



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)**

**REMOTE MEETING HELD
ON TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER, 2020**

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Brough, Doyle, Grace, Killen, Lewis,
McCann and McKinley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lappin

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September, 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

9. SURPLUS COUNCIL OWNED LAND/ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a presentation from Dominic Ellis, Assets and Property Manager on Sefton's Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset Management Strategy.

Mr. Ellis explained why the management of the Council's asset base was important; where the Council was at currently regarding its policies and activity; how this aligned with the Council's Framework for Change programme; what the next 2-3 years may look like; and how Members would be engaged in the process. Details were provided on the following:

- In respect of the Council's asset base, aside from Staff, this was the Council's next biggest resource and therefore a robust strategic approach was required to ensure assets were maximised and informed decisions could be made;
- The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy were updated to provide a strategic framework for decisions; were aligned with the Framework for Change and the new capital strategy that was required; that documents went through the

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Council's formal governance process including Cabinet and Council; and that an annual review was conducted;

- The retention of assets within the Strategy provided a strategic landholding in key locations in the borough; and value for money (in respect of their current or future investment, capital value, revenue generation and/or ability to influence regeneration);
- How the Strategy supported the Framework for Change via Asset Maximisation; Partnering Opportunities; Agile working; Alignment with ICT / Digital Strategy; Key enabler to PSR projects and reform for service delivery; Strategic Investment; and Key enabler - direct contributor to growth programme
- What the next 2 to 3 years would look like including office accommodation and making most of assets such as Magdalen House; the Locality Model; informing direction for the Growth Programme; a systematic review of asset base - top 200; and work in progress and what would inform officer and Member decision making;
- Phase 1 of the Asset Disposal Policy in relation to the 15 sites approved by Cabinet in January 2020;
- Member engagement in the decision-making processes and the Constitutional and legislative rules that provided the framework within which the Council worked

A Member of the Committee asked a question about significant sites, such as the Toad Hall site in Ainsdale, remaining derelict for a number of years; and how the Council was prioritising the disposal of such sites.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. Ellis be thanked for his informative presentation.

10. CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROGRESS REPORT

Further to Minute No. 48 of 3 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

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

- The drop-in energy consumption in Council offices and other buildings such as leisure centres because staff were working from home
- How the Green Homes Grant scheme (a scheme to install energy efficient improvements to homes and which could be accessed by both homeowners and landlords) operated in Sefton
- The operation of Sefton's Affordable Warmth scheme
- The effect of climate change in Sefton and its impacts on surface water inundation
- Sefton Surface Water Management Plan
- Alternative domestic fuel sources to be used post 2025 when all new homes constructed will not be fitted with gas boilers
- Sefton's declaration on Climate Emergency, agreed in July 2019, set out a commitment to achieve 100% clean energy by 2030. Clarification was sought and given that nuclear energy would not form part of this commitment

RESOLVED:

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

11. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Committee received a presentation from Elena Lloyd, Corporate Communications Manager, on the use of social media in the Council's response to Covid-19.

Ms. Lloyd detailed:

- That at the start of the pandemic a Communications Cell was established chaired by Head of Strategic Support and with herself as vice-chair
- Some of the main themes to the communications activity to date which included closure of services and buildings, and subsequent re-openings, #StayHomeSaveLives, #SeftonInMind, Wish You Weren't Here, Public Health messages, social distancing, face coverings, etc, support for businesses (grants etc), opening of test centres across the borough, furlough information and benefits such

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as council tax relief and the commemoration of victims and bereavement services

- Additional communications activity undertaken which included media interviews across a host of TV and radio stations and the production of video messages by senior officers of the authority
- that during the pandemic the use of social media and digital communications had increased significantly; that the Council had strived to tailor its messages for the right audience and the right platform and that it was rare to see a carbon copy of the same post/message across all 4 of the Council's main social media channels; and statistics were provided for social media activity since lockdown was enforced on 25th March 2020 in relation to Facebook, Instagram, Linked In and Twitter.

RESOLVED:

That Ms. Lloyd be thanked for her informative presentation.

**12. “MANAGE MY REQUESTS” (ICASEWORK) SYSTEM –
STATISTICAL UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Strategic Support that provided an update on the adoption of the “Manage my Requests” iCasework system (the system) for capturing, managing and reporting all customer complaints, representations and feedback across the Council including the number and nature of complaints by Service in the last 12-month period.

The report indicated that the system supported a ‘digital by default’ process, whereby all information requests and complaints were accepted, administered, responded to and archived electronically. Members of the public that did not have direct access to the internet could have their requests logged by proxy through the Contact Centre or at the One Stop Shops.

Paragraph 2 of the report provided statistical information on the numbers of complaints and inquiry management.

The report concluded that it was imperative that the system was maintained in a timely fashion to prevent drift and escalation and accordingly, the Strategic Support Service (Performance & Business Intelligence function) would continue to develop performance reporting to ensure that information and insight was shared with the Senior Leadership Board and Members.

RESOLVED:

That the report updating on the adoption of the “Manage my Requests” iCasework system be noted.

**13. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2020/21
INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2020/21
BUDGET**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that updated on:

- (1) the current estimated financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget;
- (2) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for 2020/21;
- (3) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2020/21; and
- (4) the monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of August 2020 in relation to:
 - the forecast expenditure to year end;
 - variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members;
 - updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects.

A Member of the Committee asked a question concerning the Council's negotiations with Government, and collectively with the Liverpool City Region authorities, regarding the cost pressures associated with Covid-19 and the Liverpool City Region being made subject to Tier 3 restrictions.

RESOLVED: That

- (A) in respect of the Revenue Budget:
 - (1) the current estimated impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position be noted;
 - (2) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2020/21 revenue budget and the material variations that are to be expected to the current estimates contained in this report be noted, and approval be given for subsequent reports to provide updates and where appropriate remedial actions plans as appropriate;
 - (3) the current forecast revenue outturn position for 2020/21 be noted; and

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- (4) It be noted that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved; and
- (B) in respect of the Capital Programme:
- (1) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 6.1.1) be noted;
 - (2) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 August 2020 of £5.417m (paragraph 6.2.1) with the latest full year forecast of £36.871m (paragraph 6.3.1) be noted;
 - (3) The explanations of variances to project budgets (paragraph 6.2.3) be noted;
 - (4) the proposal to upgrade Sefton's Community Equipment Store and replace the current vehicle fleet at a cost of £0.335m funded from the Disabled Facilities Grant (paragraph 6.4.2) be noted;
 - (5) the outcome of the approved procurement process for the replacement fleet for the Cleansing Service (section 6.5) be noted;
 - (6) the most favourable tenders received for the required Cleansing Service vehicles (section 6.5) be noted;
 - (7) It be noted that the Head of Highways and Public Protection and Chief Legal and Democratic Officer will enter into contracts with the successful tenderers for supply of the required Cleansing Service vehicles (section 6.5);
 - (8) the supplementary capital estimate of £0.610m in the 2020/21 programme for phase two of the Bootle Strategic Acquisitions scheme (paragraph 6.6.2) be noted;
 - (9) subject to approval by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority of a request for further funding for phase two of the Bootle Strategic Acquisitions scheme, the additional supplementary capital estimate of £0.040m in the 2020/21 programme (paragraph 6.6.3) be noted; and
 - (10) It be noted that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraph 6.7.3).

14. 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 is to comply with (3) above.

RESOLVED:

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

15. 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

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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.

16. ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 34 of 14 January 2020 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that updated on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group that was approved by Council in February 2020.

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

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group be noted; and
- (2) a further update report be submitted in six months.

17. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 11 of 10 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.

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

A Member of the Committee commented, regarding the Working Group's recommendations that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:

- (a) Employment and Skills Board be requested to consider the development of a Digital Skills Passport Scheme; and
- (b) use the information generated by the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion "Mosaic" data in order to identify need across Liverpool City Region, and target digital inclusion activities accordingly;

that he was concerned and disappointed that no progress had been made in respect of this and that the Policy Lead: Employment and Skills at the LCR simply advised that there was nothing further to update.

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.

**18. MEMBERS' WELFARE REFORM REFERENCE GROUP -
UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 22 of its meeting held on 22 October 2019 the Committee considered an update of the Head of Health and Wellbeing and Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group.

The update provided information on the purpose of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- Community Resilience and Covid-19 Response Update
- Food Programme 2020
- Universal Credit
- ELAS update summary performance data for the period 1 April 2020 – 30 August 2020.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented the update.

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Members of the Committee asked questions/made comments on the following issues:

- The availability of statistics to show how many of the 34,900 employments furloughed in Sefton had returned to work
- The Government's Job Support Scheme, which will commence on 1 November 2020 and run for 6 months, and its implications for Sefton residents; and the anticipated increase in demand for Sefton's Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme and applications for Universal Credit

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her update.

**19. 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 the views of the Committee on 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; and providing an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

20. CABINET MEMBER REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented her report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory,

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Compliance and Corporate Services be noted; and

- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.