

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON THURSDAY 26TH JULY, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, Cummins, Fairclough, Hardy,
John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Moncur and Veidman

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 21 June 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

26. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) held on 10 July 2018, the Cabinet considered the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) Special Educational Needs and Disability Process of Assessment Working Group. The Lead Member of the Working Group, Councillor Spencer presented the Final Report to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet placed on record its appreciation to all Members of the Working Group and Officers for their commitment in producing an excellent piece of work.

Decision Made:

That provided the recommendations are subject to any budget implications and the inclusion of the revised recommendation 1. (h), as amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) on 10 July 2018, the following recommendations be approved:-

- (1) That the Head of Schools and Families be requested to:-
 - (a) Review the current provision of Special Educational Needs

(SEN) units within schools, in order to ensure that appropriate provision is available within the relevant schools, as evidence provided suggests that the current system is not meeting the needs of children and their families appropriately.

- (b) Encourage relevant schools to consider an alternative term for “SEN unit”, possibly describing themselves as a “SEN-friendly school”, in order to reduce stigma and improve compliance with the Equality Act.
- (c) Liaise with the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups and Alder Hey Children’s NHS Foundation Trust in order to explore the possibility of requesting assessment appointments by professional experts to be carried out in schools wherever possible, particularly specialised schools and those schools with a unit, in order to provide a “safe” environment for children, with less preparation required for those children who experience anxiety when their routine is disrupted.
- (d) Encourage those schools that have a SEN unit to have a dedicated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), particularly where there are a high proportion of children with SEND, as evidence provided indicates that access to appropriate resources is greater in settings where there is a dedicated SENCO.
- (e) Encourage schools to include SENCOs on the management team for the school, in order to enhance the profile of SEND.
- (f) Encourage schools to support SENCOs to undertake referrals of children with SEND for professional input and assessment appointments, in order to minimise delays in obtaining Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- (g) Explore the possibility, in conjunction with the Council’s Senior Educational Psychologist, of encouraging schools to undertake joint training on SEND for parents/carers’ groups within schools, with teachers and governors, in order to ensure that the information and approach provided are consistent, appropriate embedded.
- (h) Include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for parents/carers of children with SEND within the information available on school admissions, as part of the “school readiness” approach, in order to create an efficient and effective home-school partnership from the outset, in conjunction with the Assessment, Resource and Provision Planning Team.

- (i) Explore the possibility of increasing communication with parents/carers on SEND through the Borough's Family Wellbeing Centres, particularly from an early years' perspective and possibly through the development of leaflets, in order to enhance "school readiness" for the children and their parents/carers.
- (j) Liaise with the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups to explore the possibility of requesting that information on SEND for parents/carers is included with/within the Personal Child Health Record (red book) and through the Healthy Child Programme, in order to assist in early intervention.
- (k) Encourage schools to include potentially useful contacts and useful events on SEND within school newsletters, in order to ensure that all parents/carers have access to them.
- (l) Encourage primary schools to share good practice and to consider undertaking inclusivity education with all children, particularly relating to SEND and neuro-diversity, in order to raise standards and ensure equitable and universal access to provision within schools.
- (m) Revise Sefton's Local Offer in order to make it more user-friendly and accessible to parents/carers, which could include ensuring that it is easier to find on the Council's website, using less formal language and the inclusion of a glossary of terms and abbreviations.
- (n) Liaise with the Council's Head of Health and Wellbeing in order to:
 - (i) Encourage schools to advertise and promote the School Nurse drop-in sessions within their newsletters, so that parents/carers have a greater opportunity to access them.
 - (ii) Request the School Nursing Service to approach the SENCO Forum, with a view to discussing the Healthy Schools Programme and to clarify the role of the School Nurse, particularly in relation to assessing children with SEND and in order to minimise delays in obtaining EHC Plans, as this would help to manage the expectations of parents/carers.
- (o) Submit a report to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding), following an audit, providing information on the following:-
 - (i) Any high schools which are restricting the number of enhanced transitions for SEND, together with

explanations for the reasons behind the decisions.

- (ii) The number of children with SEND accessing Sefton schools who come from outside the Borough and the reasons for this.
 - (iii) Consideration of how parents who have children with SEND and who are not engaging with schools could be engaged, or re-engaged.
 - (iv) Whether funding has been withdrawn for children with SEND in Year 6 and the reasons for withdrawal.
- (2) That the Head of Health and Wellbeing be requested to ensure that the School Nurse carries out their role prior to any collaboration with the school SENCO, in relation to assessing and referring children with SEND, in order to minimise delays in obtaining EHC Plans.
- (3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) be requested to consider the establishment of a Working Group in the future to examine post-19 provision for SENDs, in order to improve conditions for this vulnerable group of young people. This could be a Joint Working Group with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills).
- (4) That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to liaise with relevant officers in order to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) receives a six-monthly monitoring report, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations outlined above and as a means of ensuring SMART objectives.

Reasons for the Decision:

The Working Group has made a number of recommendations that require approval by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) and the Cabinet.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) established the Working Group to review special educational needs and disability process of assessment and the Working Group has performed this task.

27. PARKS AND GREENSPACES FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) held on 3 July 2018, the Cabinet considered the

report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) Parks and Greenspaces Working Group.

The Cabinet placed on record its appreciation for the work undertaken by the Members and Officers of the Working Group.

Decision Made:

- (1) That consideration and further research continues to take place on future service delivery mechanisms for the newly forming 'Green Sefton' service. These, together with other day to day innovations, to seek to reduce the reliance on the service on revenue budgets whilst still providing sites that communities value, feel safe in, and remain freely accessible, be approved;
- (2) That the Head of Communities in consultation with Corporate Communications be requested to investigate the possibility of a Sefton Parks and Greenspaces application for electronic devices to enable visually impaired individuals to safely and confidently navigate around Sefton's Parks and Greenspaces, encouraging individuals to visit parks and greenspaces;
- (3) That the Head of Communities be requested to continue exploring and developing food growing projects, such as communal allotments in parks;
- (4) That the Head of Communities be requested to continue exploring and developing the volunteer hubs, such as that at Botanic gardens old nursery site;
- (5) That the Head of Communities be requested to continue to arrange 'Volunteer Celebrations' and offer thanks formally to all volunteers who contribute so much to our Parks and Greenspaces; and
- (6) That the Head of Communities be requested to report annually or when appropriate, whichever is the sooner, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee updating the Committee on progress

Reasons for the Decision:

The Working Group has made a number of recommendations that require approval by the Cabinet.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) established a Working Group to review Parks and Greenspaces in Sefton and the Working Group has performed this task.

28. APPROVAL OF LEGAL DOCUMENTATION FOR ACADEMY CONVERSIONS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Schools and Families in relation to the Regional Schools Commissioner who had, on 24 May 2018, issued an academy order to enable Kew Woods Primary School to convert to an academy. It was also reported that the governing body of Churchtown Primary School had also informed the Local Authority of their application to convert to an academy. The report sought authorisation for officers to sign the documentation required by the Government's academy conversion process at the appropriate time.

Decision Made:

Cabinet agreed to:

- (1) note the statutory requirements regarding academy conversion;
- (2) note the financial implications to the Council; and
- (3) authorise the Head of Schools and Families in consultation with the relevant Officers to complete the necessary agreements required as part of the academy conversion process for the following schools as outlined in the report: Kew Woods Primary School and Churchtown Primary School.

Reasons for the Decision:

Cabinet needs to authorise appropriate officers to enter into the agreements required as part of the academy conversion process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There are no alternative options. The Secretary of State has the powers to direct that the academy conversion process can continue if the agreements are not signed.

29. SAND DUNES NURSERY SCHOOL – PROPOSAL TO COMMENCE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Schools and Families in relation to a letter received from the Governing body of Sand Dunes Nursery School stating that they were unable to set a budget and were unable to produce a plan which would bring the school back into budget.

It was reported that Sand Dunes Nursery School was no longer financially viable and had therefore requested that the local authority commence a statutory consultation on a proposal to close the school.

Decision Made:

Cabinet agreed to:

- (1) note the request from the Governing Body of Sand Dunes Nursery School to undertake a statutory consultation on a proposal to close the school because it is no longer financially;
- (2) note the statutory process outlined in the report for the closure of the school;
- (3) approve the commencement of the statutory consultation process relating to the proposal to close Sand Dunes Nursery School with effect from July 2019; and
- (4) note that the proposal was a Key Decision but had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) had been consulted under Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was morally important to ensure parents were aware of the proposal before the start of next academic year.

Reasons for the Decision:

The local authority has the statutory power to close a maintained school following the statutory process detailed in the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

All alternative options have been explored by the governing body with support from Officers prior to the governing body making their request.

30. APPROVAL OF PRO FORMA FOR SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS DOCUMENT, GUIDANCE NOTES AND SUDS AND FLOOD RISK INFORMATION NOTES

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Locality Services Commissioned that sought approval to use the Sustainable Drainage & Flood Risk Information Note and the Flood Risk Pro Forma to support Development Management, which relate to the implementation of Local Plan Policy EQ8 'Flood risk and surface water'.

Decision Made: Cabinet agreed to:

- (1) approve the Sustainable Drainage Systems and Flood Risk Information Note for Development Management purposes; and
- (2) approve the Flood Risk Pro Forma for Development Management purposes

Reasons for the Decision:

To provide clarity of requirements and the expectations of the Local Planning Authority in Sefton to developers with regard to Sustainable Drainage Systems and flood risk requirements, whilst improving the efficiency of the service provided to support development management.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not to develop these supplementary methods to support the Council in assessing planning applications in relation to sustainable drainage and flooding would have kept a process with a number of inefficiencies.

31. REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2017/18

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources detailing the revenue outturn position in relation to the 2017/18 financial year. The report also outlined key variations and where appropriate any impact on future years' financial performance.

Decision Made:

Cabinet agreed to:

- (1) note the General Fund net surplus of £1.923m for 2017/18 that will be held in order to support any significant budget variations that may arise in the final two years of the Council's current three year budget (up to 2019/20); and
- (2) note the Schools Delegated Budget net surplus of £1.577m for 2017/18.

Reasons for the Decision:

The production of a revenue outturn report is a key feature of effective financial management and will allow Members to make informed decisions that will support service delivery and medium term financial sustainability.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

32. SEFTON ECONOMIC STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director that updated Members on the outcome of the consultation process of the Sefton Economic Strategy and sought agreement to delegate approval of the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills.

Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services requested that reference be made to the Rural Economy within the report.

Decision Made:

Cabinet agreed to:

- (1) note the outcome of the consultation process of the Sefton Economic Strategy; and
- (2) delegate approval of the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

Reasons for the Decisions:

To update members on progress with this Key Decision and, to allow further time to align this work with the Council's Growth Programme, seek agreement to delegate approval of the final version and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

33. HOUSING DEVCO - LAND ASSEMBLY

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Commercial Development in relation to the approved Business Case for Sefton Council's Housing Development Company and the proposal of numerous sites for possible development. In some cases, in order to maximise the viability and potential returns of a specific site, the Business Case recognises the need for land assembly through the strategic acquisition of sites. This report proposes the acquisition of a site.

Decision Made:

- (1) That the recommendations contained in Appendix 1 be approved.

Reasons for the Decision:

The reasons for this recommendation are detailed in the attached commercial proposal at Appendix 1.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

An options appraisal is contained in the attached commercial proposal at Appendix 1.

34. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

35. HOUSING DEVCO - LAND ASSEMBLY

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(1) That the recommendations contained in Appendix 1 be approved.

Reasons for the Decision:

The reasons for this recommendation are detailed in the attached commercial proposal at Appendix 1.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

An options appraisal is contained in the attached commercial proposal at Appendix 1.