

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Authority Chamber - No.1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP on Wednesday, 6th March, 2019 the following Members were present -

Councillor Louise Whitley	Labour	Halton BC
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour	Halton BC
Councillor Bill Woolfall	Labour	Halton BC
Councillor Ken McGlashan	Labour	Knowsley MBC
Councillor Edna Finneran	Labour	Knowsley MBC
Councillor Carl Cashman	Liberal Democrat	Knowsley MBC
Councillor Patrick Hurley	Labour	Liverpool CC
Councillor June Burns	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor Sam Marshall	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor Paula Murphy	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor Joe De' Asha	Labour	St Helen's MBC
Councillor Jean Stapleton	Labour	Wirral MBC
Councillor Adrian Jones	Labour	Wirral MBC
Councillor Dr John Pugh	Liberal Democrat	LCR Liberal Democrat Group

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Anderson, Jeanette Banks, Jimmy Jackson, Tricia O'Brien, Mary Rasmussen and Sir Ron Watson.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meetings of the LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

#### **4. UPDATE FROM METRO MAYOR, STEVE ROTHERAM**

The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram provided an update relating to his work over the period of December 2018 – March 2019 and he highlighted the following: -

- **Investment and Economic Development**

- November 2018, the new Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) was launched with a £500m fund to drive inclusive growth to benefit everyone across the region;
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority approved over £400m in SIF projects, delivering 9,000 jobs and 5,500 apprenticeships;
- The Green Investment Fund was launched in February 2019 to support the transition to a low carbon economy;
- Launched “One Front Door” in October 2018, to be the single point of contact for the city region;
- Announced a town centre commission and £6m Town Centre Fund in July 2018 to support the high streets; and
- Submitted a bid to the DCMS for match funding for the digital connectivity project.

- **Transport**

- The £1 fast tag was introduced for residents in the Liverpool City Region on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019;
- Secured the inclusion of the new twin track lines connecting Liverpool to full HS2;
- Transport for the North’s strategic transport plan was approved in January 2019;
- Maghull North Station opened in June 2018, the first new Merseyrail station for 20 years;
- Improved Newton Le Willows Station in St Helen’s with a total investment of £19m;
- Announced £8.3m for the first 55km of a 600km network of cycling and walking routes;
- Put out a tender for the brand new Mersey Ferry;
- Provided 3,000 free bus tickets to foodbanks over the Christmas period;
- Introduced half price bus travel for apprentices aged 19-24 years in November 2018;
- Launched the “Big Bus Debate”; and
- Moved forward with plans for the brand new state of the art trains for the Merseyrail Network that would come into service from 2020.

- **Skills**
  - Launched the UK's first UCAS style apprenticeship portal;
  - Opened the Hugh Baird's new St Winefride's Campus in March 2019, providing mental health care training to local people;
  - Partnered with InnovateHer to encourage more female students into data coding across the city region; and
  - Continued with the Households into Work programme that was supporting 800 families from long-term unemployment back into work.
  
- **Culture**
  - Liverpool City Region Combined Authority supported the 2018 cultural events programme with £5m of support bringing the Giants to Liverpool and the Wirral;
  - Funded the 2018 St Helens Borough of Culture;
  - Funding the 2019 Wirral's Borough of Culture as part of the 1% for the culture programme;
  - Unveiled the new Liverpool City Region Music Board; and
  - Sponsored the 2018 Liverpool Pride.
  
- **Fairness and Social Justice**
  - Launched the consultation on a Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter;
  - Signed up to the Zero Suicide Alliance; and
  - Secured £8m to tackle homelessness through a housing first approach.

The Metro Mayor acknowledged the support of the Committee and thanked everyone for the role played through scrutiny and holding the Combined Authority to account. He also thanked the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committee for supporting and committing to the scrutiny and pre-scrutiny functions of the Committee.

Members enquired about: -

- The new Hugh Baird campus;
- The refurbished Newton Le Willows Station; and
- The clean air strategy.

The Metro Mayor informed the Committee that the Hugh Baird Campus was the first of its kind with patient access through MerseyCare and a training facility next door that offered a Level 2/3 apprenticeship programme with not just simulations, but a practicing facility. He stated that the Newton Le Willows

Station received £25m of SIF funding to connect and improve the public transport system that would be an asset to the city region. Regarding the clean air strategy, a commission involving the 6 Local Authorities had been established to work on a wider geography and look at best practice with a genuine public transport offer and alternative forms of transport in the public sector.

Members enquired about: -

- What was happening with the £1b of investment for towns announced by the Prime Minister;
- How would HS2 work and would there need to be a new station built in the City Centre; and
- How would the Housing First approach help the people and get them off the streets.

The Metro Mayor informed the Committee that there was £1.6b of Brexit fund to access and discussions were underway with Government about the criteria and being able to access it for the investment in towns. He also stated that everything had to be evidence based for the city region and that at the moment information was being distributed about the criteria and the CA were learning about the formula from Government and seeking assistance with constructing the bids. He stated that HS2 initially, was not coming to the City Region, but following the evidenced based approach to improve the case the Northern Rail Powerhouse agreed that Liverpool would connect to Manchester airport and other places. He also explained that the UK had the 5<sup>th</sup> richest economy in the world and that people were rough sleeping on the streets or begging through no fault of their own. The Housing First approach had proven that it worked in other areas of the country and with the CA and the 6 Local Authorities working with Government, it is hoped that it would be established and launched soon.

Members enquired about: -

- The new Ferries and the length of time it would take to evaluate the tenders;
- The Strategic Investment Fund that was £80m underspent;
- The apprenticeship programme and feedback on the ticket scheme;
- Whether or not the Metro Mayor would consider working with SMEs for smaller scale projects; and
- The funding allocated for the One Front Door project.

The Metro Mayor informed the Committee that in relation to the ferries that it had only conducted the first phase and that it would be a while until the tenders are evaluated. He stated that the Single Investment Fund initially led

to a number of bids that were submitted but were not accepted, which meant that the £80m was not used and just rolled over into the Strategic Investment Fund. Regarding SMEs, they are different and could be looked at differently, however, there was no capacity to deliver or manage the 600 applications from SMEs, but discussions were underway to work with Councils to assist in the process. The Metro Mayor also stated that funding for up to 3 temporary members of staff had been allocated to the One Front Door. He also stated that apprenticeships were up by 75% nationally, but the LCR were up by 60% so a lot lower than the national figure.

Members enquired about: -

- Future plans to influence or change the benefit system to tackle current issues e.g. number of people being struck by trains and the recent incident at the museum.
- Homelessness and mental health concerns

The Metro Mayor informed the Committee that the issues raised by members was being monitored, as he sees it every day through his own casework and people bringing it to his attention. He stated that people are being punished through no fault of their own, by being left desperate which then manifests itself through sleeping rough and the foodbanks. He further stated that he hoped that through the devolution plans that there would be greater control over the DWP budgets locally. He commented that there were many incidences where people were taking their own lives due to mental health and other issues and agreed that something needed to be done at an earlier stage. Housing First does all of that, but provides wrap around support through all the agencies involved, with a £5.2m saving a year. Quality of life and suicidal issues are taken into account to attack the fundamental concerns and it has been a tried and tested system that was used in America. All the agencies are co-ordinated to assist in multi complexity issues including the Suicidal Alliance – Merseycare and Suicidal Watch and all the agencies and charities working together to have a better understanding of the issues and mental health issues to support and assist.

The Committee noted the update from the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram and thanked him for his attendance.

## **5. DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report relating to the Draft Housing Strategy Update presented by Tim Jago, Lead Officer, Housing Strategy and Policy. He referred to the Appendix attached to the report that summarised the

comments and contributions from the Housing Strategy Workshop and how it would feature in the Draft Housing Strategy. He stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a pre-scrutiny exercise that was invaluable for the Draft of the Housing Strategy, which had now been shared with the Housing and Spatial Planning Advisory Group (HASPAG) and Housing Associations for feedback.

Members enquired about the following: -

- Had consideration been given to leasehold and freehold properties for new developments where the new properties are built for freehold and would any action be taken.
- First time buyers would continue to struggle and would not welcome any additional costs to new built houses.
- A motion had been submitted to the Council at Sefton to develop a Housing Corporation to control the sale of houses.
- Had a Private Landlords Charter been created and if there were any minimum standards to comply with.
- The Local Plan and if the Housing Strategy would shape or influence the local plans and what were the timescales.
- 25% of affordable housing should be more 3 and 4 bedrooms.
- It needs to be evidenced based because previously 2 bedroom houses were built and it was difficult to sell, so it is worth considering that 3 and 4 bedroom houses be built to secure sales.

Tim Jago informed the Committee that according to Appendix 1, the issues have been raised with Local Authority colleagues and it is on the Government's radar, but it would require national legislation for something substantial to be done relating to freehold and leasehold properties. However, Sefton and other Local Authority colleagues are currently working together to take regional action. He also stated that at the Housing Workshop information was shared that related to the indices of deprivation and identifying those areas to Government.

He responded to the enquiries stating that he was not aware of a Private Landlords Charter but would look into, but he was aware that local authorities already had landlord licences in place. He also stated that once the Spatial Development Strategy was approved, it would form part of the Local Plans for the local authorities and confirmed that a draft was scheduled to be produced in Summer 2020 and would also form part of the Development Plan. Tim Jago also informed the Committee that a dedicated evidence and research team were already collating evidence across the CA and that housing evidence was being currently collected as well including bespoke evidence to inform City Region issues. Information collected would show

trends, meet and identify needs, but also aspirations and getting the balance right. He stated that the Housing Strategy did not form part of the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and was not policy, but that it may inform, but was not statutory. Local plans were statutory plans and set the trend, but the Housing Strategy was non-statutory and could not over-ride the local plans as it was not statutory.

Kirsty Pearce informed the Committee that she would collate a short summary that would explain the Local Development Plans, the SDS and the Housing Strategy.

Resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: -

- a) approves this report noting the progress made on the preparation of the City Region Housing Strategy to date:
- b) notes the responses provided in Appendix 1 of this report to points raised by Committee Members at the November 2018 Housing Strategy Workshop; and
- c) requests the Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning to report the City Region Housing Strategy to a future meeting of this Committee for its information.

## **6. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Huw Jenkins (Policy Lead – Transport) relating to the Air Quality Action Plan, he highlighted the following:

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### **Review**

- January 2018 – Combined Authority's (CA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&SC) established a Task and Finish Group on Air Quality;
- June 2018 – O&SC proposed recommendations to the CA, which were welcomed and are now being implemented;
- Regular updates are provided to the O&SC; and
- The profile of air quality issues continues to grow at a national and Liverpool City Region (LCR) level.

## **Update**

- Preliminary transport feasibility study on air quality commissioned last year;
- Additional feasibility work commissioned by the CA Spatial Planning Team on non-transport pollution sources;
- The Air Quality Task Force (AQTF) members formally appointed and includes Public Health England, Director of Health, Chief Executives, Leaders and High level politicians from across the 6 Local Authorities with the first meeting being held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019; and
- Liverpool City Council (LCC) mandated by DEFRA to develop options to manage air pollution exceedances and to develop a strategic outline business case.

## **Ongoing**

- CA's Air Quality Action Plan linked to feasibility studies and LCC development work with DEFRA;
- A further update to be submitted to the O&SC at a future meeting;
- Development of proposals for LCR-wide cycle network and Green Bus Routes via £172m Transforming Cities Fund;
- Proposals for new smart ticketing portal;
- Developing options for hydrogen fuels in conjunction with Merseytravel and bus operators;
- Delivery of the LCC Connectivity Schemes; and
- New Merseyrail Rolling Stock.

## **Awareness**

- Highlighting the aims and themes for activities;
- National recognition and involvement with the Mayor of London and the "New Clean Air" Act lobby as part of the "Let London Breathe" and "Love Clean Air" activities; and
- Contributions to the Environment Bill: policy paper.

Members enquired about the following: -

- Delivering on Smart Ticketing/Contactless, what's the point of the Walrus Card;
- Hydrogen buses are great, but would smaller bus companies be able to afford it and how would it be enforced;
- Issues raised at a regional level could be taken through the Bus Consultative Forum;



- Did the Task and Finish Group consider lobbying Government or manufacturers of petrol and diesel cars in order to influence and change legislation;
- Smart ticketing should be reviewed and consideration given to out of hours workers/night time workers etc and its safe usage; and
- O&SC in 2019-20 would more than likely involve new members on the committee, so the action plan needs to be in writing with regular updates to the Committee and presented with a RAG rating.

Huw Jenkins informed the Committee that in relation to smart ticketing, it was people's preference to have an account based product that can be linked to a smart phone, smart watch and bank card etc. He stated that hydrogen buses needed to be affordable and that sensible commercial decisions needed to be made to attract Government incentives through OLEV for bus companies to invest in hydrogen buses with consideration being given to refuelling depots. He recognised that something needed to be done sub-regionally, regionally and at a national level. London was already looking at a lower emissions scrappage scheme.

The Committee noted the verbal update from Huw Jenkins.

## **7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW FOR 2018/19**

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review for 2018-19. Jill Coule and Charles Yankiah provided the Committee with an update in relation to the content of the report.

Members commented that no feedback had been received from the Transport Committee regarding the activity throughout the year, but it would be good to hear from the Transport Committee regarding the areas scrutinised that had transport links etc.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Kevan Wainwright and seconded by Councillor Paula Murphy: -

That a Joint Working Group be established between the Transport Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look into Smart Ticketing.

A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: -

- a) agrees the Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 as set out in Appendix A and that any amendments/insertions be made in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chairs and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer;
- b) agrees the draft Proposed Work Programme for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix A and that any amendments during the course of the new municipal year be made in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chairs and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer;
- c) endorses the development of a scrutiny questionnaire that will be circulated to Members of this Committee; and
- d) a Joint Working Group be established between the Transport Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look into Smart Ticketing.

**8. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) WHICH THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS TO BE OF AN URGENT NATURE**

There were no other items.

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The Chair, Councillor Carl Cashman thanked the Vice Chairs, members and officers for their contributions and support for the municipal year and encouraged the Committee members to continue to ask the right questions, scrutinise the right decisions and hold the right people to account as they contributed to the openness and transparency of the City Region.

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Chairperson of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(The meeting closed at 12.30 pm)