

## CABINET

At a meeting of Cabinet held on  
23 September 2020

(Present) **Councillor Baines (Chair)**  
**Councillors Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns, Charlton,**  
**Gomez-Aspron, Groucutt, McCauley and Quinn**

-----

### 133 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

### 134 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

Item	Title	Member(s)	Interest
14	Development of the Red Bank Educational Unit and relocation of Penkford Special School	Councillor Gomez-Aspron	Prejudicial

### 135 **MINUTES**

\* **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 July 2020 be approved and signed.**

### 136 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### (a) **Apprenticeships for Children We Look After Task Group Interim Report**

A report was presented by Councillor T Long which set out the findings of a Scrutiny Review of Apprenticeships for Children we look after which had been undertaken by the Children and Young People's Services Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor T Long reported that the Children and Young People Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel commissioned a task and finish group to review apprenticeships for children looked after by St Helens Council as part of its work programme for 2019/20. The Task and Finish Group carried out research and held a meeting with officers to develop its conclusions and recommendations as set out in the report. The Task and Finish Group's report was approved for submission to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 20 July 2020.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report be noted; and**
- (2) **a report and action plan in response to the recommendations be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet prior to submission to the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2020.**

## CABINET

### (b) Council's Use of Paper and Plastics Task Group Report

A report was presented by Councillor Uddin which set out the findings of a Scrutiny Review of Council's Use of Paper and Plastics which had been undertaken by the Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

The Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel commissioned a task and finish group to review the Council's use of paper and plastics as part of its work programme for 2019/20. The Task and Finish Group carried out research and held several meetings with officers to develop its conclusions and recommendations as set out in the report. The Task and Finish Group's report was approved for submission to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 20 July 2020.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report be noted; and**
- (2) **a report and action plan in response to the recommendations be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet prior to submission to the Place Services Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2020.**

### (c) Spotlight Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens Scrutiny Task Group Report

A report was presented by Councillor Sweeney which set out the findings of a Scrutiny Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens which had been undertaken by the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

The Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Panel commissioned a task and finish group to review the County Lines Issues in St Helens as part of its work programme for 2019/20. The Task and Finish Group carried out research and held several meetings with officers to develop its conclusions and recommendations as set out in the report. The Task and Finish Group's report was approved for submission to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 20 July 2020.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report be noted; and**
- (2) **a report and action plan in response to the recommendations be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet prior to submission to the Place Services Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2020.**

### 137 PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 1 2020/21

A report was submitted which provided analysis of progress and performance over the course of the period against each of the Council's six priorities. The Quarter 1 report reflected performance during the first three months of the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact that this has had on many of the Council's measures of performance. The Council acknowledged that effective performance management arrangements were critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times.

## CABINET

The report was presented with the caveat that work to deliver a step change in the Council's approach to performance management was ongoing over the course of Quarter 2.

This included:

- i) wholesale review of the Council's performance management framework in line with the Council's plans for reset and recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and the desired outcomes of the Borough Strategy / Council Plan following consultation, further review and approval;
- ii) full alignment of the new performance management framework to the priorities of the Council Plan; and
- iii) full review of performance targets in the light of the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Council's performance.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the current performance position be noted;**
- (2) work with appropriate Strategic Directors to address specific areas for performance improvement be undertaken; and**
- (3) work with appropriate Strategic Directors be undertaken in agreeing proposals for the future range of appropriate performance measures and indicators to be presented in Cabinet reports and their respective targets.**

### 138 PEER REVIEW/ONE COUNCIL UPDATE

A report was submitted which provided an update on the delivery of the One Council Programme, which incorporated the actions and recommendations from the LGA Peer Review and Culture Review carried out in early 2019.

The LGA Peer Review and Culture Review had highlighted that the Council had identified a need to change and modernise to meet future challenges but that it faced some significant issues. The LGA Peer Challenge made several recommendations in its report to which the Council developed an action plan including consideration of wider issues of modernisation that the Council had identified.

Progress had been variable to date due to an absence of effective programme management and governance which was now being addressed.

Members were informed that it was now timely to integrate the ambitions outlined in the One Council Programme with the council's Reset and Recovery programme of work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. To support this, additional peer support had been agreed with the LGA and would take place on 28 September 2020 in an agreed Recovery and Renewal Panel. This panel session provided an opportunity for the Leader, Cabinet Member - Corporate Services, Estates & Communication, Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive to come together, virtually, with peers to:

- Reflect on what the Council has achieved and learnt in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Discuss with peers the challenges and opportunities COVID-19 has presented for the Council and local area.

## CABINET

- Consider the steps the Council wishes to take towards recovery/renewal.

The session would help to identify a series of actions the Council may wish to take as well as identifying further support and good practice from across the sector.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **progress to date be noted;**
- (2) **it be noted that a more robust programme management approach was being developed to drive forward improvements in line with Reset and Recovery ambitions;**
- (3) **it be noted that as part of the above, key measures of success and performance improvement, supported by an evidence base, will be identified (answering the 'so what' question); and**
- (4) **the governance arrangements be noted.**

**139 REPLACEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL SYSTEMS**

A report was submitted which sought approval to source a replacement for the current in-house HR System. In addition, the report also sought approval to extend the contract of the Council's Payroll System. Finally, the report provided indicative costs and sought approval for relevant year 1 & 2 funding from the Transformation Reserve.

\* **Resolved that:**

- 1) **the sourcing of a replacement for the current in-house Human Resources System and the extension of the existing contract in respect of the Payroll System in line with the One Council Modernisation Programme be approved;**
- 2) **the funding allocation be approved; and**
- 3) **it be agreed that once a preferred supplier for the Human Resources System be identified, a further Cabinet report to be brought later in the year for approval to award the contract.**

**140 TEST AND TRACE MODEL FOR ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL INCLUDING THE CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE HUB**

A report was submitted which aimed to describe the model for outbreak management for St Helens Borough Council, which included the arrangements within the council and the development of a Cheshire and Mersey Hub. The report pulled together all the decisions that had been made so far, into one document to ensure transparency of the overarching model. Decisions had been made at speed to ensure that St Helens had a team in place to manage outbreaks locally.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the decisions already made be noted; and**

## CABINET

- (2) **the overall model of delivery be approved.**

### 141 **PROPOSALS TO CONTINUE THE PAUSE PROGRAMME FOR ST HELENS**

A report was submitted which explained the Pause programme and the impact it has had in St Helens since it was launched as a pilot in 2017. The proposal was to continue to fund the Pause programme for a period of 21 months through a combination of grant funding provided by the Pause charity and a contribution of match funding from the local authority.

The report provided Members with an overview of the Pause programme, an update on service delivery, effectiveness and value for money. It also gave details of the proposal for the Department for Education, through Pause organisation, to provide 50% match funding for the delivery of Pause as part of developing a wider city region approach to service delivery.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the continuation of the Pause programme for a period of 21 months (November 2020 to July 2022) be approved; and**
- (2) **the total cost of the programme (£508k) be approved and confirmed that this will be funded by a grant of £254k provided by the Pause charity, and by allocating £254k of existing Troubled Families monies.**

The following Minute was a Key Decision but notice had not been given in the Public Notice of Key Decisions. The Cabinet was able to make a decision in relation to the item as the provisions relating to the General Exceptions in the Council's Constitution had been met.

Councillor Groucutt left the meeting during discussion on the following item.

### 142 **LOCAL PLAN**

A report was submitted which stated that at its meeting held on 6 March 2020, Cabinet had resolved to delay submission of the St Helens Local Plan Submission Draft (2019) to consider the land use planning implications of entering into a strategic partnership with English Cities Fund (ECF). Whilst ECF have ambitious plans, there was not enough evidence at this point that submission of the Local Plan be delayed.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was required to set out the development plan documents that the Council intends to produce and a timescale for their preparation.

If Cabinet resolved to submit the Local Plan, it was recommended that the LDS be updated and brought into effect to reflect the timescale.

Members considered the outcome of discussions with the ECF within the context of the Local Plan and discussed the local development scheme to reflect the submission timescale for the St Helens Local Plan Submission Draft (2019).

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the St Helens Borough Local Plan Submission Draft (2019) be submitted as per the resolution of Council at the meeting held on the 19 December 2018; and**

## CABINET

- (2) **the Local Development Scheme July 2020 be brought into immediate effect.**

### **143 HIGHWAYS PROGRAMME 2020/21**

A report was submitted which sought approval to accept grant funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to support the recovery from COVID-19 restrictions and to facilitate maintenance and improvement to the highway infrastructure that includes the delivery of walking and cycling measures in the financial year 2020/21.

The Cabinet was informed that the decision was a Key Decision and details had been published in accordance with the provisions within the Constitution.

**\* Resolved that:**

- (1) **the Transport Single Investment Capital Pot Allocation of £2.213m, from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be accepted, comprising £1.573m for Highway Maintenance and £0.640m for Integrated Transport;**
- (2) **the Transport Single Investment Pot Key Route Network allocation of £0.751m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be accepted;**
- (3) **the Highways Pothole and Challenge Fund Part 1 of £1.668m from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocated to them by the Department for Transport be accepted;**
- (4) **the Highways Pothole and Challenge Fund Part 1 of £0.140m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocated to them by the Department for Transport be accepted; and**
- (5) **the Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund Part 2 capital funding of £0.742m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocation be accepted.**

### **144 TOWN DEAL ACCELERATED FUND AND LIVERPOOL CITY REGION TOWN CENTRE FUND UPDATE**

A report was submitted which brought forward an opportunity for the investment of £2m into St Helens and Earlestown Town Centres to recognise the impact that covid pandemic has had on the town centre and to help and assist local businesses and the St Helens Economy to recover. It was anticipated that this significant level of investment would act as a catalyst for future investment and to accelerate delivery of the Council's regeneration programmes.

The Cabinet was informed that the decision was a Key Decision and details had been published in accordance with the provisions within the Constitution.

**\* Resolved that:**

- (1) **the acceptance of the £1m Liverpool City Region Town Centre Fund to support the recovery of Earlestown and St Helens Town**

## CABINET

**Centres be accepted and the associated action plan for implementation be approved;**

- (2) the acceptance of the £1m Town Deal Accelerated Fund from Central Government to accelerate a key component of the Town Deal, for the demolition of Chalon Way Car Park to unlock a future development site in the St Helens Town Centre be approved; and**
- (3) it be approved that in the event of the demolition costs exceeding the award of £1m, any gap in funding, up to a maximum of £100,000, to be funded from the Growth Reserve.**

### **145 OFSTED MONITORING REPORT**

A report was submitted which informed Cabinet that as a consequence of the 2019 Ofsted ILAC, which judged Children's Services to be Inadequate, a series of monitoring visits were required prior to a full reinspection. In addition, as a consequence of this judgement the Department for Education (DfE) had made St Helens Borough Council the subject of formal intervention.

The first of the Ofsted monitoring visits were conducted in early August, the outcome of which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The department had identified a number of areas requiring improvement. They had been developed as part of the wider improvement plan.

The Department was to be subject to a detailed Focused Visit between January and March 2021. The subject of the visit would be to review the 'the quality of decision making in social care practice'.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the findings of the Ofsted Report be noted;**
- (2) the planned actions of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and the department be noted; and**
- (3) further reports on the progress of the department in addressing the areas identified in the Monitoring letter that required improvement be received.**

Councillor Gomez-Aspron here left the meeting.

### **146 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RED BANK EDUCATIONAL UNIT AND RELOCATION OF PENKFORD SPECIAL SCHOOL**

A report was submitted which informed Cabinet that Penkford Special School buildings had exceeded their life expectancy and there was a need to consider how pupils can be accommodated within a fit for purpose building.

There was an increasing pressure on the high needs budget of the Dedicated Schools Grant due to increasing demand for specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs and disability. This proposal was part of a range of initiatives to develop more cost-effective quality provision for pupils with Social,

## CABINET

Emotional and/or Mental Health needs and reduce the reliance on independent non maintained special schools.

A feasibility study on whether the Red Bank educational unit could be re-purposed had established the building could provide a suitable alternative for Penkford School, at an approximate cost of £6.806 million.

Alternative options had been considered including alternative sites or rebuilding Penkford School on its current site. However, the development of the Red Bank educational unit was considered to represent a better option for the children and young people and delivered better value for money.

The relocation of Penkford School to Red Bank educational unit would be subject to Charity Commission approval.

The Cabinet was informed that the decision was a Key Decision and details had been published in accordance with the provisions within the Constitution.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the development of the former Red Bank educational unit and the relocation of Penkford School be approved and subject to Charity Commission approval of the proposed development, to enter into a lease with the Company on the terms set out at Appendix 1 of this report;**
- (2) the overall project costs associated with the development of the educational unit, estimated as £6.806m be approved;**
- (3) the allocation of funding for the project as being £1.393m that is already earmarked in respect of Penkford School be approved, with an additional £0.5m from currently uncommitted funding within the Children's Services capital programme, and £4.913m from Council capital receipts;**
- (4) the submission of a planning application in respect of the proposed works at the Red Bank site be approved; and**
- (5) it be approved that, subject to tender costs being within approved budget levels, the appointment of a constructor be approved by Delegated Executive Decision following a competitive tender process via the North West Construction Hub.**