

ECONOMY REGENERATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 June 2022

Present: Councillor T Jones (Chair)

Councillors P Martin I Lewis
G Wood L Rennie
G Davies J Grier
J Robinson D Mitchell
D Burgess-Joyce M Collins (in place
of A Hodson)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair opened the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast and a copy was retained on the Council's website for two years.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Hodson who was deputised by Councillor Mike Collins.

3 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 MINUTES

Members asked that the minutes from the last Housing Committee held on Wednesday 2 March 2022 be brought to the next Committee meeting for approval.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

5 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

No questions, statements or petitions from the public or Councillors had been received.

5.1 **Public Questions**

The Chair indicated that a public question had been received from David Williams regarding Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) of various schemes. The questioner (who was not able to attend the meeting) had asked if any of the £11,679,450 funding would be spent on Cycle Routes/Paths and Cycle Paths improvements in Wirral, and if so where.

The Chair responded to say that Wirral Council was due to receive a share of the LCRCA funding award for active travel. The amount and schemes identified to be delivered would be the subject of a report to this committee in the coming months following receipt of a formal offer from the LCRCA.

5.2 **Statements and Petitions**

No Statements or Petitions were received.

5.3 **Questions by Members**

No questions by Members were received.

6 **DOMINICK HOUSE**

The Chair advised that following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place and with the consent of the meeting, which was duly given, the report was withdrawn. A further report in relation to this property was to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

7 **SALE OF LAND AT CROSS LANE, WALLASEY**

The Chair advised that following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place and with the consent of the meeting, which was duly given, the report was withdrawn. A further report in relation to this property was to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

8 **LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP) – BIRKENHEAD TO NEW BRIGHTON**

The Chair advised that following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place and with the consent of the meeting, which was duly given, the report was withdrawn. A further report in relation to this property was to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

9 **SPORTS CITY, BIDSTON DOCK**

The Assistant Director: Special Projects, presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report proposed a significant regeneration opportunity for land at the former Bidston Dock in Birkenhead. It was outlined

that the project would be a major catalyst to the Wirral Waters programme and would support economic, employment and visitor objectives in relation to the Liverpool City Region. The centrepiece would be a new 15,000 stadium for Tranmere Rovers Football Club alongside other leisure related activities.

Members were informed that the proposals within this report would enable a feasibility study to be carried out to enable progress with the regeneration opportunity to be assessed. If the project was able to proceed it would not only help to safeguard the future of Tranmere Rovers FC as an important “community asset” but would also contribute to enhanced health and leisure provision as well as increased employment and long-term economic growth. The project was also seen as a catalyst for the whole Left Bank regeneration scheme and especially Wirral Waters

Members welcomed the report and queried the financial aspects of the feasibility study and associated risks attached to the project. Various aspects the project were discussed and in particular the environmental impact of the project in terms of flood risk, biodiversity and habitation was raised as a consideration.

Resolved – That

(1) the Sports City Project in principle, as outlined in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.8 of the report be supported.

(2) delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Place to:

(a) accept a grant of £100,000 from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority as referred to in paragraph 4.1 of the report; and

(b) award a contract for a feasibility study into the Sports City Project, within the approved budget and to the highest scoring tenderer and in accordance with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender criteria.

10 **CONSULTATION OUTCOMES (PUBLIC TOILETS)**

The Asset Manager presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place which provided Committee with the outcomes of a public consultation exercise undertaken as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process to reduce the revenue expenditure for Public Toilets.

On 28 February 2022, Budget Council agreed a balanced budget for the 2022/23 financial year. This included proposals for the reduction of the number of Public Toilets which would generate savings and allow for the

balanced budget to be achieved. As part of Budget Council's recommendations an amount of £50,000 would be taken from the Public Toilet Budget which would result in the re-alignment of the facilities.

Committee was informed that toilets identified for permanent closure had not been re-opened since the pandemic due to the enhanced cleaning regimes required. It was considered that the four public toilets proposed to be retained at key sites, met the needs of residents and visitors due their location, frequency of use, ability to maintain good cleaning standards and in maintaining a good provision of toilet facilities within a given radius.

Members considered the report and raised a query regarding the public toilet Facilities at Vale Park, New Brighton which had been severely damaged during storms. Officers provided assurance that work was being done to rectify the damage.

Members also queried the possibility of Asset Transfer to keep certain locations open, citing the availability of public toilet facilities and an active lifestyle. Other possibilities for keeping these facilities in the long term were discussed, with the committee noting that they would like them to be re-opened in the future if the Council finds itself in a better financial position.

Further information on accessible toilets was requested with Members asking that members of the public be informed with consideration given to the standardisation of access keys.

Resolved – That

- (1) the outcomes of the online public consultation through the “Have your say” consultation report at Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) the closure of the public toilets at Moreton Cross, West Kirby Concourse (external), Meols Parade (Bennetts Lane) New Ferry and Thornton Hough be authorised; and**
- (3) the Public Toilets identified for closure Moreton Cross, West Kirby Concourse (external), Meols Parade (Bennetts Lane), New Ferry and Thornton Hough be declared surplus to requirement and the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to consider other options for the sites including marketing them for sale and subsequent disposal, demolition and clearance or any expressions of interest from the communities.**

The Senior Business Partner introduced the report of the Director of Resources which detailed how the 2022/23 budget would be monitored through the Committee system which allowed Policy and Services Committees to take ownership for their specific budgets. The report emphasised the need to stay within budget and the requirements which had been set out across the Council. It was outlined that budget reports would be brought to Committee on a quarterly basis and a monthly budget monitoring panel would monitor the progress.

Members noted the report and the legal advice regarding the formation of the budget monitoring panel.

Resolved – That

- (1) the process for in-year monitoring of the 2022/23 budget be noted;**
- (2) the establishment and appointment of a Budget Monitoring Panel to comprise of the Committee Chair and Spokespersons in line with Section 3.12 of the report, with sessions to be led by the relevant Director/Assistant Director be agreed; and**
- (3) the establishment of budget workshops as detailed in Section 3.26 of the report, the outcome of which to be reported back to Committee in September 2022 be agreed.**

12 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN MONITOR REPORT**

The Senior Business Partner introduced the report which set out the financial monitoring information for the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee and provided members with an overview of budget performance for this area of activity. The financial information in the report detailed the year-end revenue and capital outturn position as reported at quarter 4 2021/22.

Members were informed that at the end of March 2022, the year-end position for Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee is an adverse variance of £0.384m against a budget of £11.726m. The report also set out detail of the budget position for Regeneration, Housing, Asset Management and Investment, Planning and Building Control, Special Projects and the Local Pan.

Members were also informed of an error within the report, with the Committee asked to note spend of 18.487m. This should have been spend of £17.974m. Table 5 also has the wrong variance figures shown.

Members discussed the report and questioned the safety of Future High Street Funding, as well as the budget around HMO and Homeless services.

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Resolved - That

- (1) the year-end revenue outturn variance of £0.384m adverse position as reported at quarter 4 (March 2022) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- (2) progress on the achievement of approved savings and the year-end outturn position at quarter 4 (March 2022) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- (3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for future one-off commitments be noted; and**
- (4) the year-end capital outturn expenditure position of £17.974m as reported at quarter 4 (March 2022) of 2021-22 be noted.**

13 ESTABLISHMENT OF REGENERATION PROGRAMME WORKING GROUP

The Lead Principal Lawyer introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance, which sought agreement for the establishment and terms of reference of the Regeneration Programme Working Group and to seek appointment of members to it.

Members were advised that the report had been brought to Committee to formalise a resolution made by members on 26 January 2022 in response to a report on Legal Input into Major Regeneration Projects. On 23 March 2022 the Committee had resolved to amend the working group arrangements,

The working group was in acknowledgement of concerns raised Economy Regeneration and Development Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee. The working group would allow for scrutiny of the legal process that would include feedback from partners where needed as an assessment of the performance of the Council's legal practice as it related to the regeneration programme. Its purpose was not to micromanage the process but to allow scrutiny and offer assurance to elected members across both Committees and the wider Council chamber.

Members discussed the Membership in relation to other working groups and after a discussion with the Lead Principal Lawyer agreed that Membership of the Committee should be made up of the Chair and Group Spokespersons.

Resolved – That

(1) the Regeneration Programme Working Group be appointed for 2022/23 with terms of reference identified in paragraph 3.3 of this report;

(2) the size of the Regeneration Programme Working Group be agreed as the Chair and Group Spokespersons with appropriate provision for substitute members

14 **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ACTIVE TRAVEL WORKING GROUP**

The Principal Lawyer introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which asked the Committee to review the continuing need for the Active Travel Working Group and, subject to that, to appoint Members to serve on it.

Members were advised that the work of the group would enable the Committee to make appropriate decisions and recommendations which would support the delivery of increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030.

Members discussed the terms of reference of the group in relation to decisions which had been made, citing concerns around the introduction of cycling lanes around Fender Way. Also discussed was proportionality, with Members requesting the both the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee each nominate a Member from one of the four political groups.

Resolved – That the Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Active Travel Member Working Group and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

15 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the work programme for the municipal year and the report of the of the Director of Law and Governance who requested it to include only items of business that required a decision, relate to budget or performance monitoring or which were necessary to discharge their Overview and Scrutiny function, in line with the recently revised Constitution.

Members noted the report and asked that items previously included on the Housing Committee Work Programme be included.

Resolved – That the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year be noted

16 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

17 **SALE OF EGERTON HOUSE AND PACIFIC ROAD, BIRKENHEAD**

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place in its entirety and agreed the recommendations as below,

Resolved- That the recommendations as detailed in the report be agreed.

18 **HIND STREET INFRASTRUCTURE RELOCATION REPORT**

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place in its entirety and agreed the recommendations as below,

Resolved- That the recommendations as detailed in the report be agreed.