events Centre

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In respect of the cleansing/street scene issues referred to above, the Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that the Work Programme included a number of associated reports that would be submitted to the Committee prior to March 2025. These reports related to:

- Methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues
- Investigation of measures that could be introduced as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes to compel landlords to have a level of control over their tenants to alleviate the anti-social actions of littering and dumping rubbish in rear entries
- Investigation of the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals
- Presentation from Liverpool City Region Strategic Waste Partnership Manager about the changes in waste legislation and what that will mean due to the statutory requirement for the collection of food waste in 2026

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Domestic Abuse report be deferred and considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 5 November 2024;
- (3) the Southport Market update report be deferred and considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 5 November 2024;
- (4) consideration be given, at the March 2025 meeting of the Committee, to holding an informal meeting to review the cleansing service and which could also include recycling operations;
- (5) bearing in mind that a review has recently been undertaken by a Member Reference Group regarding weed control no further action be taken at this time to review the topic of issues associated with weed control/grass cutting;
- (6) details of the review of weed control that took place in 2021/22 by a Member Reference Group be circulated to members of the Committee;
- (7) a copy of the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group final report be circulated to members of the Committee
- (8) In respect of the informal meeting of the Committee held on 28 August 2024 to consider the issue of the provision of housing for former looked after children who are now care leavers:
 - (1) the approach agreed at the Strategic Housing Partnership -

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Housing for Care Experienced Young People event; and the commitment of housing providers to a Care Experienced Housing Charter be endorsed; and

- (2) at the conclusion of the Task and Finish Group to develop and agree the Housing Charter, the Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Housing be requested to submit a report to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Regeneration and Skills) and (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) updating on the outcomes of the Group; and the Work Programme be updated accordingly; and
- (9) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

15. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JUNE 2024 TO SEPTEMBER 2024

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills.

Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing presented her report and indicated that an updated version would be submitted to the next meeting. Councillor Doyle also highlighted issues associated with the allocation of legacy monies at Hesketh Park.

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

- Councillor Doyle was thanked for her recent visit to a Southport allotment
- An update was sought on the repair of the waterfall at Hesketh Park

Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member – Cleansing and Street Scene presented his report and highlighted the following issues:

- The successful application for £50,000 grant funding from DEFRA to launch a fly tipping intervention project in July. This two-month #WFT? Why Fly Tip? Project provided hard-hitting messages and had focused on waste in shared rear entries in parts of Derby/Linacre wards
- Taking the Lead Campaign the aim of which was to offer important safety tips to all dog owners in Merseyside about looking after their pet, especially around children, which could prevent serious injuries

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

- The significant support offered by the street cleansing service following the incidents in Southport, both in terms of a role in the clean-up following the riots and assisting with managing tributes at various sites was praised
- The £50,000 grant funding from DEFRA to launch a fly tipping intervention was welcomed but more funding was required to target other problem areas within the borough
- The potential to include rear entries/alleyways as part of residents' back yards/gardens to stop incidents of fly-tipping.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Employment and learning
- Sefton@work
- Tourism
- Invest Sefton

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

- The positive comparisons for Sefton with the Liverpool City Region in respect of Not in Education, Employment, or Training
- Childcare providers grant support and the provision of free places

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member - Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (2) Councillors Doyle, Harvey and Lappin be thanked for their attendance at the Committee; and
- (3) the Committee places on record its appreciation of the street cleansing service for the significant service offered following the incidents in Southport, both in terms of a role in the clean-up following the riots and assisting with managing tributes at various sites.