



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

REMOTE MEETING HELD ON ON TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor John Sayers (in the Chair)
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Dowd, Halsall, Killen, Lewis, Myers,
Robinson and Sathiy

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson, Hardy and Moncur

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brough.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2020 and the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 19 October 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

14. CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROGRESS REPORT - PRESENTATION

Further to Minute No. 40 of 10 March 2020, the Committee received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, the Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources; and Julia Thorpe, Project Officer – Climate and Environment, reporting on Climate Emergency progress by the Council. The presentation outlined the following:

- Purpose of the presentation
- Background – Climate Emergency
- Carbon footprint for Sefton
- Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Implementation Plan - Phase 1
- Covid-19 – how the lockdown has changed air pollution levels
- Green recovery
- How will progress be monitored?
- Communications Plan

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- Climate Assembly UK
- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions
- Summary and next steps
- Contact details

RESOLVED:

That Ms. Jukes and Ms. Thorpe be thanked for their informative presentation.

15. FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that presented the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report (the Annual Report). The report indicated that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council, as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority, of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions; and that the Annual Report satisfied such requirement.

The report provided information on the following matters:

- Delivery of duties under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 in relation to:
 - Duty to cooperate with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs)
 - Duty to have an up to date Local Flood Risk Strategy
 - Undertake duties as a Riparian owner
 - Maintain a register of assets – features that have a significant effect on flooding in the area
 - Undertake statutory consultee role responding to major planning applications checking the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) design
 - Duty to investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results
 - Duties under Civil Contingencies Act - Emergency Planning and response
 - Duties under Coast Protection Act 1949
- Flood and Coastal Erosion events
- Coastal Flooding and erosion
- Progress made in relation to:
 - supporting the delivery of the Council's aim of the creation of resilient communities
 - Asset inspections
 - Capital schemes

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- Annual Grant in Aid refresh submissions
- Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme
- Antony Gormley's Another Place
- Flood Risk Management Plans
- Financial matters associated with the funding to deliver coastal schemes
- Green Sefton Service plan
- Priorities for the next year which included:
 - Better use of digital technology to automate processes and improve recording and reporting
 - Support of the review and development of an operational flood response plan
 - Sefton Council's Climate Emergency Declaration

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

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

- Flooding issues, especially internal flooding, was a major concern for residents in parts of the borough. Concern was expressed that suitable schemes had been identified to combat such problems but because it was deemed by the Environment Agency that too few homes would be involved in such schemes, then funding would not be made available
- The increase of internal flooding incidents during the summer months due to heavy rainfall
- Changes to grant funding mechanisms to include multiple benefits such as people's health and wellbeing as part of the criteria process

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report presenting the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report be noted; and
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services be requested to write to:
 - (a) the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs seeking the provision of adequate funding for Sefton to combat the flooding issues identified in the report; and
 - (b) Sefton's Members of Parliament with a request that they support the funding request by lobbying the Secretary of State accordingly.

16. GREEN SEFTON ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that provided an update on the progress of Green Sefton's establishment and development, its current operational delivery over the last year, and setting out the strategic work programme, in line with the Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan for the next year.

The full Annual Review was attached as appendix 1 and included other background information including the current Service Plan updates; Key Performance Indicator updates; and examples of the Green Sefton Newsletter.

Tables within the report provided a summary of progress against the Service Plan actions, and the headlines actions/ priorities as agreed in 2019 with a summary of progress in 2020 and outlined actions planned for 2021. The headlines detailed in the tables had been populated in a 'importance/ urgency' matrix in order to inform the work programme of officers in the coming year.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Members for Health and Wellbeing and Locality Services.

The Committee also received a presentation from Mark Shaw, Service Manager, Green Sefton. Mr Shaw highlighted aspects of the work undertaken by the Green Sefton service relating to the following categories:

- Together a stronger community
- A borough for everyone
- Living, working and having fun
- A clean, green, beautiful borough
- Visit, explore and enjoy
- On the move
- Open for business
- Ready for the future

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

- The impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on the Green Sefton service Natural Alternatives, the long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs
- Funding opportunities available for apprenticeship schemes to increase team capacity within the Green Sefton service; and the potential for apprentices to take up full-time positions within the service
- The potential to increase team capacity by the use of the Kickstart government programme into 'green' jobs

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- How the Green Sefton service was aiming to be cost-neutral
- The potential to expand wild flower meadow schemes to include highways and other public spaces across the borough
- The unfortunate cessation of Green Sefton services due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on local communities
- The great work undertaken by Green Sefton staff during the Covid-19 lockdown and their resilience in taking on new roles
- The ambitious Green Sefton programme for the future was welcomed

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Moncur, paid tribute to the excellent work undertaken by the Green Sefton services team and highlighted the value placed on the service especially during the Covid -19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the progress of Green Sefton's establishment and development be noted;
- (2) Mr. Shaw be thanked for his informative presentation; and
- (3) the Committee places on record its appreciation to the Green Sefton service team for all their efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic.

17. WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY & OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Highways and Public Protection seeking consideration of the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for approval for 2020/21.

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 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'.

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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. No responses were received as a result of the consultation with Elected Members.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for 2020/21 be endorsed.

18. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY - 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU ARE SCRUTINISING CLIMATE CHANGE

Further to Minute No. 6 (3) of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 8 September 2020 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that provided information contained in a document, produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), entitled "10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change". A copy of the CfPS document was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report indicated that the CfPS document was part of the "10 questions" series, which set out key issues on which local scrutineers (councillors sitting on scrutiny committees and the officers who support them) could pose questions to those with decision-making responsibility; and the 10 questions in respect of scrutinising climate change were set out in the report.

This report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 8 September 2020 and it was resolved that:

- (1) the document entitled "10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change", as produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, be noted;
- (2) the Member Reference Group for Climate Change be requested to take account of the 10 questions posed in the Centre for Public Scrutiny document as part of their work on climate change; and
- (3) a copy of the Centre for Public Scrutiny document be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Committee members for information.

The purpose of the report was to comply with (3) above.

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RESOLVED:

That the Centre for Public Scrutiny document entitled “10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change” be noted.

19. DRAFT EXECUTIVE/SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

Further to Minute No. 4 of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 8 September 2020 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking consideration of a draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol. This draft Protocol was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report indicated that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 30 July 2020, considered a report that sought consultation on both the guidance published by the CfPS and on Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in Sefton, in general, with a view to providing feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, in due course; together with a proposal that the Management Board develop an Executive / Scrutiny protocol for Sefton.

Cabinet resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be requested to develop an Executive / Scrutiny protocol for use in Sefton.

The report concluded that any comments made by this Committee would be considered by the Management Board and subsequently Cabinet at their meetings to be held on 10 November and 3 December 2020 respectively.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) that draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol be endorsed; and
- (2) the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet be advised accordingly.

20. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 13 of 17 September 2019 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

A table attached to the report set out each recommendation and an accompanying update on the action taken to implement each recommendation.

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RESOLVED:

That the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

21. HOUSING LICENSING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 5 of 2 July 2019 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Housing Licence Performance Framework Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

A table attached to the report set out each recommendation and an accompanying update on the action taken to implement each recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Housing Licence Performance Framework Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

22. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought a review of the Work Programme for 2020/21; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by 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; and updated on the progress of items that have previously been considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) it be noted that the Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2020, agreed that no new Working Groups be established until the completion of one of the current Working Groups;
- (3) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (4) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to submit the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Town Centres

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Commission to the next meeting of this Committee; and

- (5) the update on United Utility issues be noted.

23. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and
- (2) Councillors Atkinson, Hardy and Moncur be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.