



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Dowd, Harvey and Lappin

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Hart, welcomed Members to the first meeting of Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Councillor Hart especially welcomed Councillors Cavanagh, Hinde, Killen, McGinnity, Morris and Sammon as newly appointed members of the Committee; and expressed thanks to Councillor Dowd, the former Chair of the Committee, and Councillors Howard, Harvey, Lloyd-Johnson, Catie Page and Sir Ron Watson and former Councillor Christine Maher for their help and involvement on the Committee during the previous year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor McGinnity.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interest were made:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Killen	Minute No. 6 – Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan (in relation to the potential to hold an informal meeting to review the topic of Provision of Housing for	Has an involvement in a supported accommodation business. Stayed in the room but took no part in the consideration of the item

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

	Former Looked After Children who are now Care Leavers)	
Councillor Killen	Minute No. 7 – Cabinet Member Reports March to June 2024 (in relation to the reference to Care Experienced Young People in the Cabinet Member Report - Highways and Housing)	Has an involvement in a supported accommodation business. Stayed in the room but took no part in the consideration of the item
Councillor Corcoran	Minute No. 7 – Cabinet Member Reports March to June 2024 (in relation to domestic abuse issues contained in the Cabinet Member Report - Communities and Partnership Engagement)	Is employed by an organisation referred to in the report. Stayed in the room but took no part in the consideration of the item
Councillor Corcoran	Minute No. 7 – Cabinet Member Reports March to June 2024 (in relation to Libraries issues contained in the Cabinet Member Report - Communities and Partnership Engagement)	Is an Advisory Board Member of “At the Libraries”. Stayed in the room and took part in the consideration of the item

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. COUNCIL HOUSING PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that updated on the Council's Housing Programme.

The report indicated that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 7 January 2021, (Minute No. 79) approved the strategic case for Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market through the provision of council housing for rent; that the Council currently had approximately £5m of capital available to fund the acquisition of Council Housing as a result of the Right to Buy Receipts Sharing Agreement with One Vision Housing and from commuted sums secured via S106 agreements; and that the strategic rationale for the scheme was that over the past few years there had been a growing acceptance in Government that councils needed to play a greater role in meeting new build housing targets; that although very little additional council housing had been developed in the last 50 years the active participation of local councils acting as developers and landlords was something that government were actively encouraging; and that Sefton had already partly responded to this through the establishment of Sandway Homes, its wholly owned private housing development company.

The report also set out the progress to date; the Phase 1 Business Plan Delivery Model Option Appraisal; that direct delivery option was selected; that under this model homes would be in the legal ownership of the Council and the programme under the Council's direction; and that because the Council had already registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, an application could be made to access Homes England grant on eligible schemes.

The report concluded by detailing the Business Plan Overview for the Council Housing Programme which set out the sites, number of units and timescales for scheme completions.

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

- The classification of temporary accommodation
- The 'Cost Floor Rule' associated with a Council Tenant's Right to Buy their home
- Statistics on the numbers of One Vision Housing properties purchased under the Right to Buy scheme

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

- The Homes England grant on the Buckley Hill Lane housing scheme and the application for Homes England Investment Partner status
- The need to ensure that new build properties enjoyed high levels of energy efficiency; and that there should be an aspiration to achieve energy efficiency levels over and above those specified in current building regulations
- How new build properties would be allocated and the use of Property Pool Plus

RESOLVED:

That the report updating on the Council's Housing Programme be noted.

6. 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 views on the draft 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; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; that sought a potential date for an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers; and that sought a decision on whether the Committee wished to pursue, at an informal meeting of the Committee, the topic of the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals.

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

- The benefits of holding informal meetings rather than formal Working Groups to review topics
- The ability to update the Committee's Work Programme at each meeting
- The operation of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer be requested to liaise with Members regarding the selection of a date to hold an

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

informal meeting of the Committee to consider the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers; and that it be agreed that the informal meeting be held using Microsoft Teams;

- (3) Sefton's appointed Members on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to raise the issues, at that Committee, of the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Combined Authority and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals; rather than the matter be dealt with at an informal meeting of the Committee; and
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

7. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - MARCH 2024 TO JUNE 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 Dowd, Cabinet Member - Communities and Partnership Engagement presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- The all-Easter Holidays Activity Fund and that in particular that 253 secondary aged young people attended HAF provision over the Easter holidays across 6,595 individual sessions
- The two procurement exercises currently underway with regards to domestic abuse
- The recent successful bid to the Library Improvement Fund that had secured £80,000 of capital funding to pay for improvements to Bootle Library

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

- Why Fly Tip? that was part of a £50,000 grant to tackle rear entry and on street fly-tipping; and whether an evaluation of the scheme would be undertaken to measure outcomes and be reported to Committee
- Compliments were paid for the community engagement activity associated with the Sefton Pride event held in Southport on 15 June 2024
- Satisfaction was expressed at the good news regarding the successful bid to the Library Improvement Fund to secure funding to pay for improvements to Bootle Library

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

- With regard to the Youth Engagement team, the selection of sites for the youth bus across the borough
- With regard to work with migrants and sanctuary seekers, the selection of sites in the borough for weekly advice and support sessions

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

- That he would be shortly visiting Sefton Arc to gain an understanding of how the service operated
- The prevalence of fly-tipping incidents
- The weed control programme which was now in the second of four sprays for the season; and that sample inspections were undertaken to capture evidence of 'die back' of weeds approximately 10-14 days following the scheduled spray
- Grass cutting on the Formby Bypass
- The continual problem of waste being fly-tipped in rear entries

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

- The supervisory/inspection regime in place to ensure road sweepers undertook their duties to agreed standards
- Problems associated with properties that had no refuse storage facilities and whose residents placed their refuse on the highway
- The use of seagull-proof refuse sacks to prevent the spillage of litter due to scavenging animals
- Regarding grass cutting on the Formby Bypass, it was often difficult to balance the views of those residents who were in favour of the activity against those who were opposed and would rather allow a wildflower verge to flourish
- Weed issues on Marine Drive in Southport that did not give a good impression to visitors to the town
- Performance monitoring of the weed control contract
- Complaints received about the cleanliness of Chapel Street, Southport
- Street scrubbing operations in Southport town centre
- Upkeep and maintenance of small parcels of council land by community and voluntary groups
- Proposals to change the enforcement regime to combat the problems of residents dumping rubbish in their rear entries
- It was stated that some areas of the borough appeared to receive better weed control services than others
- The impact of schools planning to implement changes to the structure of their school day from September 2024 on the School Crossing Patrol service
- Resources associated with the burial and cremation service
- The Careline call response time for 99.3% of calls answered within 60 seconds was praised; and it was acknowledged that additional

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

time would have to be taken into account for referrals to other organisations as these too would have their own response targets

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

- LCR Metro Mayor's Young Persons Guarantee
- Sefton@Work's achievement at passing the annual Customer Service Excellence assessment for 2024
- Mersey Care and Sefton Council's collaboration to develop plans for a Mental Health Digital Research Centre at Maghull Health Park

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

- The welcome news in relation to the Fast Track to Counselling for Sefton@work clients
- The level of profit achieved for the Council from the Southport Food and Drink Festival

A Member of the Committee asked a question in respect of Councillor Doyle's Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing portfolio (Green Sefton element) regarding what would happen when the legacy money for Hesketh Park was spent.

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) issues associated with weed control/grass cutting be a potential topic for review at an informal meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) Councillors Dowd, Harvey and Lappin be thanked for their attendance at the Committee.