

# BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4 July 2018

Present: Councillor M Sullivan (Chair)

Councillors P Hackett D Mitchell  
C Blakeley C Spriggs  
D Elderton J Stapleton  
K Hodson KJ Williams  
A Leech S Williams  
J McManus G Wood

Deputy: Councillor L Rennie (In place of T Cox)

## 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mike Sullivan welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Tony Cox who had a deputy standing in for him.

## 2 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.

Councillor Anita Leech declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4, 'Early Impact of Universal Credit' by virtue of her membership of the Leasowe Community Homes (Prima) Board.

## 3 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 March, 2018.

Councillor Anita Leech requested feedback in respect of minute 53 'Members' Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest / Party Whip', and the issue of meetings scheduled for March 2019 during the pre-election period.

In response, the Scrutiny Officer informed the meeting that this would currently impact on two of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and that the Chairs of all four Committees were due to meet to discuss the issue.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March, 2018, be approved.**

#### 4 **MANAGEMENT OF CAMPERVANS AT COASTAL LOCATIONS**

Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner for Environment, introduced a report which set out the background and latest position with respect to the management of campervans at coastal locations.

The effective management of campervans and other visitors to the borough primarily contributed to the Wirral Plan Pledge to achieve a Vibrant Tourism Economy.

To date the presence of campervans had mainly been an issue affecting the Wallasey and New Brighton Wards. During the past twelve months, numerous complaints had been received from residents in New Brighton and Wallasey Wards regarding the overnight parking of campervans and similar vehicles along Kings Parade and Coastal Drive in New Brighton. The concerns had focused on the aesthetics of these vehicles parking at this seaside location along with anecdotal evidence of environmental offences being committed (waste being thrown into the sea etc). Officers had visited the location on numerous occasions and to date there had not been any tangible evidence of environmental or other offences being committed that would warrant formal enforcement action being taken.

It was reported anecdotally that New Brighton was promoted amongst the campervan fraternity as a place to visit, in part due to the availability of free parking. It was also reported anecdotally that a proportion of those people staying in campervans visited the local attractions and made use of the food and drink offer, contributing to the local economy.

In October 2017, Ward Members had requested a meeting with officers to look at potential options for the management of campervans visiting New Brighton. The options identified focused on either removing / discouraging campervans from parking on the highway by regulation (ie. a Traffic Regulation Order to ban or charge for vehicles) or by incentivising such vehicles to park at an alternative off-highway site. A summary of the options discussed at the meeting was appended to the report.

Mark Smith informed the meeting that the Leader of the Council had confirmed in the last few days that the proposed introduction of car parking charges at coastal locations would not be taken forward by the Council.

The Chair then welcomed Mrs Foster of Mockbeggar Drive, Wallasey to the meeting and invited her to address the Committee. She commented upon the issues arising from the situation and stated that most coastal Councils had solved this problem. She had written to the Chief Executive but had not received any satisfactory response.

The Chair thanked Mrs Foster for her comments and apologised on behalf of the Chief Executive for the lack of a satisfactory response.

David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive, thanked Mrs Foster for her contribution; he had visited Mrs Foster some 6/9 months ago to discuss the situation and acknowledged that the number of campervans did appear to have increased since then and that at weekends both cul-de-sacs were full of campervans.

In response to comments from Members, Mark Smith stated that having checked with a number of service areas, including the Safer Wirral Hub, Environmental Services and Housing, the number of complaints about the campervans over the last twelve months was approximately 25 – 30. Approximately 20 of these related to traffic and the reduction caused in on street parking spaces. One complaint through Environmental Services related to allegations of somebody selling tyres from a campervan, although no evidence was found on this. There had been no anti-social behaviour complaints, though he was aware of a number of local Councillors raising concerns.

A Member queried why a resident, in response to a Freedom of Information (Fol) request, had been told that the Council had only received five complaints and that he should be given an apology as the Council had not been accurate in its response.

David Armstrong apologised that the figures in the Fol might not have been accurate if the Fol team had only approached one service area for figures, when an issue might impact across a number of service areas and he would take this back to the Fol team.

Mark Smith outlined some of the practical challenges in introducing a ban on campervans parking, issues of enforcement and the costs of implementing such a proposal. His Parking Services team was currently looking at examples across the country of restrictions on overnight parking including in North Wales and at Aberystwyth. He was also mindful of the Visitor Economy Strategy in place too with Wirral having the fastest growing tourist economy in the Liverpool City Region.

A Member referred to numerous complaints which had been made about this issue over the last 4 / 5 years and suggested that a 'no overnight parking' ban could be imposed on these two particular cul-de-sacs. She also referred to the

hygiene issues arising, having seen bottles of urine in waste bins in the area. There was a need for a dedicated site on the Wirral and she was aware of 90 spaces available at Thurstaston.

A Member suggested a Working Party could be set up to look at the issue and examine all the options and the need to ensure that if some action was to be taken the Council ensured that it was the right approach. A Working Party should also involve campervan owners and residents.

Another Member suggested that a 'no overnight sleeping' restriction could be imposed as was the case in some parts of the Lake District and Yorkshire National Park areas.

Responding to Members' comments, Mark Smith and David Armstrong stated that –

- With regard to Travellers, they tended to go on Council land and not the highway.
- There had not been any information gathered as to where the campervans were from, the majority of them appeared to be relatively new vehicles touring and would stay for one or two nights, although one or two of the vehicles had owners who claimed they were living there as a necessity.
- If a ban was to be introduced there would be a legal process to go through and costs involved in its implementation. He would ask his officers to undertake a comprehensive piece of work on options.

The Chair stressed the need for action and that a suggested working group would come back with recommendations on how the issue could be resolved.

On a motion moved by Councillor Lesley Rennie, seconded by Councillor Chris Blakeley, it was –

**Resolved (11:3) – That a ban on 'Overnight Sleeping' on the two cul-de-sacs of Kings Parade and Coastal Drive, Wallasey be introduced, if it is legally possible to do so, and that this be a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

On a further motion by Councillor Dave Mitchell seconded by Councillor Pat Hackett, it was –

**Resolved (14:0) – That a Working Party be established, to which all stakeholders be invited, to enable recommendations to be made to the Committee on the issue of campervans.**

## RE-COMMISSIONING OF HIGHWAY SERVICES FROM OCTOBER 2018

Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner for Environment, introduced a report and gave a presentation on the re-commissioning of Highway Services from October, 2018. The Council and contractor Bam Nuttall (BAMN) had agreed that the current strategic contract for Highway Services would come to an end on 30th September 2018 after one six month extension to the original four year contract which commenced in April 2014. He agreed that the presentation slides be circulated to the Committee.

Taking account of the limited time period to re-commission these services, an options appraisal exercise using the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Procurement Route Choices Toolkit indicated the most viable way forward was to bring these services back under the direct control of the Council.

The re-commissioning of these services based on this 'direct control/ownership' model was approved by the Leader of the Council on 28 November 2017.

Responding to comments from Members David Armstrong and Mark Smith stated that:

- BAMN had made significant improvements to the depot in Prenton and with the Cleveland Street depot, which had the new salt barn facility, options would be kept open as to the consolidation of the depot facilities.
- With regard to potholes, there were rules in place to prioritise their repair but with the service coming in-house these policies and rules would be subject to review.
- The timescale for emergency repairs varied dependent on the nature of the issue or defect and whether there was an immediate danger to the public, with each defect being inspected and assessed.
- They had both met with the staff of BAMN, many of whom had previously worked for the Council, prior to them working for Colas and then BAMN. The expectation was that supervisors would be transferred along with the staff undertaking the work. Highways Inspectors would check work, so it would be supervised, managed and administered in-house thus removing a degree of separation.
- There would be some one-off costs as a commercial settlement had to be reached with BAMN and an agreement as to how many staff were moved across to the Council, this would, as far as possible, be contained within existing resources.
- The contract would be run at current cost once brought back in-house, and there would be no loss of work already in the system, work would continue as normal during the handover.
- They were confident of the October deadline being realised and a working group was meeting fortnightly to ensure this.

- BAMN would be maintaining stock levels, although the Council would need to bring in some additional plant.

The Chair thanked Mark Smith for his presentation and welcomed the service being brought back in-house.

**Resolved – That the report and presentation be noted and the progress in re-commissioning these services to meet the October 2018 deadline, be endorsed.**

## 6 OUTCOMES FROM CHINA VISIT - 2016

Sally Shah, Lead Commissioner – Place and Investment, introduced a report on the background and outcomes of the visit undertaken by Wirral Council Leader, Councillor Phil Davies to China in 2016 as part of a Liverpool City Region delegation.

Attracting inward investment and supporting Wirral businesses to take advantage of international trade opportunities in order to grow were pledges within the Wirral Growth Plan. Economic growth was a key part of realising the Wirral Plan and delivering a better life for Wirral's residents. As an authority Wirral remained committed to working in close partnership with other authorities in the region to drive economic success through attracting investment. These partnerships meant that the Council was spreading its reach far further than it could achieve by working alone and was able to maximise the range of channels to market that were available.

Responding to comments from Members, Sally Shah stated that:

- Currently there were two businesses looking to invest in Wirral and a Wirral business was working with a Chinese company to enable it to export to China.
- Investment from China was being made into student accommodation in Birkenhead.
- Foundations were being laid for businesses themselves to take up opportunities with China and work on investment was being undertaken with Liverpool City Region partners.
- The confidence of Chinese investors had not been diminished following any negative publicity with the recent collapse of potential investment in Liverpool's Chinatown, indeed, at the recent Liverpool International Business Fair, there were 25 delegates from China, compared with 8/9 two years ago.
- The Council was now at a point where actual projects would be happening at pace with the Council much more focussed to tackle the economic and housing growth agenda with the new directorate and Director, Brian Bailey, now in place.

The Chair thanked Sally Shah for her report and commented that the topic could be followed up in the work programme.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

**7 EARLY IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair announced that this item would be deferred until the September meeting.

**8 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced a report which set out a brief overview of latest developments at the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The Annual Meeting of the LCR Combined Authority had taken place recently, and included an overview of key developments and achievements from the last year, as well as setting out some key priorities for the coming months.

Key developments over the last 12 months had been establishing the Metro Mayor's office and the Combined Authority constitution, governance structures and statutory officers to accelerate delivery of LCR priorities.

The CA had made investment decisions totalling £100m during 2017/18 as part of a wider investment programme of over £1bn in transport, skills, economic development and housing.

Responding to comments from Members, Alan Evans, Assistant Director – Regeneration and Inward Investment, stated that the LCR was currently undertaking a large piece of work in respect of the housing and spatial strategy. With regard to housing he would be happy to bring a report back to a future committee on social housing and the minimum requirements laid down by legislation. He did not yet have any further detail on the new £5m fund for revitalising town centres in the City Region.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

**9 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair gave an update on the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee had not met since the local elections in May due to a number of Members being appointed as Deputy Portfolio holders, including Councillor Gillian Wood, thus leading to new Members having to be appointed to the Committee.

The first meeting was scheduled to take place on 1 August, 2018, and he made a plea for those appointed Members to attend as the last few meetings of the Scrutiny Committee had been inquorate.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

10 **2017/18 QUARTER 4 AND YEAR END WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE**

David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced a report which provided the 2017/18 Quarter 4 (January - March 2018) performance report for Wirral Plan pledges under the Business theme. The Quarter 4 report was included as Appendix 1 to the report, and provided a description of the progress in Quarter 4, including available data in relation to a range of outcome indicators and supporting measures.

Responding to comments from Members, David Armstrong stated with regard to the road traffic accident / injury performance indicators he was not aware of issues with staffing in the road safety team but would supply a written response on this matter.

With regard to jobs created, Alan Evans, Assistant Director – Regeneration and Inward Investment stated that the performance indicator for jobs created would be for full time equivalents and he was sure those on zero hour contracts would not be included, though he would check with the Chamber of Commerce over this. He suggested that the Chamber of Commerce could be invited to address the Committee at a future meeting.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

11 **BUSINESS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME REPORT**

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

A Member suggested that a report could be brought to the Committee on how cohesively the Council was working with heritage groups in respect of tourism.

Another Member suggested a cross-Committee piece of work could be undertaken on the value and contribution of volunteers to the borough with invitees from the third sector being involved.

**Resolved – That the proposed Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2018/19, be approved with the suggestions being incorporated.**

12 **APPOINTMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATION PANEL**

The Chair introduced a report on the need to keep panels under review and, in particular, at the first meeting of a Committee in each municipal year, in accordance with Standing Order 33(1). The Committee was requested to appoint Members to serve on the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel in 2018/19.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel be retained in 2018/19, with the terms of reference identified.**

**(2) That the following Members be appointed to serve on the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel in 2018/19, with Councillor Steve Williams appointed as Chair –**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Deputies</b>
<b>1 Conservative – Steve Williams</b>	<b>Chris Blakeley Tony Cox David Elderton Kathy Hodson Mary Jordan Andrew Gardner Tom Anderson Bruce Berry</b>
<b>1 Labour – Mike Sullivan</b>	<b>Pat Hackett Anita Leech Sharon Jones Julie McManus Jean Stapleton Tony Cottier Jerry Williams Gillian Wood</b>
<b>1 Liberal Democrat – Dave Mitchell</b>	<b>Allan Brame Chris Carubia Phil Gilchrist Stuart Kelly</b>