

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, 4th March 2020 the following Members were

P r e s e n t:

Councillor T Crone (Chair)	Green	Liverpool CC
Councillor S Gorst	Labour	Liverpool CC
Councillor T O'Brien	Labour	Liverpool CC
Councillor L Whitley	Labour	Halton BC
Councillor B Woolfall	Labour	Halton BC
Councillor A Bowden	Labour	St Helens MBC
Councillor R Hattersley	Labour	St Helens MBC
Councillor H Cameron	Conservative	Wirral MBC
Councillor A Jones	Labour	Wirral MBC
Councillor J Stapleton	Labour	Wirral MBC
Councillor E Finneran	Labour	Knowsley MBC
Councillor J Morgan	Labour	Knowsley MBC
Councillor L Dowd	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor C Howard	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor S Marshall	Labour	Sefton MBC
Councillor Dr J Pugh	Liberal Democrat	LCR Opposition Group
Councillor Sir R Watson CBE	Conservative	LCR Opposition Group

37. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Tom Crone extended a warm welcome to Councillor L Dowd, who was attending her first meeting of the Committee since her recent appointment by Sefton Council.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Cashman, J Jackson and K Wainwright.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

40. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the meeting of the LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer, Jill Coule reported that following receipt of legal advice on the issue and in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, it was proposed that the appointment to this position be dealt with in the new Municipal Year 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That approval be given for the appointment of Vice-Chairman to be dealt with at the start of the Municipal Year 2020/21.

42. METRO MAYOR S ROTHERAM'S UPDATE

The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram provided an update relating to his recent activities and he highlighted the following: -

- It was the last meeting of the Committee before the May 2020 elections, although the ramifications of Corona virus may cause the elections to be re-scheduled;
- The Mayor's thanks to the Committee for their contributions and to Officers for the running of the meetings; and
- The Mayor particularly thanked the Chair for taking the time to ensure transparency and stated that he was proud of what had been achieved over the past 3 years.

The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram added that by working together, the foundations has been laid for a fairer, more socially just City Region.

The Mayor added that as it was the final meeting of the Municipal Year, it was an opportunity to reflect on the following key achievements during his first term of Office:-

- 9000 jobs and 500 apprenticeships;
- Lots of infrastructure investments across the 6 Districts;
- Successful lobbying with the Mayor of Greater Manchester regarding the Northern Rail franchise which was now back in Government control;
- The new 'Maghull North' rail station;
- Brand new accessible publicly owned trains on the City Region network;
- The delivery of £52 million Adult Education Budget;
- The £1 fast tag in order to reduce congestion and speed up flow through the Tunnel;
- £15 million investment in Kirkby Town Centre to reinvigorate the heart of the Town;
- Half price travel for Apprentices;
- Tackled the scourge of homelessness with the Region's 6 Local Authorities to provide homes and wrap around support;
- The 'Households into work' Programme which tries to tackle the fundamentals of access to employment
- The 'Bus Services Act 2017' and the Combined Authority's recent decision to pursue options for bus reform in the Liverpool City Region;
- The Metro Mayor's visions for a 'London style' Transport system with smart cards and contactless payments on bus network; and
- The development of a 'Tidal Energy' Scheme as a green energy alternative;

The Metro Mayor also reported on his work on a 'National' level including Discussions with Government Ministers on levelling up and further devolution powers. He had also expressed his concern over the scaling back of the 'Northern Powerhouse'.

The Metro Mayor also welcomed the Government's commitment to deliver HS2, but added that only the delivery of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail together was acceptable for the City Region. He then added that he continued to press Government on the need for proper investment in the Northern transport infrastructure.

The Metro Mayor concluded his update by reporting that he was delighted to speak at the recent launch of Wirral's Community Wealth Building Strategy and was impressed by their bold approach to keep as much money in the local economy as possible.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Metro Mayor.

Councillor Edna Finneran asked about bus reform and if Local Authorities were expected to contribute money towards the franchise?

The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram responded and stated that the reality was that we had to find additional money, including Local Authorities. The Government had recently announced funding of £5 billion which was only available to areas looking at doing something innovative, therefore the City Region could access funding. The Metro Mayor's aspiration was to look at transport holistically and have a system similar to the London style transport system with a London style subsidy, then the City Region Authorities wouldn't have to subsidise costs in the future.

Councillor Dr John Pugh referred to page 21 of the agenda papers and the 'skills gap' particularly digital manufacturing and construction skills. He asked that given the amount of building we had in the Region, what the Metro Mayor's view was on what was going wrong and where did interventions need to be made? Was it at School level or Employers and did we have the right schemes for the transition from School into a skilled occupation?

The Metro Mayor responded and stated 'all of the above', particularly a lack of strategic powers to Local Authorities and Combined Authorities, or both. The Employment and Skills Team surveyed more than 2000 employers for them to forecast future skills needs. That was compiled into a set of documents which includes a 'construction growth plan'. The Metro Mayor asked Rob Tabb, Policy Lead for Employment and Skills to make the documents available to the Members of the Committee. The Metro Mayor added that the information was a full breakdown of where there were skills shortages and the information was presented to Government to request that some of the current £2 billion 'Apprenticeship Levy' underspend be released. If the City Region had more flexibility and the funding was released, apprenticeships could be increased giving young people a great start, Employers the skills base they need and an opportunity for people to progress in world of work.

Councillor Tricia O'Brien asked about buses. She reported that she had attended public meeting the previous evening about the '82 bus route. She referred to the upcoming public consultation 'The Big Bus Debate' and added that generally, the public did not feel that their comments are going to be fully incorporated which she understood. She asked how where we going to get inclusion and once the

results were compiled, how could we explain to the public why they can't always get what they want for very sound and green reasons?

The Chair, Councillor Tom Crone also added a supplementary question regarding the bus debate and model of running the bus routes. Specifically, he asked about the 82, 80 88 and 75 routes where proposed changes had been announced and public did not know about those changes. He asked if the Metro Mayor had any information on these specific routes.

The Metro Mayor responded stating that he is asked all the time about specific bus routes. He referred to the Climate emergency and the need to get more people out of a car and onto buses. He added that 82% of people use buses with 400,000 journeys per day. The Combined Authority currently had responsibility for strategy and did not have the power to control routes. The ideal was to take control to regulate bus services so routes, timetables, fare structure, bus style are decided by the Combined Authority. The Metro Mayor stated that this would enable the use of subsidy or profit to facilitate another route. The Combined Authority had not made a final decision on its preferred option out of the three types as a result of the Bus Services Act 2017 and the bus reform agenda. He added that Greater Manchester had opted for the 'franchising' model, whilst West Midlands had opted for an 'enhanced partnership'.

Councillor O'Brien asked what sort of survey would be carried out in what level of details so that the public really feel that their views were being taken into account.

The Metro Mayor responded and stated that the survey would not be about bus routes, but about the strategic direction for the City Region's transport network and the options for which model worked best.

Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE, asked if there would be a criteria on additional public subsidy on certain routes? Also, would there be a set criteria that determined the level of viability for services. If the public were advised on changes or recommendations of this from the outset, they would understand what was likely to be feasible and what wasn't.

The Metro Mayor responded and stated that bus routes follow the strategic overview of what the Combined Authority were trying to achieve which was the re-regulation of bus routes. He referred to the £64 million spend on route subsidy and concessionary travel which was the most generous concessionary scheme in the Country. He added that this all formed part of the decision on bus reform options. The Metro Mayor described his aspiration for the roll out of a smart ticketing approach which calculated the cheapest fee at the end of the day and could be used on all modes of transport, along with more reliable services, better, greener vehicles with charge points and WIFI service. This could only be achieved if the Combined Authority were in control of bus services.

The Chair, Councillor Tom Crone stated that attracting more people was only half of the equation, driving needed to be dis-incentivised. He asked the Metro Mayor if he agreed and if he regretted reducing the fast tag to £1?

The Metro Mayor responded and stated that he did not regret the £1 fast tag as it was a promise made in his manifesto that had been delivered and he made no apologies for that. He said that the City Region needed a genuine quality alternative, and the way to do this was by having a fully integrated transport system.

The Metro Mayor added that he did not own a car anymore, he used public transport, walked and cycled. He added that he had just returned from the launch of 'Active Travel' in Runcorn which encouraged walking and cycling as a better alternative.

Councillor Sam Marshall asked about the Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board. She asked about its function and where it sat in the Combined Authority structure. She referred to the public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 to undertake equality impact assessments on policy and strategy development and referenced the previous duty in relation to those in lower socio-economic groups. She asked was this Board a way to include this specific group and ensure that they are not negatively impacted.

The Metro Mayor responded stated that the Combined Authority complied with all the equality legislation as part of everything it did but he wanted to go further to make things better. He added that the Board was chaired by Lynn Collins and looks at policy making within the organisation but also came up with ideas for consideration by the Combined Authority. As an example, the Metro Mayor referred to the use of buses late at night, how women felt more vulnerable and what could be done to address it within the transport system. The Board was also representative of young people to enable their views to be incorporated into the process.

Councillor Marshall asked where the Board sat within the structure of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and was everything being fed in for review?

The Metro Mayor responded and stated that it was a stand-alone Board and the first of its kind in the Country. The constitution was drawn up and agreed by Government. The Board sat within the Policy Strategy area of the Authority. The Metro Mayor requested that the terms of reference for the Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board be circulated to Members of the Committee for information.

Councillor Helen Cameron, referred to the Wirral Community Wealth Building which received cross party support aside from setting specific targets and the report indicated that they were delighted to have exceeded Preston's 'keep it local' model with 46% of spend retained in Wirral. She added that the Health and Social Care sector was 74% but all other classifications were 7%. She asked would the Metro Mayor actively encourage the 'keep it local' campaign to include private businesses, SME's and micro businesses not just the 3rd Sector.

The Metro Mayor responded stating that he did believe it had to be everybody. He indicated that the imbalance between private and public sector had to be redressed. He added that the 3rd sector had been under-utilised. It had stepped in where councils had been forced to cut services. Self-employment was huge across the City Region and the Metro Mayor acknowledged that by separating some of the £75 million business support package funding for those who previously couldn't bid in. He added that the framework was being developed by 'Power to Change' to include employer 'social responsibility', e.g. no zero hours contracts, payment of real living wage and greater diversity.

Councillor Cameron also referred to analysis of some of the spend that the Combined Authority were responsible for e.g. recruitment and IT and unfortunately because of the private sector, it isn't done locally, but it should be done locally regardless.

The Metro Mayor agreed and stated that he didn't wasn't to come across as a 'protectionist', but there was a better way to do things that would help to prop up some local businesses and better use of local supply chains. He added that the Combined Authority was looking to be assessed. He was hopeful that instead of referring to the 'Preston' model, the 'Liverpool City Region' model would be highlighted as currently the 'Preston' model was being done here 'at scale'.

The Chair, Councillor Tom Crone, thanked the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram for his attendance and his update to the Committee.

43. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE

The Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery which provided an update on the Digital Infrastructure Project.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery gave a presentation to the Committee which highlighted the following:-

- An overview of the digital connectivity programme;
- The proposed delivery model;
- The 'Dig Once' approach;
- How improving internet speed added an average of £17 million GVA per annum;
- The development of end use inclusion projects; and
- The timeline for the next steps in the project.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Tom Crone invited questions and comments from Members of the Committee.

Councillor Christine Howard referred to the £17 million GVA per annum to each Local Authority and asked if that would be delivered via a boost to the economy rather than a lump sum to each District.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and agreed that it was mainly through productivity gains as better connectivity helps businesses to grow and innovate. She added that a robust economic assessment had been done and that could be shared with members of the Committee.

Councillor Sam Marshall asked who was in the pool of providers for digital infrastructure owner, if that information be shared and secondly would the fibre optic cable used be new or would some existing superfast cable be utilised?

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that information on the pool of providers could not be disclosed as it was a live procurement but the market had been widely consulted with. She indicated that in relation to cabling, it was anticipated that it would all be new but it depended on the solution the provider presented.

Councillor Dr John Pugh commented on aspects of the project in relation to competition with 'Openreach' and others as directed by Government, the idea of waiting for roads to be dug up to lay cable on an 'ad hoc' basis and on the other side waiting for the road to be dug up opportunistically.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that works would be co-ordinated when plans were in place to undertake highways works to take advantage of the opportunity to install infrastructure so the road is now being dug up twice.

Councillor Dr Pugh also asked if the project was waiting for highways works to be able to install cable.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that it would be the other way around and selected schemes were aligned to the backhaul route and schemes were planned over the next 2 years. Following a further query on cables, she added that it would be new cables.

Councillor Tricia O'Brien asked whether this was completely independent of the 5G roll out.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that it was separate but 5G still needed to go into the ground and connect to a fibre network.

Councillor Helen Cameron asked about the 'Dig once' element. She referred to the key route on the A41 having extensive cabling installed and how wildflowers had been planted on former grass verges instead of re-turfing it. She asked if this could be considered as part of the scheme.

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that it could be taken into consideration.

Councillor Sam Marshall asked what an 'open access network' was. Was it the provision of free WIFI across the region?

Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery responded and stated that it was open to other internet service providers to provide services, e.g. Virgin media is closed, but Openreach isn't, so there is a lot more choice of providers for the customer and end user.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the progress on the Digital Infrastructure Project be noted;
- (ii) that the Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive regular updates on the project;
- (iii) that the intent to procure a commercial partner to deliver a backhaul network following a competitive procurement process and that this decision will be presented to the Combined Authority for approval, be noted; and
- (iv) that Lorna Rogers, Head of Mayoral Programme Delivery be thanked for her informative presentation.

44. MERSEY TIDAL PROJECT UPDATE

The Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the report of the Head of Tidal Project Development which

- (1) Provided a summary of recent progress in the Mersey Tidal Power project;
- (2) summarised the findings; and
- (3) outlined the trajectory of the project and the proposed next stage of development.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development also gave a presentation which detailed the progress made to date and the next steps which was expected to result in a preferred option to take forward for development funding.

The presentation highlighted the following:-

- The history of Mersey tidal power;
- What had changed and the creation of opportunities;
- Recent developments;
- The whole energy market analysis;
- The key findings of the strategic case;
- Options appraisal;
- Summary of findings; and
- Next steps.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Tom Crone invited questions and comments from Members of the Committee.

Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE referred to paragraph 5.10.4 on page 14 of the agenda papers and stated that this clearly indicated that the current policy adopted on a national basis wasn't sufficient. He expressed concern at groups that claim that if you stopped certain activities it would solve the problem, when it wouldn't. He referred to the UK's contribution to reducing carbon emissions not being significant in the global sense but that didn't mean it wasn't the right thing to do. Councillor Watson asked if any modelling had been done to estimate the contribution in percentage terms that this project would make to carbon reduction or was it too early to tell.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development responded and commented that the Committee on Climate Change was looking into how the UK could get to net zero by 2050. He acknowledged that the UK was a small net contributor in the global sense.

In response to the question, Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that it was a difficult one to answer as at that stage there were a range of potential options. The larger options had the potential to power one million homes, so in percentage terms that was roughly 8% of the North West electricity requirement.

Councillor Edna Finneran referred to recommendation 2.1 (c) and asked had the jobs already been advertised?

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development responded and stated that following the decision of the Combined Authority on 28 February 2020, the Senior Managerial roles had been advertised. There would also be additional roles including junior and apprentice positions which would be advertised in the coming weeks. He added that if there were any recommendations for that process he would be willing to take them on board.

Councillor Finneran was concerned that the Committee was recommending the process but it was already being done.

Jill Coule, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer clarified that the recommendation in the report was to note that staff were being recruited and that was put to the Combined Authority at its meeting on 28 February 2020 so it was to make you aware that the team for this project was going to increase.

Councillor Dr John Pugh commented that it was essential to be upfront and state that there would be an environmental impact and a displacement of wildlife, albeit for greater environmental benefit. He made reference to 'Government engagement' which was included throughout the report, in particular, paragraph 5.8.1 on page 13 of the agenda which stated that financial revealed an encouraging reduction in costs. Councillor Pugh talked about the experience in Swansea on a similar project where it was almost at point of shovel and the Treasury withdrew commitment. He asked that if we didn't get the strike price and money was still being spent pursuing the project, shouldn't Government engagement be accelerated, to ensure that we receive a 20% subsidy for the strike price and if the answer was 'no', would the project be put on hold.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development responded and stated that Government talks were accelerating over the next phase and the importance of in principle support from Government was recognised. As much more electricity was required for use and to achieve net zero by 2050, cheaper fossil fuel technologies could not solely be relied upon to achieve this target, additional capacity was needed. This project was low risk was a technological perspective and if support for the subsidy was received from Government it would be delivered quickly. Government were considering this technology as an important part of the future electricity supply mix. He added that there was a good line of sight for driving down costs and the 20% figure was achievable with further development work.

Councillor Dr John Pugh asked that for the sake of the Combined Authority and the use of public resources, the conversation with Government could be as candid as possible, given that offshore wind power is already a proven technology and a viable alternative.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development responded and stated that offshore wind was great but it was not generating all of the time, so the more you added that energy type to the grid, the more you need alternatives to fill in the gaps. At the moment the alternative was gas, but there was more flexibility with tidal energy on when you could dispatch your energy to meet demand. He concluded and stated that part of engagement with government was encouraging them to consider technologies on a more holistic basis so some of the wider system benefits are taken into account.

Councillor Liz Dowd stated that she was very supportive of the project. She commented that she had recently visited hydro-electric plants in Norway which were developed, owned and run by the Regions and they benefit from profits. Councillor

Dowd asked in the event the project went ahead, would the asset owned by the Liverpool City region and would it benefit the Region.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that it was a hard question to answer at this stage. From a wider strategic context, he felt that they should be a locally owned asset as the benefits could be realised locally. He referenced a project in St Malo which initially was an expensive project when it was built, but the capital costs had now been repaid and because the operation and maintenance costs were so low, it provided some of the cheapest electricity in Europe. He added that taking a long sighted view was part of engagement with Government to see what avenues could be explored to apply the regular asset based model approach to this type of project.

Councillor Sam Gorst stated that he was supportive of the project but sensed financial uncertainty. He referred to the £3.5 billion cost and asked where the additional funding was coming from and if there had been assurances given by Central Government on additional funding and support.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that it depended on the level of support. The funding that had been committed in comparison to the overall capital expenditure of the project was small. Part of the reason for the very structured approach to the development was to ensure that money wasn't being spent unnecessarily. The funding that had been secured was appropriate for this stage of development. Future revenues may come from Government if a support mechanism could be agreed, then it wouldn't be difficult to raise the capital required to build the project through things like institutional investors or pension funds.

Councillor Sam Marshall thanked Shaun Benzon for the regular updates. She asked what SMR and CCUS meant.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that SMR was a small modular reactor which was a concept used instead of large nuclear power stations. CCUS related to carbon capture and underground storage which was a facility to capture and store carbon dioxide somewhere that didn't contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Councillor Sam Marshall asked about the timeline for the project and how long the building time would be for the actual project?

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that a detailed construction methodology had not been done yet and it depended on the size of scheme. It was generally the mechanical and electrical equipment which had the longest lead time and currently the timescale was 3-4 years from placing your first order to having those machines commissioned, ready to plug into the grid and generate power.

Councillor Marshall commented that it would be beneficial if some of the output for this work could be generated locally and not exported and also how the project tied into air quality improvement.

Councillor Helen Cameron referred to the lifetime of infrastructure and the windfarm on Burbo Bank and asked if one of the options was to reuse or recycle existing infrastructure particularly due to the concrete and drilling that went into that build.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that the nature of these types of projects mean that you would never really fully decommission it was a requirement from the Crown Estate to develop a decommissioning plan for these types of projects. He added that as part of the next phase, a decommissioning plan for the project could be looked into.

Councillor Cameron commented that her question may have been misunderstood, she stated that the decommissioning of the wind farm was already evident within the timeline, it wasn't about the decommissioning and the end of life of the tidal project infrastructure, it was about existing infrastructure and the next 15 year plan and re-utilising it.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development indicated that he was not aware of the plans for the decommissioning at Burbo Bank as it was not a project he was involved in I'm really involved in. He was aware that anecdotally, there were opportunities for repowering offshore wind farms by installing new turbines, but this was dependent on the location of the foundations so he wasn't in a position to comment that project.

Councillor Cameron asked again would the project be utilising any of the existing infrastructure that was already in the Mersey Estuary, or would it be a completely separate build.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development stated that he did not think that there would be a lot of crossover in the infrastructure, so it would need to be a separate build.

Councillor Christine Howard asked what framework for decision making would be used by the project team that is going to be put in place in terms of decisions that they're able to make independently and those that are required to taken by the Combined Authority.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development indicated that he was in the process of putting together a multi criteria analysis decision-making process which will be applied to that ensure the project had involvement and buy-in from key stakeholders. The process would be similar to the current process with regular updates to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with requests for comments and regular reports to Combined Authority meetings where key decisions on the project were required.

Jill Coule, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer added that there was a significant process to go through and it will carry on through Combined Authority. She added that information on the legal process could be included as part of the next update to the Committee in due course.

The Chair, Councillor Tom Crone referenced the new technology having a reduced impact on the natural environment and asked if Shaun Benzon could explain more about that. Councillor Crone asked about the £3.5 billion and whether there was a range for different projects that were being looked at. He also referred to the potential to power up to a million homes and asked what that meant in terms of megawatts or gigawatts for the most energy that was likely to be generated. Lastly, would the carbon impact of construction be calculated and would the carbon debt be paid back by 2040.

Shaun Benzon, Head of Tidal Project Development indicated that the turbines that had been used in the past were fixed speed machines. By varying the speed of the turbine it can operate very efficiently into both directions of the tide. This helps to mitigate some environmental impact as within your enclosed basin you have the same high-tide level and low tide level and have the flexibility to shape the profile of the tidal curve within that basin and create more intertidal habitat.

In relation to the second question, Shaun Benzon stated that it was anywhere from £1 – 1.5 billion on smaller projects, up to £8 or 9 billion depending on the size of the structure. The deliverability question also came into play with the potential for further cost reductions in the next phase.

In relation to energy capacity, Shaun Benzon indicated that it was from 1 gigawatt up to nearly 4 gigawatts installed capacity. He added that these were significant projects on a small nuclear power scale for some of them so they had the opportunity to contribute significantly to our energy requirements.

Finally, Shaun Benzon responded on the carbon cost of construction and stated that it hadn't been looked at in the last phase. Other tidal projects of this nature had considered it and there were always going to be carbon costs with the amount of concrete but because the project would be generating such large volumes of renewable energy, the payback period was typically within a 3 year period.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked Shaun Benzon for his attendance and informative presentation.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the progress made in developing a viable tidal energy scheme, be noted ;
- (ii) that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates during Phase 3 of the project; and
- (iii) that the Combined Authority's intent to recruit or second a small in-house team, supported by external consultant experts, to undertake this next phase of work, be noted.

45. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION SKILLS INVESTMENT STATEMENT 2020/21

The LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director Policy and Strategic Commissioning which submitted the Liverpool City Region Skills Investment Statement 2020/2021 for consideration.

Rob Tabb, Policy Lead for Employment and Skills highlighted the key messages and activity around delivering the outcomes detailed in section 3 of the report.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Tom Crone invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Tricia O'Brien commented that as a City Region there were still issues for school age children which had never been addressed by Government,

particularly in relation to funding cuts per pupil and that attainment would not be improved at age 16 without earlier intervention. Councillor O'Brien added that she was aware of the work being done on Adult Education within the Apprenticeship Scheme which was to be applauded but she felt that something needed to be done at an earlier age.

Rob Tabb, Policy Lead for Employment and Skills responded and stated that there was a clear evidence base about early intervention and many Local Authorities were doing some excellent work around early intervention and early help with programmes to try to address these issues.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the report and the Liverpool City Region Skills Investment Statement 2020/2021 of local needs as set out in Appendix One to the report, be noted; and
- (ii) that Members of the LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee give consideration to areas which may be suitable for further investigation in future work programmes and submit any suggestions via e-mail to Democratic Services.

46. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

As this was the last meeting for this Municipal Year, the Chair, Councillor Tom Crone took the opportunity to thank Members and officers for their contribution to the work of the Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past year. He also thanked Committee members who were not in attendance, in particular, Councillor Kevan Wainwright for being a very committed and active member of this Committee.

Minutes 37 to 46 received as a correct record on the 22 day of July 2020.

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny

(The meeting closed at 12.25 pm)

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