

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 July 2015

Present: Councillors KJ Williams (in the Chair) T Pilgrim
J Crabtree D Realey
G Ellis C Spriggs
R Gregson J Stapleton
D Mitchell A Sykes
S Niblock S Williams

Deputies: Councillors I Williams (In place of M Daniel)
E Boulton (In place of J Hale)
A Leech (In place of M Sullivan)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Daniel, J Hale and M Sullivan.

Councillor KJ Williams in the Chair.

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.

Agenda Item 5. Councillor Steve Niblock declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5 (Directorate Plan – Performance Management) due to his serving on the Mersey Fire and Rescue Authority - a partner member of the authority working to reduce the number of persons killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

2 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2015 be approved.

3 TOURISM

The Senior Manager - Visitor Economy presented a report of the Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement that provided an overview of the Council's tourism team past performance, current delivery in 2015-16 and plans for the future.

The report highlighted an annual tourism team implementation plan had been informed by detailed visitor research and the creation of a "vision" led by the Wirral Tourism Business Network (i.e. a business-led partnership from the accommodation, attractions, coastal, food and drink, golf, and history & heritage sectors). The Senior Manager – Visitor Economy appraised Members that delivery was driven by one of the Council's key priorities, to support a healthy, safe and prosperous borough, by helping to sustain and grow Wirral's economy.

Members were informed that the latest statistics for the borough's visitor economy confirmed that the ongoing annual implementation plan was working both efficiently and effectively.

The Senior Manager – Visitor Economy reported that Wirral's tourism economy is the fastest growing in the city region and currently valued at over £355 million; employing 4,800 full-time equivalent jobs and attracting over 7.5 million visitors in 2014. In addition, the visitor economy had grown by a substantial 41% since 2009, adding £103 million to Wirral's local economy; employment within the sector increasing by over 20%, and visitors to the borough had also risen by 14% during the same period.

Members commented on the quality of the report and expressed their support for the work undertaken by the Council's tourism team, noting the research, engagement and marketing undertaken in support of Wirral's tourism businesses.

Officers responded to a series of questions on topics that included:

- Methods used to encourage Wirral based tourism to Cruise Line visitors
- Promotion of Heritage tourism
- Access to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding to promote the Wirral

- Staffing level within the Council's tourism team
- Competition with Liverpool City attractions
- Ideas and opportunities to attract young people and families to Wirral
- Short break and day visit campaigns
- Promotion of community events with the potential to attract tourism visitors e.g. Sand Yachting
- Notification of local events to Elected Members
- Website development
- Success of Port Sunlight and the Royal Liverpool Golf Club as attractions that attract Cruise Liner passengers
- New Brighton Casino
- Tourism promotions and advertising including Merseyrail
- Developing links to further advertise Wirral's historic sites to overseas visitors

It was proposed and seconded that a Task and Finish Group of Elected Members be established to review the promotion and marketing of Wirral tourism.

In response to comments from Members, the Senior Manager - Visitor Economy undertook to circulate a link to the existing day visitor booklet and competition to support Wirral's attractions.

<http://www.visitwirral.com/>

Resolved – That

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **a Task and Finish Group of Elected Members be established to review the promotion and marketing of Wirral tourism.**

4 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORT

The Policy and Performance Committee – Regeneration and Environment received a report of the combined authority scrutiny link member Cllr Mike Sullivan, that set out progress to date on the work carried out by the Liverpool City Region Scrutiny Panel.

The report informed that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Scrutiny Panel had agreed the development of the work programme at its meeting held on the 29 October 2015. The Scrutiny Panel agreed that the following items would be included on the work programme:

- European Funding
- Skills and Learning / Apprenticeships
- Housing
- Affordable Transport Links

The report further informed that European Funding had been identified as the priority item for the Scrutiny Panel Members. The review commenced in January 2015 with an overview provided by Alan Welby, Director for Key Growth Sectors at the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Martin Eyres, Head of European Affairs at Liverpool City Council. The overview detailed the existing position in relation to the current EU Programme as well the new programme of 2014-2020. This had helped inform the scope of the review with Members wanting to subsequently focus on two key areas:

- the governance arrangements in place to shape and oversee the local operation of the programme are effective, robust and accountable; and
- the commissioning/bidding framework being developed to underpin the local delivery of the European programme

The review had been conducted over two evidence sessions during February and March and a final report was submitted to the Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 8 April 2015.

A scoping document and final report recommendations were attached as appendices to the report.

The report contained additional summary information regarding:

- a presentation on Liverpool City Region Growth Plan and Strategic Economic Plan; and
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transition Plan and Transport Protocol

The Chair informed the Committee that an LCRCA Scrutiny Panel meeting had been held on 8 July and an update would be provided to Members once the finalised minutes had been agreed.

Resolved - That the progress to date regarding the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Panel be noted.

5 **DIRECTORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - YEAR END 2014/15**

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment presented a report that outlined the year end performance of the Regeneration and Environment Directorate against the delivery of its Directorate Plan for 2014/2015.

The Strategic Director informed that the performance of the Directorate Plan was regularly monitored against the targets set at the start of the year and that red, amber and green (RAG) ratings were assigned - depending on the performance level against those targets. He further informed Members of the final year position against 17 outcome measures. 16 (94%) of the measures were rated green and 1 (6%) was rated red.

The measure rated 'red', being: to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (KSI).

Members were appraised of the various factors impacting on the KSI statistics, primarily inclusion of figures relating to accidents on the M53 motorway – falling under the remit of the Highways Agency, but included in local authority statistical data.

Members questioned the inclusion of such data, and factors that might influence road safety on the borough's roads and motorway. Examples included statistical variance over the years, and the re-allocation of motorway policing from Merseyside Police Authority to the Cheshire Constabulary.

Members noted that 4 key road user groups sustaining injury (KSI data) showed an increase compared with the same quarter 2014 vs 2013 and remained a priority. These being:

- Adult Pedestrians (60+ yrs)
- Adult vehicle occupants
- Child Pedestrians (aged <4yrs)
- Motorcyclists

The Committee were informed that Public Health funding was being utilised to promote and market road safety via Employers and Employees engagement initiatives, and that a report was to be presented to Cabinet next week containing information on proposals for capital investment in road safety from the Council budget.

Members noted the Directorate's success in meeting its objectives and the Strategic Director's pride in the performance of staff over a challenging year.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

During the course of discussion on the item relating, Councillor Niblock declared a non-pecuniary interest due to his position on the Mersey Fire and Rescue Authority.

6 **POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER**

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment presented a range of Policy Briefing papers that included an overview of emerging policies, ongoing and recent national legislation and bills presented to Parliament.

The Strategic Director informed that during the course of the 2015/16 Municipal Year, the Council's Policy and Strategy team would prepare four policy briefing papers which would be reported to the Policy and Performance Committees for their consideration.

The Committee noted that briefing papers focussed predominantly on the policies and legislation that had emerged from the newly formed Conservative Government. The papers provided a high level summary based on the available information released by Central Government at this time. These included:

- Conservative Manifesto 2015 – Key Points
- The Queens Speech 2015 – Various Bills
- Recent Ongoing National Legislation – Infrastructure Act 2015
- Policy Developments – Apprenticeships and Traineeships for 16-19 year olds

Members questioned whether the removal of public subsidy for onshore Wind Farms would impact the economy of Wirral. It was noted that economic drivers and job focus regarding the Wirral continued to be directed towards offshore facilities.

Further questions were raised by the Committee regarding potential benefits to the Wirral economy (both direct and indirect) arising from specific projects e.g. HS2.

Members were informed that it was expected that the September Briefing Paper would be more detailed following the release of further information from Government and would also consider the implications for Wirral.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Councillor KJ Williams introduced a report by the Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee and updated Members on the current position regarding the Work Programme.

Councillor Williams informed that the Chair and Party spokespersons had met to discuss the Work Programme for the Municipal Year. Members noted that it had been agreed that the following reports would be included on the Committee's Work Programme:

- Homelessness (including the initial view of the potential impact of the removal of Housing Benefit for under 21's).
- Mersey Travel – its responsibilities, and the background to the levy paid by Wirral, why it is paid and what it is spent on.
- Background to the Enterprise Zone Investment and the Property Development Fund.
- Devolution (up to date position, governance and accountability arrangements etc).
- Wirral Waters – progress update.
- Birkenhead Town Centre – progress update.
- Flood Risk Management – a statutory scrutiny responsibility

Resolved – That the Work Programme for 2015/2016 be approved.

8 **APPOINTMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATION PANEL**

The Principal Committee Services Officer 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 2015/2016.

Resolved –

(1) That the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel be retained in 2015/2016, with the terms of reference identified.

(2) That the following Members be appointed to serve on the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel in 2015/2016, with Councillor Steve Williams appointed as Chair –

Members**1 Labour Mike Sullivan****1 Conservative Steve Williams****1 Liberal Democrat Dave Mitchell****Deputies****Jerry Williams
Jim Crabtree
Matt Daniel
Rob Gregson
Anita Leech
Steve Niblock
Denise Realey
Christine Spriggs
Jean Stapleton****Gerry Ellis
John Hale
Andrew Hodson
Tracey Smith
Adam Sykes
Kathy Hodson
David Elderton
Eddie Boulton****Alan Brighthouse
Chris Carubia
Phil Gilchrist
Pat Williams**