

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 22 July 2014

Present: Councillor M Sullivan (Chair)

Councillors KJ Williams S Niblock
D Mitchell D Realey
S Williams J Stapleton
M Daniel G Ellis
R Gregson A Hodson
A Leech Tracey Smith

Deputies: Councillors C Muspratt (In place of J Crabtree)
T Anderson (In place of J Hale)

Cabinet Members: Councillors George Davies Stuart Whittingham

1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillors Leech and Sullivan declared personal interests in agenda item 4 – Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Scrutiny Arrangements (see minute 4 post) by virtue of them being appointed to the LCRCA Scrutiny Panel.

2 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2014 be approved.

3 FUTURE COUNCIL

Mike Callon, Project Coordinator and Kevin MacCallum, Corporate Marketing Officer introduced a report and gave a presentation which provided the

Committee with an update as to the progress of the Future Council project, as well as an opportunity to engage with and influence the emerging options which were being developed in order to transform the Council and achieve the savings required of the Council.

The emerging options would be further developed and then published by the Chief Executive, as officer budget options, for full public, staff and service user consultation in September 2014.

The Strategic Director set the context for the project in that investment decisions and budget savings were to be made according to three key priorities:

- Tackling health inequalities, poverty and disadvantage - narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest communities in the borough
- Protecting the vulnerable, making sure people were safe and felt safe – and could remain independent as long as possible
- Driving economic growth – investing in Wirral's future

The Council was also committed to ensuring that savings were identified and delivered based on the following principles where possible:

- Spend less on the cost of running the Council
- Broadest shoulders to bear the greatest burden
- Mitigate the impact of savings on frontline services

Current projections of savings were for a total of £70million would be required by 2018. Across the Council 81 different service areas had been reviewed in detail. Services had been considered according to three themes and within the theme relevant to this Committee, Community and Neighbourhood Services, there were five 'blocks':

- Looking after the environment
- Regulation and enforcement
- Neighbourhood services
- Cultural services
- Driving economic growth

Responding to comments from Members, the Strategic Director, Kevin MacCallum and Mike Callon made the following comments:

- With regard to field based staff, improvements to IT systems would help in maintaining logs without staff having to make unnecessary journeys back to an office.
- The results in terms of tourism generation, from a very small team of three with a budget of not more than £100,000, significantly outperformed other authorities in the region, with around 5,000 people in employment in Wirral as a result of tourism.

- Budget options would be brought forward which might have previously been rejected, as options would add up to more than £45m, the required saving in 2015/16 and 2016/17, so that choices could be made.
- The Future Council project would make it easier for customers to access services in the most appropriate way, the Customer Relations Management system would be developed as a person centred system.
- The Coordinating Committee, at its meeting on 2 July (minute 4 refers) had agreed that a working group of the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and spokespersons from all the Policy and Performance Committees could meet in early September to look at the best way of scrutinising the options to be published and this had been supported by the Families and Wellbeing and Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committees.
- The working group could decide how and if the public could be involved in workshop sessions.

A Member expressed the view that it would be useful to get the views of other organisations as to how budget options could affect them and this could be done in a workshop setting.

Resolved – That the report and presentation be noted.

4 **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**

A report from the Chief Executive explained the scrutiny arrangements which were being developed by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and also explained the relationship between those arrangements and the existing scrutiny model in Wirral.

Council on 14 July, 2014 had appointed Councillors Mike Sullivan and Anita Leech as Wirral's LCRCA Scrutiny Panel members, with Councillor Sullivan appointed as the 'Authority Scrutiny Link'.

The remit of the Scrutiny Link Member was yet to be fully defined in Wirral, but it was anticipated that the role would provide a link to Elected Members of the Regeneration & Environment Policy and Performance Committee.

It was expected that the Scrutiny Officer of each constituent Council would ensure that the work programmes and minutes relating to the work carried out by the Scrutiny Panel in scrutinising the Combined Authority and the Merseytravel Committee, were circulated appropriately within their own constituent Council's scrutiny arrangements. In Wirral it was proposed that the committee responsible for receiving this information would be the Regeneration & Environment Policy and Performance Committee. It was therefore proposed that the receipt of such relevant information from the LCRCA Scrutiny Panel become a standing item on the agenda for this Committee.

Resolved - That the proposed reporting arrangements as described in the report, be approved and that LCRCA Scrutiny become a standing item for this Committee's agenda.

5 DIRECTORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment presented a report which outlined the year end performance of the Regeneration and Environment Department against the Directorate Plan for 2013/2014. It also presented the 2014/16 Directorate Plan and current performance against its delivery as at 31 May 2014. It translated the priorities set out in the Plan into a coherent and measurable set of performance outcome measures and targets which were to be used to evaluate the achievement of Directorate priorities.

Two measures were rated 'red', being:

- Apprenticeships supported (Wirral Apprentice Programme)
- Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks

Exception reports were included as to how these were being addressed.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning, responding to comments, reported that the scheme of delegation had been changed from March 2014 and this would now have an effect on planning applications being determined more expeditiously.

In response to comments from Members, the Head of Environment and Regulation outlined the geographical area of east Wirral, as referred to in the indicator on 'Improved accessibility to employment and opportunities (Local Strategic Transport Fund)'. This involved capital investment in infrastructure, using £4m of LTSF funding from central Government, targeted at key locations to enable people to get to particular employment sites. A separate 'healthy cycling' allocation had been used particularly in Wallasey.

The Head of Housing reported that there had been significant growth in the size of the private rented sector in Wirral. There had been a move out of the social sector in response to welfare reforms. Most of the long term empty homes, up to 2,500 were in the private sector, and the Council did everything it could to try and bring these homes back into use. The Strategic Director stated that Wirral was significantly outperforming other authorities in the City Region in bringing empty homes back into use. The British Gas Eco homes scheme had been very successful in improving insulation but there were still many properties requiring significant funding for improvements.

The Strategic Director, in response to a Member's comment stated that it was proposed that the Dock Bridges Major Scheme would involve replacement of bridges not repairs by 2017/18. This was a joint responsibility with Peel

Holdings, as the road network crossing the docks was the responsibility of the Council but the access for shipping to the docks system was the responsibility of Peel Holdings.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

6 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 2 (MAY 2014)

The Director of Resources presented financial monitoring information for 2014/2015 Month 2 (May 2014), which had previously been reported to the Cabinet (minute 27 (7 July 2014) refers) as a means of providing regular, detailed updates on budget performance.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment responded to comments from Members and elaborated on community safety options savings for 2014/15 which were on track. He also explained the targeted assistance for local businesses of £3m through the Liverpool Enterprise Partnership Regional Growth Fund.

During this item, Councillors Steve Niblock and Jean Stapleton declared a personal interest by virtue of their membership of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7 APPOINTMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATION PANEL

The Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources reported that Standing Order 33 (1) required that Committees should keep the need for panels under review and, in particular, the position must be reviewed at the first meeting of a Committee in each municipal year. He requested that a review be undertaken of the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel and set out its terms of reference. If the Panel was to be retained, the Committee was requested to appoint Members to serve on it in 2014/2015.

Resolved –

(1) That the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel be retained in 2014/2015, with the terms of reference identified.

(2) That the following Members be appointed to serve on the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel in 2014/2015, with Councillor Steve Williams appointed as Chair –

Members

1 Labour Mike Sullivan

Deputies

**Jerry Williams
Jim Crabtree
Matt Daniel**

**Rob Gregson
Anita Leech
Steve Niblock
Denise Realey
Jean Stapleton**

1 Conservative Steve Williams

**Gerry Ellis
John Hale
Andrew Hodson
Tracey Smith
Adam Sykes
Kathy Hodson
David Elderton
Eddie Boulton**

1 Liberal Democrat Dave Mitchell

**Alan Brighthouse
Chris Carubia
Phil Gilchrist
Stuart Kelly
Pat Williams**

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Resources which updated Members on the current position regarding the Committee's work programme. Consideration would need to be given to the need for flexibility in the work programme, particularly in terms of scrutinising options arising from the Future Council Programme in September.

At this point Councillor Jerry Williams declared a personal interest by virtue of his membership of the Merseytravel Committee of the Combined Authority.

The Chair suggested that there would be a lot of work to be undertaken on Future Council at the September meeting following publication of the Chief Executive's budget options.

A Member suggested and it was agreed that the Committee could receive reports on the review of apprenticeships and the review of the Council's car parking strategy, both of which were reaching a conclusion, at the September meeting.

Officer reports on a proposed review of street cleansing post budget options, and a proposed review of arrangements for monitoring the new Highways contract, would come to a later meeting.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

9 **HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL - MINUTES**

The Head of Legal and Member Services presented the minutes of the meeting of the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel held on 16 July 2014, which the Chair had agreed to accept as an item of urgent business in view of the need to consider these minutes prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Panel had considered –

- A petition against 'Except for Access' Road, Woodchurch Road /Storeton Road, Oxton.
- Objections to proposals to introduce a puffin crossing on Old Chester Road, Bebington.
- Objections to proposals to introduce traffic calming measures at the junction of Shrewsbury Road and Gerald Road, Oxton
- Objections to proposals to introduce traffic calming measures in the Houghton Road area, Woodchurch.

Resolved – That the Committee recommend to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport:

- (i). **That no further action be taken in respect of the petition against 'Except for Access' Road, Woodchurch Road /Storeton Road, Oxton.**
 - (ii). **That the proposed scheme to introduce a puffin crossing on Old Chester Road, Bebington, be approved.**
 - (iii). **That the proposed traffic calming scheme, consisting of a mini-roundabout at the junction of Shrewsbury Road and Gerald Road, Oxton, be approved.**
 - (iv). **That the proposed traffic calming scheme and associated 20mph Traffic Regulation Order for the Houghton Road area in Woodchurch, be approved.**
-