

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER, 2011**

**Overview
& Scrutiny**



PRESENT: Councillor Papworth (in the Chair)

Councillor Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Ashton, K. Cluskey, Fenton, Hardy,
McKinley, Robinson, Weavers and Welsh

Also Present: Councillor Maher, Cabinet Member –Regeneration
and Housing;
Councillor Parry, Cabinet Member – Corporate
Services; and
Councillor Shaw, Cabinet Member – Environment

Councillors Carr, L. Cluskey, Crabtree and Roberts.

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that All Members of the Council had been invited to attend the meeting for Agenda Item 4, Draft Economic Strategy for Sefton. In that respect apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byrom, Fairclough, Glover, Kelly, Porter and Tonkiss.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

Member	Minute No.	Interest	Action
Councillor Fenton	40 – Operation of the Blue Badge Scheme	Prejudicial – In receipt of a Blue Badge	Left the room during consideration of that item
Councillor Papworth	41 – Core Strategy	Personal – Subscription to the National Trust – National Trust responded to the consultation	Stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon

37. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

38. DRAFT ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR SEFTON

The Head of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Mark Long, presented the Draft Economic Strategy for Sefton which detailed the issues and options required to be considered.

The presentation highlighted the following issues:-

- The need for jobs and prosperity
- The Sefton economy
- Recession and recovery
- Critical constraints
- Success factors
- Strategic objectives
- Target Sector – SuperPort, Tourism, Low Carbon Economy and Knowledge
- Capturing Job Opportunities
- Progressing Individuals into Work
- Strengths, Weaknesses and Strategic Priorities for North, South and Mid Sefton
- Leadership
- Delivering the Strategy

Members raised concerns regarding the impact on the Community that the Port expansion could have with regards transport and health. Their concern was specifically in relation to the increased volume of traffic travelling through the city centre carrying containers as opposed to travelling by rail and the consequences and impact that increased traffic will have on the Community.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing, Councillor Ian Maher reported that whilst the Port offered great opportunities the Council needed to be vigilant in seeking assurances with regards:-

- the expansion of the Port onto Derby Road and the management of relocating those businesses currently operating there.

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- Employment – influence peel holdings to employ local people.
- Transport issue – Impact on community
- Port Access Plan.
- Unemployment – requirement to have an understanding of issues in the labour markets.

The Cabinet Member agreed that the Council would have the ability to influence peel holdings at certain levels and would have more leverage should the Council become the accountable body for the River Dredging.

RESOLVED: That the presentation in relation to the Draft Economic Strategy for Sefton be accepted.

39. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S 'LOWER ALT WITH CROSSENS DRAFT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT' - OVERVIEW

The Chair, Councillor Papworth welcomed and introduced Mr Ian Rowlands and Mr Graham Shephard from the Environment Agency and Mr Brian O'Hare Chair of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for the North West of England.

Mr Rowlands of the Environment Agency gave a presentation which included the following issues in relation to Lower Alt with Crossens Pumped Drainage Catchment and the Draft Flood Risk Management Strategic Plan Consultation to the Committee:-

- Area of Study
- Brief Historical Background
- Drivers for Change
- Potential Challenges
- Draft Recommendations

Members were re-assured that the Environment Agency were not increasing the flood risk in Urban areas, Mr Rowlands referred to the biggest risk as coming from the Sea.

Members pointed out that a fundamental weakness in the consultation was the lack of financial information available and that decisions shouldn't be made until the Council understands the cost. It was stated that as well as there being a risk to the Council there was a massive risk to the people and communities of Sefton.

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The Chair of Hightown Parish Council stated that agricultural land should be protected.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment stated that the presentation had been an interesting one and reiterated that Sefton, like other Authorities, were facing financial burden. He highlighted the need to ensure that flood protection in the Urban areas was either maintained or improved.

To compliment the presentation the Committee also considered the report of the Director of Built Environment which informed Members of the content of the consultation draft "Lower Alt with Crossens Pumped Drainage Catchment: Draft Flood Risk Management strategic Plan: Consultation Document". The report also provided an overview of the key issues and potential implications to form the basis of the Council's response to the Environment Agency which were detailed in paragraph 3 to the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS - That:-

- (1) The presentation be received;
- (2) The key issues and potential implications of the consultation draft "Lower Alt with Crossens Pumped Drainage Catchment: Draft Flood Risk Management Strategic plan" be accepted;
- (3) The Head of Planning Services and the Head of Investment Programmes and Infrastructure be given delegated authority to respond to the consultation, on the basis of paragraph 3 to the report, be accepted ; and
- (4) Officers continue to engage with the Environment Agency regarding the Lower Alt with Crossens Pumped Drainage Catchment: Draft Flood Risk Management Strategic Plan, be accepted.

40. OPERATION OF THE BLUE BADGE SCHEME IN SEFTON

Further to Minute No. 27 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) held on 20 September 2011 the Committee considered the report of the Director of Built Environment which informed Members of the operation of the Blue badge Scheme in Sefton. The report detailed:-

- the history and development of the Blue badge Scheme;
- changes to the operation of the scheme in Sefton in February 2004;
- removal of G.P's from the assessment process;

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- transfer of administration of the scheme from Social Services to Technical Services;
- the blue badge improvement service;
- the way forward;
- equalities and publicity;
- enforcement

Members raised concerns regarding misuse of blue badges. It was reported that some fundamental changes to the blue badge itself should help enforcement officers to detect fraudulent uses of the badge.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted

41. SEFTON'S CORE STRATEGY OPTIONS - UPDATE ON CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Built Environment, which reviewed the consultation, carried out in connection with the Core Strategy "Options" during May - August 2011 and detailed an overview of the representations received.

It was reported that the next stage of consultation would be the "Preferred Option" stage, later in 2012. It was highlighted that the challenge would be to improve the consultation process and encourage people to express their views, while recognising the tight limits of budget and staff.

The following key messages, from the 2,500 individual responses received from the consultation, were outlined as:-

- The vast majority of responses opposed the possibility of developing land in the Green Belt and greenspaces for either homes or jobs.
- The key concerns being in relation to building on high quality agricultural land, impact on food security, flooding and drainage, traffic congestion, lack of adequate infrastructure for example availability of school places and pressure on doctors surgeries, loss of green areas which are valuable for recreation, nature, general openness. Many responses felt that empty homes should be refurbished and brownfield sites remediated before any greenspace or Green Belt land was developed.

It was reported that the comments were being analysed in more detail and that further work was required in order that a response to the concerns regarding agricultural land maybe drafted.

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Members congratulated all Members of the team who were involved with the consultation process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the review of the Core Strategy "Options" consultation and the next stage in preparing the Preferred Option for the Core Strategy be accepted;
- (2) all staff involved with the consultation process be congratulated and thanked for the sterling work carried out.

42. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Commissioning submitting the most recent report by the Cabinet Member – Environmental for the period September to October 2011.

In accordance with the recently agreed procedure, the Cabinet Member update report attached to the report had been e-mailed to the Chair and Spokespersons of the Committee on its availability and Spokesperson, Councillor K. Cluskey, indicated that he would wish to receive further information on the following issues:-

- Air Quality and Health
- Street Cleansing

A briefing paper in relation to Air Quality and Health was circulated with the Agenda.

Members raised concerns regarding the expansion of the Port and the additional pressures this could bring in relation to the air quality.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental circulated a briefing paper in relation to Street Cleansing.

Members raised concerns regarding deliberate littering of leaves by some gardeners and requested that the Cabinet Member investigate the possibility of a standard formal letter being drafted, to send out in such cases.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and briefing papers in relation to Air Quality and Health and Street Cleansing be received;
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Environmental be requested to investigate the possibility of a standard formal letter being drafted to send out

to individuals who deliberately litter the street with leaves whilst gardening.

43. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Commissioning in relation to the Committee's programme of work. A number of Key Decisions within the latest Key Decision Forward Plan fell under this Committee's remit and the Committee was requested to consider whether any of the items should be pre-scrutinised. In that respect Members requested to pre-scrutinise the following items:-

- Adoption of the Southport Town Centre Retail Strategy and its recommendations.
- Sefton Carbon Management Plans – To formally adopt new “Sefton Carbon Management Plans”, carbon savings target and strategic energy issues as Council Policies.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave a brief update to the Committee in relation to the first meeting of the Port Master Plan Working Group and stated that the Scoping Document would be submitted to all four Overview and Scrutiny Committee's for agreement.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) the Committee requests to pre-scrutinise, before a decision is taken, the item on the Key Decision Forward Plan in relation to adoption of the Southport Town Centre Retail Strategy and its recommendations;
- (2) the Committee requests to pre-scrutinise, before a decision is taken, the item on the Key Decision Forward Plan in relation to Sefton Carbon Management Plans – To formally adopt new “Sefton Carbon Management Plans”, carbon savings target and strategic energy issues as Council Policies; and
- (3) the update in relation to the Port Master Plan Working Group be accepted.