

BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 January 2018

Present:

Councillor M Sullivan (Chair)

Councillors	P Hackett	D Mitchell
	RL Abbey	J Stapleton
	E Boulton	W Ward
	G Ellis	KJ Williams
	A Leech	S Williams
	J McManus	G Wood

Deputies:

Councillors B Berry (In place of J Hale)
D Elderton (In place of T Pilgrim)

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that no further apologies had been received other than for Councillors John Hale and Tracey Pilgrim, both of whom had deputies standing in for them.

44 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 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 Dave Mitchell, David Elderton and Ron Abbey declared personal interests in agenda item 6, 'Budget Proposals Workshop – Scrutiny Report' by virtue of them being holders of Blue Badges.

Councillor Jerry Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, 'Budget Proposals Workshop – Scrutiny Report' by virtue of him being a member of the Tranmere Rovers Residents Association parking scheme.

45 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 November, 2017.

Councillor Anita Leech queried the situation with regard to minute 39, 'Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2017/18' in respect of the issue of officers attending Committee meetings when there were no questions to be posed to that officer.

The Chair commented that the issue was to be discussed at the next Chairs' meeting and he would report back to the March meeting.

The Interim Assistant Director: Law and Governance reported that Chief Officers had been speaking about which officers would be attending Committees and that it was expected that officers would be present to present their reports and respond to any questions.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November, 2017, be approved.

46 **CONNECTING WIRRAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY - PLEDGE UPDATE**

Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor Ron Abbey declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Pledge Champion for Transport and as a member of the Merseytravel Committee.

The Lead Commissioner, Transport, Julie Barnes, introduced a report and gave a presentation on the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy which set out how the Council would deliver one of the 20 pledges to ensure that:

“Wirral has safe affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work”.

The Transport Strategy set out 4 Priority themes to support “Connecting Wirral”:

- Priority 1 – Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently
- Priority 2 – Reliable and affordable public transport
- Priority 3 – Encourage healthy active travel
- Priority 4 – Inclusive integrated transport that supports our residents' needs

Julie Barnes gave an overview of what was in place to deliver the transport pledge and the progress which had so far been made. With regard to priority one she reported on the progress made against the target, which included:

- The Council had received the top road safety award at the National Transport Awards for its innovative 'Mind your Business' project.

- The Council had completed the replacement of 'C' bridge and was on programme for completion of the remainder of the Bridges Replacement programme by the end of March 2018.
- Following market testing, remote payment for car parking via mobile phones had been withdrawn from 2017/18 and would be included in the new parking contract which would be in place from 1 April 2018.

In respect of priority 2, progress included:

- The LCR Bus Alliance had been the Transport Partnership of the Year at both the North of England and National Transport Awards.
- The review of the Wirral Bus Network had been completed.
- Levels of public satisfaction with overall public transport in Wirral were 2% above the national average according to the results of the 2016 National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey PSS survey.

With regard to priority 3, progress included:

- The Council had secured over £2 million of funding from the National Productivity Investment Fund for Tower Road Civilised Streets Project.
- Levels of public satisfaction with the Council's walking/cycling facilities were in line with the national average according to the results of the 2017 National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey.

Responding to comments from Members, Julie Barnes' comments included:

- The review of the Wirral bus network had been undertaken at the start of the summer 2017 so might not reflect the changes in the recent bus review.
- She acknowledged the need to improve communications and work on this was being undertaken through social media and through the Council's Wirral View publication to inform the public of the investment which was being undertaken.
- A group was being set up involving the Council, Merseytravel and the NHS with regard to looking at the issue of bus routes to hospitals.

Councillor Ron Abbey referred to the fact that the Wirral Network review had been driven by Government cuts to Merseytravel, which had seen its budget cut from £24m to £19m. Wirral had the most supported bus routes in the City Region because of the isolated nature of most routes on Wirral in that the majority did not cross through over into other Council boundaries. He expressed satisfaction with much of the good work which Merseytravel was undertaking with young people's passes which had seen a 170% increase in young people travelling on buses. The senior citizen's pass was also the best

system outside of London for the elderly. All the changes to the Wirral bus network would be reviewed in 12 months' time.

A Member, whilst acknowledging the good work being undertaken, expressed concern for the lack of routes in more rural areas of the Borough which led to some elderly residents' feeling of isolation.

Another Member referred to the good work being undertaken with regard to improved cycle provision and assisted travel.

In respect of comments on street lighting and the issue that in some wards street lights had been out for over a year, the Assistant Chief Executive commented that he was aware that a considerable number of columns had been condemned, an investment of £500,000 was starting to help to address this but a further £500,000 was being sought to further improve the situation.

The Chair commented that all Members would be aware of the pressure of cuts in services in their own wards and thanked Julie Barnes for her presentation and commended Merseytravel and the officers in Environmental Services for the work they were doing.

Resolved – That the report and presentation be noted.

47 **WIRRAL'S ROAD SAFETY PLAN - SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Chair introduced a report which set out the findings and recommendations arising from a scrutiny workshop held in December 2017 to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's Road Safety Plan.

A workshop had been convened on 13 December 2017 and was attended by Councillors Mike Sullivan, Steve Williams, Pat Hackett and Pat Cleary, with Councillor Sullivan in the Chair. The workshop was conducted through a presentation made by senior officers followed by a question and answer session to consider Wirral's Road Safety Plan and supporting evidence. The key findings and recommendations were detailed in the final report of the workshop.

Responding to comments from Members, Julie Barnes, Lead Commissioner, Transport, reported that the Road Safety Plan did form part of the quarterly performance indicators. The Chair agreed that a half yearly update could be provided rather than an annual update. In respect of funding for dropped kerbs, she stated that a report was due to go to the Cabinet meeting in February on the Transport Plan for Growth programme which would provide funding for accessibility and a prioritisation process would be undertaken paying regard to road safety.

Resolved –

(1) That the contents and recommendations of Wirral’s Road Safety Plan workshop be supported.

(2) That the report be referred to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

48 BUDGET PROPOSALS WORKSHOP - SCRUTINY REPORT

A report from the Chair presented the work of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to scrutinising the 2018/19 budget proposals. A workshop had been held on 15 January for Members to explore in more detail the various budget proposals being put forward that fell under the remit of this committee. A report on the workshop had been circulated as a supplement to the agenda. The Committee was requested to acknowledge this report as its response to the 2018/19 budget proposals to be referred on to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

Resolved –

(1) That this Committee acknowledges this report as its response to the 2018/19 budget proposals.

(2) That this report be referred to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

49 UPDATE ON LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DEVELOPMENTS

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced a report which set out a brief overview of latest developments at the Liverpool City Region (LCR). A wide range of activity continued and the report highlighted a small extract of these, including those within the portfolios of Economic Growth and Culture which Wirral had the lead for.

The Chair reported that the Metro Mayor was in the process of putting a budget together. He had also just that afternoon heard the announcement of the Metro Mayor that off-peak charges for tunnel tag users would be reduced to £1, between the hours of 7pm to 7am and all day on Sundays.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

50 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair gave a verbal update on the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A major piece of work

for the Scrutiny Committee would be on spatial development and all the City Region authorities were in the process of putting together their local plans. Two further pieces of work they would be undertaking would be on air quality and Universal Credit.

The Chair also referred to the budget to run the office of the Metro Mayor and that it was unclear how this would be funded. The Government had said that the Mayor did have the power to impose a precept.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

51 **BUSINESS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chair which explained the process of developing and managing the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year.

The report referred to current work programme items, including, pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's Road Safety Plan and Budget Scrutiny, both of which were items on this agenda. A meeting of the Chairs of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees had agreed to undertake further scrutiny of Universal Credit in February 2018 when the implications of implementing Universal Credit might be better known and the relevant data could be made available to Members.

The proposed agenda items for the March meeting, items awaiting scheduling and work programme activities outside the committee were also listed in an appendix to the report.

Resolved – That the report be noted.