

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 23RD JANUARY, 2018**

PRESENT: Councillor Sayers (in the Chair)
Councillors Michael O'Brien, David Pullin, Roche,
Weavers, Webster and Bill Welsh

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Atkinson

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bliss (and his Substitute Member Councillor Jones), Carragher and Dan T. Lewis (and his Substitute Member Councillor Carr).

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) held on 7 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

35. MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING AND WASTE AUTHORITY - SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2017/18

The Committee received a presentation from Carl Beer, Chief Executive of Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) on his Authority's Service Delivery Plan 2017/18.

Mr. Beer provided information on:-

- The "waste hierarchy" regarding the most and least favoured options in respect of waste
- The Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership and detailed that 1.5 million residents, living in 688,000 households, generated 650,000 tonnes of waste per year of which 42% was recycled
- Household Waste Recycling Centres and the recycling and diversion performance statistics for 2009 – 2017
- The Bidston and Gillmoss materials recovery facilities
- The Kirkby rail loading station used to transport waste to the Wilton Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power Facility
- The MRWA and Veolia Community Fund
- Household recycling rates

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- Liverpool City Region kerbside residual waste results - 2015/16
- A Classification of residential neighbourhoods (ACORN) together with associated recycling statistics
- Collection strategy considerations
- Waste prevention and re-use
- The “circular economy” and the need for those materials that are discarded the MRWA must ensure that they return in some form to the local economy – securing and creating jobs for local people
- The cost of service vs the MRWA levy
- The strategic review which included actions from a Leaders meeting in September 2017 which included as part of Phase One - c.£500k savings options from MRWA, levy apportionment mechanism options and ‘Publish’ Strategic Review report; and as part of Phase Two - governance options, District Collaboration, bulky and clinical waste and common policies

Members also watched a short video that provided information on the transfer of Merseyside’s residual waste, via train from the Kirkby rail loading station, to the Wilton energy from waste plant in Teeside.

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

- The Chinese Government’s ban on the importing of waste plastic for recycling. It was noted that this ban had been anticipated for a number of years and that the MRWA’s contractor Veolia had therefore sought alternative destinations in the UK, the European Union and India
- The operation of a recycling facility in the Sandhills area of Liverpool that recycled plastics and yoghurt pots into street furniture
- What would be the anticipated uptake of the purchase of subsidised composting bins and the effect on recycling rates? It was noted that subsidised compost bins schemes had previously been introduced across Merseyside but the effects on recycling had not been significant
- The political governance arrangements associated with the MRWA levy and the requirement for unanimous decisions to approve the levy
- It was acknowledged that Council Leaders across the City Region discussed issues about the MRWA levy, recycling and residual waste collection but that each borough had its own ideas that were not always complementary
- It was noted that the Local Government Association were lobbying Government to produce recycling targets but with adequate resources to ensure that the process could be effectively managed
- What could the saving have been to the Merseyside local authorities if the energy from waste plant was built in Merseyside rather than Wilton? It was indicated that the suggested saving could have been in the region of £5 to £10 million per year

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- Would it be more cost effective to burn all residual waste rather than send it to landfill? It would be cheaper to burn it all but this would not take into account all externalities such as pollution. As always, the best option would be to recycle as much material as possible
- A concern was expressed that the burning of plastics had negative, long term environmental impacts
- It was noted that from an economies of scale position it would be more efficient for all Merseyside local authorities to harmonise their recycling and residual waste collection services as far as possible
- What was the lifespan of the Wilton plant? The plant had a 27 year lifespan but with options in place to refit at appropriate times. This could increase the plant's lifespan to 50 years. Furthermore, the benefit of the Wilton site was that it had the benefit of planning permission and was currently operational. The identification of future sites and obtaining of all necessary approvals may prove to be problematic

RESOLVED:

That Mr. Beer, Chief Executive of Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority be thanked for his informative presentation.

36. ACTION PLAN ON EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive that provided an update setting out the progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Employment Development Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

The report indicated that as a result of the expected impact of the Sefton Economic Strategy due to be adopted by the Council in 2018, the current update report had varied from earlier reports; that the forthcoming Sefton Economic strategy would incorporate all the Council's objectives related to employment and skills for younger people and adults in the community, encompassing those actions which were the responsibility of the Investment and Employment services such as Sefton@work and Invest Sefton; and that accordingly, it was recommended that future reporting on employment actions form a part of the performance reporting framework to be devised once the Council had adopted the forthcoming Sefton Economic Strategy.

Members of the Committee asked a question/commented on the following issue:-

- A comment was made about the paragraph "We will measure our success by the extent to which we generate self-conscious commissioners maximising social value and social investment, assets and services transferred to emerging self-supporting markets, stimulate responsiveness in social finance providers and build a new generation of confident, capable and committed social

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entrepreneurs”; and clarity was sought on the phrase “self-conscious commissioners”. It was indicated that this terminology was used as it formed part of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules; and alternative wording of “market aware commissioners” may be more appropriate

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress achieved against each of the recommendations formulated by the Employment Development Working Group in the current reporting period be noted;
- (2) future reporting on employment actions form a part of the performance reporting framework to be devised once the Council adopts the forthcoming Sefton Economic Strategy; and
- (3) Claire Maguire be thanked for the production of her comprehensive and informative report.

37. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that updated on the draft Work Programme for 2017/18; and seeking the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) the report on the Economic Strategy for Growth be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 March 2018.

38. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS – NOVEMBER 2017 – JANUARY 2018

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Atkinson be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.