



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

DATE: Tuesday 28 April 2009

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor
Hands (Chair)
Howe (Vice-Chair)
Barber
Booth
Bradshaw
Byrom
Cummins (Spokesperson)
Doran (Spokesperson)
Hough
Larkin
Mrs. S. Roberts
Fr. D. Seddon

Substitute

Councillor
Shaw
McGuire
Bigley
Weavers
Moncur
Gustafson
Kerrigan
T Jones
Colbert
McGinnity

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Ruth Harrison
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If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

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A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers are requested to give notice of any personal or prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.
3. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2009.
4. **Fostering Service Working Group - Final Report** (Pages 11 - 48)

Report of the Legal Director.
5. **Work Programme and Key Decision Forward Plan - 1 May 2009 - 31 August 2009** (Pages 49 - 78)

Report of the Legal Director.
6. **Children's Social Care - Part 1** (Pages 79 - 88)

Report of the Strategic Director – Children's Services.
7. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider passing the following resolution:

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.
8. **Children's Social Care - Part 2** (Pages 89 - 96)

The Committee is requested to consider and note the attached report previously submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet Member – Children's Services held on 20 January 2009.

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THIS SET OF MINUTES IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL IN".

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON TUESDAY 17TH MARCH, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Howe (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Barber, Booth, Bradshaw, Byrom,
Cummins, Doran, Hough and Larkin

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hands and his Substitute Councillor Shaw, Mrs S Roberts and Father D. Seddon.

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:-

Member	Minute No.	Reason	Action
Councillor Barber	81. Activities undertaken by Children's Services in conjunction with Merseyside Police and Fire Services	Personal – Member of the Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon.
Councillor Byrom	81. Activities undertaken by Children's Services in conjunction with Merseyside Police and Fire Services	Personal – Member on the LGA Fire Forum.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon.
Councillor Howe	81. Activities undertaken by Children's Services in conjunction with Merseyside Police and Fire Services	Personal – Member of Merseyside Police Authority.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon.

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TUESDAY 17TH MARCH, 2009

Councillor Cummins	82. Role of Children's Trust Director	Personal– Non-Executive Member of Sefton PCT.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon.
Officer	Minute No.	Reason:	Action
Mr Graham Taylor	80. Working Together – Sefton Education Business Partnership and Sefton Council	Personal – Member of the Board	Remained in the meeting during consideration of the item.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on the 27 January 2009 be confirmed as a correct record; and
- (2) the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record subject to Minute No. 67 – Declarations of Interest being amended to specify Councillor Cummins interest as a Governor at Rimrose Hope.

80. WORKING TOGETHER - SEFTON EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AND SEFTON COUNCIL

The Committee considered the report of the Partnership Manager Sefton Education Business Partnership which informed members of the support that Sefton Council, as main guarantor to the partnership, currently provided to the Work-related learning and Enterprise activities offered to young people by Sefton Education Business Partnership. It was reported that the Partnership provided opportunities for businesses and young people to work together to develop and improve employability and enterprise skills and that the Partnership had been in operation for 10 years.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Member be recommended to seek support from Council directorates to increase the number of Sefton Council employees engaged in the activities of the Partnership to support the development of the young people of Sefton.

81. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN CONJUNCTION WITH MERSEYSIDE POLICE AND FIRE SERVICES

Further to Minute No. 46 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) held on 2 December 2009, Members requested further information in relation to activities undertaken by Children's Services in conjunction with Merseyside Police and the Fire Service.

Members requested further work to be carried out by the three newly recruited Area Managers in relation to how the youth service linked into and carried out interagency work at a ward level.

RESOLVED:

That the three newly recruited Area Managers be requested to submit a more detailed report in September 2009 in relation to how the youth service link into and carry out interagency work at a ward level.

82. ROLE OF THE CHILDREN'S TRUST DIRECTOR

Further to Minute No. 65 of the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) held on 27 January 2009 the Committee requested to consider the role of the Children's Trust Director, including governance arrangements across partnerships associated with the post.

It was reported that the Children's Trust Director had been in post since April 2006 and was jointly funded by Sefton Council, Children's Services and NHS Sefton and had been able to influence partnership working through the joint nature of the post. It was further reported that the new governance arrangements were due to be implemented from 1 April 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the report be accepted.

83. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT FEBRUARY 2009

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services which updated Members upon the outcome of the assessment for the award of Investors in People undertaken by Children's Services in February 2009 as part of the Council's commitment to corporate achievement. It was reported that the Assessors Report indicated that Children's Services had met 34 of the 39 indicators and that further development was required in order to meet the overall standard.

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It was explained that the 5 remaining indicators were in relation to evaluation of training and it was pointed out that subject to satisfactory progress being made, it was intended that the re-assessment would be sought in May 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the report be accepted.

84. DISCRETIONARY AWARD POLICY 2008/09

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services which detailed the eligibility criteria regarding Discretionary Major Award Policy. It was reported that historically, 4 levels of discretionary award were offered to students who qualified however since 2000, only Discretionary Major Award had remained due to many of the minor awards being incorporated in to Further Education provision via the Learning and Skills Council and the fees associated with them being removed. It was further reported that the discretionary major awards budget had therefore been reduced accordingly over the years and that the purpose of the current major award was to continue to provide discretionary funding for students who had applied for the remaining performing arts courses which did not attract national mandatory funding.

Members raised concerns in relation to a reluctance to fund one year courses and requested the Cabinet Member Children's Services to consider the funding of such courses in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member be requested to amend the Discretionary Major Award Policy to consider funding one year long courses.

85. CROSS GOVERNMENT CO-LOCATION FUND

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Children's Services which detailed the possibility of a bid for grant capital funding from the Cross Government Co-location Fund to support area working and co-location of services.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) supports approval of a bid for grant funding from the Cross Government Co-location Fund.

**86. WORK PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN 1
MARCH 2009 - 30 JUNE 2009**

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which detailed the Committee's programme of work including the Key Decision Forward Plan containing all the Key Decisions which the Executive would take during the above period. The latest Key Decision Forward Plan for period 1 April 2009 to 31 July 2009 was circulated at the meeting and the Committee were advised of its right to pre-scrutinise any Key Decision which fell under its remit.

Members were advised that due to unforeseen circumstances the Fostering Service Working Groups Final Report had been delayed and that it would be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) scheduled to take place on 21 April 2009.

Members referred to information that had been recently circulated in relation to Sefton Young Carers and requested a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee detailing how the service operated.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the Forward Plans for periods 1 March 2009 – 30 June 2009 and 1 April 2009 – 31 July 2009, together with the report, be accepted;
- (2) the Strategic Director Children's Services be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee detailing how the Sefton Young Carers service operates; and
- (3) the progress to date of Working Groups be supported.

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Meeting: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

CAINET MEMBER - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

Date of Meeting: 28 APRIL 2009
5 MAY 2009
14 MAY 2009

Title of Report: FINAL REPORT
FOSTERING SERVICES WORKING GROUP

Report of: C.J. Elwood
Legal Director

Contact Officer: Ruth Harrison
(Telephone No.) 0151 934 2042

This report contains	Yes	No
CONFIDENTIAL Information/		√
EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph(s)..... Of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		√
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?	√	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To formally present the Final Report of the Fostering Services Working Group.

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REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED

The Working Group has been investigating the Fostering Service provided by Sefton M.B.C. The recommendations within the report will enhance and improve the Fostering Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee agrees the Final Report with recommendations of the Fostering Service Working Group as detailed in paragraph 7.0 of the report;
- (2) That the Committee authorises the Chair in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to amend the Final Report accordingly as a result of comments from this meeting;
- (3) That the report with recommendations be referred to Cabinet Member – Children’s Services for information; and
- (4) That the report with recommendations be referred to the Cabinet for approval.

Corporate Objective Monitoring

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1.	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2.	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3.	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4.	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5.	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6.	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7.	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young people	√		

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Financial Implications

	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
REVENUE IMPLICATIONS				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N				When?
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

There are financial implications, in the short term, as a result of this report however those should be met by the forecasted savings in the medium to long term.

Projected Financial Implications:-

Year 1: £375,000

Year 2: £430,000

Year 3: £485,000

Please Note that the above figures do not include costs associated with recommendations 3, 4 and 13, further work and research is required.

The Working Group have established from it's findings that a potential saving per child is expected – this information will be reported verbally at the Committee.

Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

Children's Services, Finance, Human Resources and Legal.

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report

None

SEFTON M.B.C.

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SEFTON COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(Children's Services)**



Fostering Service Working Group

FINAL REPORT

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Foreword

When we started this review I don't think any of us envisaged the amount of time, or length of time, it would take. I am very grateful to the Working Group for the incredible amount of hard work they have put in and their keenness to see the job done. The issues at times were quite worrying as the information was revealed and the sensitivity and complexity of the task became apparent.

I understand that the recommendations we are making will cost the Authority increased expenditure in the short term but the Working Group are convinced in the long term savings will be achieved. In the last three years we have estimated that nearly £3M growth has been invested in Children's Services, most of which has gone into fostering or relevant departments. We believe our recommendations, once implemented, should reduce this year on year.

Many Officers gave their time to help the review. Whilst interviewing Officers and Foster Carers the Commitment and professionalism shone through and I would like to thank all Officers and Foster Carers on behalf of the Working Group for all their hard work in carrying out what can be an emotionally challenging job at times. I also wish to express my thanks for the efforts of the Assistant Director, Margaret Loughlin who was very helpful.

Finally a special word of thanks to our Support Officer, Ruth Harrison, who has worked very hard over and above the call of duty to enable us to do this review. I wish to personally thank all officers and witnesses who have contributed to our report, it really is most appreciated.



Councillor Richard Hands
Lead Member – Fostering Service Working Group
April 2009

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1.0 INTRODUCTION - FOSTERING SERVICE REVIEW

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) met on the afternoon of the 3 June 2008 where a Work Programme Session was facilitated. The purpose of the session was to invite all sections of the Children's Services directorate and their partners to share with the Committee issues that they felt required further investigation. The session went well and it was identified that after a poor Ofsted inspection the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should investigate the work of the Fostering Service. Minute No. 7 of the meeting held on 10 June 2008, resolved that a new Working Group be appointed as follows.

1.1 Membership

Councillors R. Hands (Lead Member), S. Bradshaw, Glover and Hough and Mrs S. Roberts (Parent Governor Representative).

Further to Minute No. 20 of the meeting held on 19 August 2008 the Membership was amended as follows:-

Councillors R. Hands (Lead Member), S. Bradshaw, Doran and Hough and Mrs S. Roberts (Parent Governor Representative).

1.2 Terms of Reference and Objectives

The objective of the review is to make recommendations to Cabinet on:

1. The recruitment and retention of Foster Carers in Sefton in order to lead to improvements in the Fostering Service provided to children and young people in Sefton.
2. The recruitment and retention of staff in Children's Social Care.

The Working Group will investigate the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers in Sefton in order to lead to improvements in the Fostering Service provided to children and young people in Sefton and will investigate the following:-

- a) A review of current recruitment of Foster Carers, compare methods used in Sefton with those in other local authorities to establish models of good practice.
- b) A review of payments to Foster Carers in Sefton compared to those made by other local authorities and independent fostering agencies.
- c) A review of Foster Carers deregistered in Sefton during the last 12 months and the reasons for this.
- d) To explore, through SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and interviewing appropriate Officers, the advantages and disadvantages of out-sourcing the service.

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- e) To examine the Children's Services budget lines including the budgetary figures.
- f) To explore the reasons why there is a shortage of foster carers for babies.
- g) To examine the procedures and methods for advertising vacancies.

The Working Group will investigate the recruitment and retention of staff in Children's Social Care by investigating the following:-

- a) A review of:-
 - (i) current staffing levels;
 - (ii) number of vacancies;
 - (iii) use of agency staff; and
 - (iv) turnover of staff at various levels in Children's Social Care.
- b) A review of current staff recruitment methods to identify good practice approaches.

1.3 Meetings / Site Visits

The following Meetings have taken place:-

2 July 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
18 July 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
20 August 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
10 September 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
17 September 2008	Interviewed Representative – National Fostering Agency	Bootle
17 September 2008	Interviewed Group of Foster Carers	Bootle
24 September 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
2 October 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
17 October 2008	Interviewed Foster Carer	At their home (as requested)
21 October 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
22 October 2008	Interviewed Foster Carer	At their home (as requested)
18 November 2008	Working Group Meeting	Bootle
23 January 2009	Interviewed Chair of Fostering Panel	Bootle
23 January 2009	Interviewed Witnesses – Ellesmere House	Bootle
23 January 2009	Interviewed Sefton Advocacy	Bootle

3 February 2009	Interviewed Representative – National Fostering Agency	Southport
3 February 2009	Interviewed Social Workers	Southport

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The first meeting was arranged to meet with the Assistant Director, Children's Services and to scope the review. The Scoping Document is attached as Appendix 1. You will see from the scoping document that the Working Groups brief was a very complex and sensitive subject area.

2.2 Once the scope of the review had been identified Members requested further information in relation to the following:-

- The Ofsted Inspection Report and the Councils response to that Report.
- Statistics on the numbers of children fostered and the number of foster carers.
- Presentation in relation to how a child becomes fostered.
- Report on staff structure vacancies, agency staff.
- Report on Turnover of staff.
- Presentation on the Breakdown of the Children's Social Care Budget.
- Report on current and planned recruitment activity.
- Benchmarking exercise with regional authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) in relation to Fostering allowances.
- Good practice examples in relation to recruitment and retention of foster carers.

All the above information is available upon request – details at paragraph 8.

2.3 Members of the Working Group have been very busy in building their own knowledge base up of the Fostering Service, you can see from paragraph 2.2 above that this has been done through various approaches from reading material to receiving presentations with question and answer sessions following on.

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2.4 Once Members felt comfortable with the information they had gathered they requested to interview witnesses. We wrote to all Seftons Foster Carers requesting expressions of interest of which we received a very good response. We held a meeting where a large number of Foster Carers attended, they had come to the meeting prepared and had the following issues they wanted to raise with the Working Group:-

- Communication
- Staffing
- Private Sector
- Respite/Support
- Training
- Complaints
- Allegations

These issues are considered in more detail later on in the report. The meeting was received well and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was the main point of contact for the Foster Carers for the purposes of the review.

2.5 Paragraph 1.3 illustrates details of site visits. Working Group Members visited Foster Carers at their homes (at the request of the Foster Carer) the Overview and Scrutiny Officer also attended those visits. Members were very keen throughout the review to include as many Foster Carers and took steps to encourage that.

2.6 Members have also interviewed an expert witness from the National Fostering Agency. She was able to draw on her experiences of working for Local Authorities as a Social Worker and also for the private sector. This is examined in more detail later in the report.

2.7 The Working Group also wrote to all Social Workers employed by the Council, via the Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Trade Union, Unison requesting expressions of interest. Paragraph 1.3 shows that Members interviewed those Members of Staff as a group on Tuesday 3 February 2009.

2.8 The Working Group has carried out some excellent work during the life of the review and improvements to the service have been introduced throughout. The issues being reviewed were very complex and sensitive one which required thorough examination. The following paragraphs will convey the Working Groups findings along with recommendations and the reasons for those recommendations with safeguarding children being at the heart of the whole process.

3.0 HOW A CHILD BECOMES FOSTERED

- 3.1 For the purpose of this report and those reading it Working Group Members felt that the reader should have some background knowledge of how a child becomes fostered. What follows are details the Working Group Members have been presented with throughout the review. The following are broad outlines of the process and not meant as definitive lists.

REFERRALS

A referral could come from a number of sources:

- Schools
- Youth Service
- Health (including GP's, hospitals, Child and Mental Health Services, School Nurses or Health Visitors)
- Parents/Family Members
- Friends/Neighbours
- Probation or Police
- Voluntary Agencies
- Adult Services
- Substance Misuse or Mental Health Services

INVESTIGATION

The concerns may consist of:

- Injury or harm to the child
- Neglect
- Child is abandoned or left unsupervised
- Concerns re parental drug and/or alcohol use
- Parent's involvement in criminal activity
- Parents have mental health issues or a learning difficulty
- Allegations of sexual abuse
- Family breakdown or dysfunction
- Parents struggle to manage child's behaviour/children are out of parental control
- Historical concerns about older children who were removed following court proceedings

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ASSESSMENT

- Initial Assessments will be completed within 7 working days – outcomes-
 - no further action,
 - support services being offered, or
 - further assessment being required
- Core Assessments will be completed within 35 working days
- Section 47 Investigation is specific to allegations of abuse or neglect and can be combined with a core assessment

OUTCOME OF ASSESSMENT

- No further action
- Support Services to be offered either via universal services, targeted services or by social care
- Family Support agreement to be drawn up
- Concerns warrant formal conference under child protection procedures
- Concerns are so significant that consideration given to the child being removed from the family
- If voluntary services were provided these would be reviewed to ensure concerns had been addressed
- If concerns continue or escalate then a formal child protection conference or care proceedings could follow

THE CHILD BECOMES LOOKED AFTER

This could be:

- By arrangement with birth parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- In an emergency by applying for an appropriate order
- By issuing an application for a Care Order in the local Family Proceedings court

OPTIONS FOR CARE

- Local Authority Foster Care Placement
- External Provider (Agency Foster Carers)
- Residential Placement

FOSTER PLACEMENT – THE PROCESS

The child's Social Worker contacts Family Placement with:

- Details of the child
- Reason for care
- An assessment of their needs and
- The likely time they would need to be cared for

Family Placement will check available carers and assess whether or not there is a match in terms of:

- Age
- Gender
- Geography
- Siblings being placed together or separately
- Any health or educational needs &
- Contact arrangements with birth Family Members
- What the child's needs are
- How the proposed carers can meet these needs
- The plan for introductions to the placement

If an in-house placement is not available then a Senior Manager will need to agree that independent providers are approached.

RELATIVE/FRIEND CARERS

- The Local Authority has a duty to consider family members or friends as possible placements for children wherever feasible
- A child can be placed with a family member/friend on an emergency basis (Regulation 38) and in these instances the family member should be assessed within six weeks
- Family and Friend carers have to meet the same fostering standards as other foster carers
- They receive the same training and support and the same financial remuneration.

3.2 After reading the details of how a child would become fostered I think you will agree that the Working Group have been investigating a very sensitive and important service provided by the Council. Whilst reading what follows bear in mind that this is emotionally challenging work for all involved, the Council as Corporate Parent, Social Workers, Foster Carers and all other bodies/agencies associated with the Fostering Service.

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4.0 FINDINGS/EVIDENCE

4.1 As referred to in paragraph 2.4 above, after interviewing Foster Carers, as a group on 17 September 2008, it was clear that there were 8 ((a) – (h)) recurrent areas of concern shared between Carers. Foster Carers expressed the following concerns both written and verbal and what follows is a summary of those concerns:-

(a) Communication

Communication appeared “poor” across both teams (The Family Placement Team and Children’s Social Worker Team) and foster carers. Carers felt that the service would benefit from more openness and that there should be mutual respect.

Foster Carers want to be treated equally with regard to information, finance and equipment. (Foster Carers felt that there was a different level of knowledge between Social Workers with regards what Foster Carers were entitled to).

It was deemed that policy changes were not conveyed to everyone and are applied inconsistently (for example family members helping with care for more than 24 hours should be assessed as foster carers).

Different funds for use by Foster Carers are held in different departments with different criteria for access. This causes difficulties when trying to claim expenses back and often results in delays.

Foster Carers reported incidents of informally passing on to some carers and not others, important information, leads to a culture of ambiguity. Important information such as changes in procedure, become the subject of “hearsay” where no one has a clear understanding of the facts.

(An example of confusion given was the concept of children sharing a room or is it one child/room).

It was felt that written policies for all special allowances should be available to Foster Carers, with written clarification when a child is placed with a carer and that such policies should be enforced corporately so that advice doesn’t differ from Social Worker to Social Worker. Carers had experienced difficulties with verbal agreements for clothing/equipment allowance only to be told at a later date that the money spent by Carers couldn’t be reimbursed.

Members of the Working Group believe that the various recommendations cross-referenced will help to address the lack of communication and openness that Foster Carers have spoke of. **(If agreed, recommendations 9 and 11 should address the issue)**

(b) Staffing

Foster Carers raised the issue of the high turnover of staff and constant changes to staff for both carers and children they believed that to have a detrimental effect on all concerned. Evidence received illustrated some children had received up to 6 different social workers in twelve months, another 14 in two years and four in twelve months. It was felt that the number of Agency staff (whilst very competent workers) employed was a concern, particularly when they can leave post with one week's notice.

(If agreed, recommendations 7, 13 and 14 should address this issue and identify ways in which more permanent staff may be employed and retained rather than Agency personnel, it is envisaged that this will be a short term expense for a long term saving on Agency costs).

(c) Agency

The Council have to pay a significant premium for Agency Foster carers compared with the same services that are provided within the Authority. Children who are placed with Agency Foster Carers seem to receive greater benefits compared with their authority counterparts for example appropriate therapy, regular activities during holiday periods, increased professional support for children and carers when required. One case study given as an example was two siblings, one placed with the Council's Foster Carer and another placed with the Council's Agency Foster Carer. When they both met up for the afternoon the Agency placed child had lots of toys, been on a holiday abroad and had new clothes and shoes. The other looked after child had none of this. This caused friction between the two children.

The Working Group found that Sefton uses many Agencies and the cost to the Authority is extremely high. The largest provider which Sefton uses is the National Fostering Agency (NFA), therefore the Working Group felt that it should explore a preferential partnership or outsourcing which should reduce costs, see paragraph 4.3. **(Recommendation 5)**

(d) Respite/Support

Foster Carers felt that this aspect of the system varied greatly throughout Sefton and was dependant upon the ability and commitment of the individual Social Worker allocated to the Foster Carer. Foster Carers felt that there was insufficient support when unforeseen circumstances arise such as the need to attend personal hospital appointments, family bereavement/funeral and appointments of other family members. It was found that when respite was required on a short term basis it wasn't forthcoming. Members of the Working Group listened to evidence that such issues were resolved by removing the Foster Child from the Foster Carer indefinitely causing distress to both Foster Child and Carer. **(If agreed, recommendation 4 will address this issue).**

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(e) Training

It has been recognised that training given to Foster Carers has improved significantly over the past few years with real benefits for carers and children. New standards are being introduced with the “Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things” and it was agreed that this can only be good in the long term. However Foster Carers felt that what new demands ie paper work, placed an extra burden upon already hard pressed carers who see themselves asked to take on a more professional role without the associated recognition. **(If agreed, recommendations 1, 2 and 3 will address this issue).**

(f) Complaints

Foster Carers felt that their complaints weren't always dealt with appropriately. One case study given was in relation to a Foster Carer being given approval for a loft conversion to accommodate a child. The work was instructed by Social Services who paid the builder as work began, it became apparent that the standard of building work was poor, the roof leaks and the loft conversion has now been condemned as uninhabitable. As a result of this poor work, the Foster Carer can no longer act as a Foster Carer as placements are on “hold” owing to “inadequate housing”. **(If agree, recommendations 10 and 11 will prevent such issues occurring in the future).**

Other examples given were in relation to the response times of letters of complaint and Foster Carers waiting up to six months with one Carer waiting nine months. Members of the Working Group felt that this was unacceptable and have been assured that this has been much improved.

(g) Allegations against Foster Carers

Allegations made against a Foster Carer is a very serious issue which should be dealt with as quickly as possible and treated in a sensitive manner. Foster Carers felt that written information was not sent out about the procedure with no reports being provided from meetings or panels. Delays occur without reason. Foster Carers reported that correspondence was not provided following the conclusion of an allegation. Some Working Group Members visited a Foster Carer who had shared information about an alleged allegation. The Foster Carer shared information with Members which led to grave concerns about the current system. It became apparent when interviewing Foster Carers that the Social Worker allocated to the Foster Carer can also be the investigating officer of a complaint made against them, with that same officer making recommendations to the Fostering Panel for the final decision on de-registration. Members felt that allegations should be investigated independently and that there should be an advocacy service available to Foster Carers **(hence recommendation 5).**

(h) Insurance

The Working Group were concerned to hear that Foster Carers were expected to arrange their own insurance cover while Fostering. This means that they are expected to use the allowance money they receive for the child(ren) to pay for that insurance. The Working Group found that no help was given or offered by the Authority. In view of the fact that the Fostering Network believes “That no Foster Carer should be out of pocket as a result of Fostering” the Working Group felt **recommendation 3 to be fair.**

4.2 RETAIN AND RECRUIT FOSTER CARERS

4.2.1 As part of the review Members have investigated why Sefton Council are finding it difficult to retain and recruit Foster Carers.

Payment to Foster Carers at Sefton is lower than that of neighbouring Authorities, Members examined this in more detail by looking at information shared from the Fostering Network “Survey of Allowances and Fee Payment Schemes 2007-08 and Recommended Minimum Allowances 2007-08”. After examining the document Members of the Working Group found that there was no “standard” allowance that foster families receive for the children and young people they look after. The amount varies widely, sometimes within the same authority depending on a variety of factors including the age of the child, the child’s needs and their level of independence. Taking that into account Members of the Working Group concluded and agreed with the Fostering Network in their belief that “No Foster Carer should be out of pocket as a result of Fostering”. The Fostering Network recommended payment for 2007-08 is attached as Appendix 3)

4.2.2 Members of the Working Group strongly believe that if Sefton Council were to:-

- (i) increase its weekly payment to Foster Carers by 30%,
- (ii) pay them a retention fee of £50 per week for a maximum of 12 weeks when they are without placement; and
- (iii) pay for their insurance in terms of their professional capacity

the Council would be more successful in recruiting and retaining existing Foster Carers (who could otherwise go to Agency Organisation where they are paid more and the children receive greater benefits). Members believe that this in turn would alleviate the requirement to pay the Agencies considerably higher rates than in-house costs, which would give the Council a long term saving and so therefore believe **recommendations 1, 2 and 3 to be fair and result in a long term saving.**

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4.2.3 Sefton Foster Carers

The Working Group Members believe that if we invest in our own Foster Carers (Council employed) by increasing the payment then we should retain more of our own Foster Carers and also recruitment should increase because the benefits are more attractive. **(If agreed, recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 will go some way in addressing the inconsistencies between Council placed looked after children and Agency placed looked after children).**

4.2.4 Members of the Working Group also examined marketing and felt that the Council should undertake some professional marketing if they are to compete for the best Foster Carers in the area. Members were disappointed to find a clear lack of adverts compared to that of Liverpool City Council who are advertising on trains, buses, in the press and local radio stations covering the Sefton area. Stockport have been marketing on national television and with that in mind Members have recommended that the Children's Services Department develop a marketing strategy with Sefton's Communications Department. **(If agreed, recommendation 15 will assist in addressing this issue).**

4.2 PREFERENTIAL PARTNERSHIP

4.3.1 The Working Group Members examined the possibility of entering into a preferential partnership agreement with the National Fostering Agency (NFA) which they believe would also alleviate the disproportionate rates paid to Agencies.

4.3.2 Members interviewed the Regional Manager for the North West and found that the NFA is already a specialist contractor to the Council, it is a long established, independent fostering provider with national coverage and a dedicated and specialist infrastructure supporting its regional team structure. As a key contractor to Sefton MBC, the NFA has a clear understanding and knowledge of the existing services provided by the authority and currently provides nearly a quarter of all Sefton's independent fostering placements. Management and operational relationships with the Contracts, Family Placement and Child Care teams are robust and based on mutual respect and professional understanding.

- 4.3.3 Members also learnt that the NFA has established strong working relationship with all Merseyside Local Authorities and Sefton MBC initially led an accreditation model with placement North West formally Greater Merseyside and Cheshire Consortium. NFA are currently participants with Placements Northwest and the NFA has received a “Good” score after submitting a report to Panel. It was reported that they were able to evidence a 97.8% stability rate for children and young people in the North West with a commitment to demonstrating that children achieved positive outcomes, in line with Every Child Matters.
- 4.3.4 Working Group Members explored a preferential partnership with NFA and have received a summary from the NFA which outlines a core framework of principles of operation, together with a list of actions that would have to be completed in order to identify potential costs and benefits. Members understand that this would need to be subject to joint discussion to establish contractual terms and agreed Service Levels. At this stage the information received can not be shared as it is strictly confidential. It was very important to Members of the Working Group that the Final Report was open to the public so Members are requesting that the issue of a Preferential partnership with the NFA be looked into further as a confidential issue. **Recommendation 5**.
- 4.3.5 Outsourcing – The Working Group interviewed the past Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) and discussed at length the route of outsourcing. Although the Council has outsourced some departments the Working Group felt that in this case outsourcing would not achieve significant savings. The Foster Carers were unhappy with the idea along with Social Workers who expressed their concerns. The Group made strenuous efforts to get information from Telford and Wreakin Council in relation to their outsourcing but were unable to either arrange a visit or glean information due to confidentiality rules. The issue of outsourcing may need to be revisited in the long term but Members of the Working Group felt that in the short term **recommendation 6** would be the best way forward.

4.4 SEFTON ADVOCACY

- 4.4.1 Members of the Working Group were concerned to find that an advocacy service wasn't made available to Foster Carers who had allegations made against them. Foster Carers were expected to co-ordinate an advocate themselves. Members strongly believe that such a service is required. Due to confidentiality Working Group Members can not share evidence received of this nature however the statistics of complaints against Foster Carers does illustrate the need for such a service. Members of the Working Group strongly believe that the Council should have some safeguards in place for its' Foster Carers.

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4.4.2 Members of the Working Group interviewed representatives from Sefton Advocacy to determine if they would be willing to provide that service for the Council and associated costs with providing it. Sefton Advocacy service have sent a forecast of financial costs associated with providing an advocate service to Foster Carers and Members of the Working Group would like this to be investigated further and negotiate the terms of an Agreement. (This information is confidential and can not be disclosed on a public document). **(If agreed, recommendation 6 will address this issue).**

4.5 RETAIN AND RECRUIT STAFF IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES SOCIAL CARE

4.5.1 Members interviewed Social Workers as a group and also visited them at their work place (Ellesmere House, Crosby). It became apparent almost immediately that recruitment to Social Worker posts was difficult. This is a National problem which has increased, the National average of vacancies in Social Worker posts is 9%, Sefton is currently at 16%.

(a) As at 20.10.08 Sefton had 5 agency staff in team manager or assistant team manager posts (out of 21 posts) and 11.5 agency social workers out of 69.5 posts. When interviewing the Assistant Director in the early part of the review she gave us the current vacancies even with Agency staff the Authority was one team manager post and 2 social work posts not covered.

(b) Sefton has already taken a number of steps to address the issue of recruitment and retention:

(c) Seconded post of Resource Manager to lead on recruitment and retention in Social Care

(d) Work with Jacaranda Recruitment Agency to recruit German Social workers. These interviews resulted in two candidates being offered posts. Further interviews for Social Workers have taken place that should also result in 6 candidates being offered posts.

4.5.2 Trainee Social Worker Posts - Members investigated the idea of recruiting Trainee Social Worker posts from local university's as a way of addressing the recruitment and retention issues Sefton are currently experiencing. Members believe that the Council would benefit from setting up such an agreement with the University and have requested that the Council consider recruiting three Trainee posts per year, this to be continued until all vacant posts are filled. The cost would be approximately £55,000/year for 3 posts. (Appendix 4 sets out the costs associated with the proposed establishment of trainee Social Worker posts). **(Recommendation 7).**

- 4.5.3 Members were also alarmed to be informed that as a result of vacancies in Sefton's Children's Services Social Care, that the Social Care staff that were in post were picking up those additional cases thus resulting in those Members of staff managing an approximate case load of 25, the national average is said to be between 12 and 16 cases. Members felt that this was causing a substantial amount of stress on an already over stretched service. This became more apparent when Members arranged to interview witnesses who provide this service.

Whilst interviewing the Social Workers and Support Workers their passion and commitment for their job was evident. Members were delighted and found it refreshing to interview a team who felt so strongly for the Foster Carers and Children that they would go the extra mile to get the job done. They spoke of a team spirit that was strong and when asked why they hadn't gone to work for Agency because they pay more with more benefits "because we like the team" was the answer. However it was recorded that they have an increasing case load which includes home visits, attending Looked After Children reviews, panel meetings, preparation meetings, writing up reports, completing documentation and arranging toddler groups, older children groups and whatever may be requested or required. They maybe required to attend "out of Borough visits" to Foster Children whom the Authority are responsible for but are placed with a family/relative member who lives outside the borough. It was highlighted that there seemed to be a high turnover in Children's Social Worker posts which they stated was "sad" and they felt that it needed to be recognised that children needed stability and continuity in order for them to move forward. One Social Worker told the Working Group that they had been handed 16 cases on their first day.

(Members would like to see this addressed as a matter of urgency hence recommendations 13 and 14).

4.6 Other Issues

- 4.6.1 There is no doubt that this review has resulted in much public interest so much so that individual Members were approached by Foster Carers in the hope that personal issues maybe resolved. Members received telephone calls, letters and e-mails about many issues including outstanding accommodation issues and aids and adaptations made to properties. The Working Group are not at liberty to share personal details however they realised quite quickly that a protocol was required to address such issues. Urgent issues raised were referred immediately to the relevant Officers and in most cases the issue was resolved but in some cases the issue is still ongoing. **(Recommendations 10 and 11 will improve that part of the service and safeguard Social Workers and Foster Carers who are not qualified to authorise, make decisions and supervise aids and adaptations to properties).**

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- 4.6.2 Members of the Working Group interviewed the Chair of the Fostering Panel who clarified the role of that panel. The Chair of the panel acknowledged that there was a problem of Agency staff and stated that in his professional opinion Foster Carers required more support and that there needed to be more communication between Foster Carers, Social Workers, the Fostering Panel and management. **(If agreed, recommendation 12 will address this).**

The Chair referred to the standard of reports coming before the panel as being “poor” but were improving, that the panel wait too long for new applications to reach panel and the reports on allegations were often missing information. The Chair believes that Sefton is losing Foster Carers at recruitment stage because they leave and go on to an agency where they are paid more and receive more benefits. The Chair referred to Cheshire as having a rigorous structure, an incremental payment structure linked to training and professional ability. The Chair of the panel also referred to judgements made by the courts whereby an order will specify that the grandparents should look after the Child(ren). The Chair stated that this is a challenge for them because the grandparents then are required to become Foster Carers and sometimes they don’t have the professional ability or training that is required. The Working Group agreed with these points and felt that they should be referred to the proposed support group for discussion, and the results be sent to the Cabinet Member Children’s Services. **(Recommendation 12(a))**

- 4.6.3 Budget Headings – When interviewing various Financial Officers of the Council it became apparent that the budget for Foster Carers, Social Workers, aids and adaptations, equipment and other relevant costs were shown or placed in various sub headings of the overall Children’s Services budget. The Working Group and all those involved found this to be very confusing, so to enable managers and the management to work diligently with the budget it was agreed that an overhaul of budget headings should be carried out. **(Recommendation 8 should make future analysis of budget spend easier).**

5.0 Conclusion

The Working Group at first felt that Ofsted were harsh on the Authority, in their award of “Inadequate”, but after a few weeks it became apparent that Members felt that the Service had “got off lightly”. Members of the Working Group do believe that the time has come to stop providing such an important service on the “cheap” and believe that the recommendations (although causing increased expenditure in the short term) should provide significant savings and much improved services in the long term for Sefton’s Looked After Children and Foster Carers.

While the Working Group were investigating Fostering, the Department were making improvements and the Working Group would like to express its congratulations for the hard work which has already been done. Since the report was written Ofsted re-inspected the service as “satisfactory”, this is a huge credit to all the hard work of staff working in the service.

6.0 Acknowledgements

- 6.1 The Working Group is grateful to all those witnesses and other persons who have assisted with research, provided and shared information and given up time to attend interviews.
- 6.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer will circulate the Final report to all witnesses who have taken part in the review.
- 6.3 Finally the Working Group would like to take this opportunity to thank the Foster Carers and Social Workers who do an amazing job and are a vital part of our society.

7.0 Supporting Information

- 1.7.1 During the process of this review, the Working Group has gathered a substantial amount of information and data, which will be invaluable in helping it to form its conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.7.2 Any background information that has been gathered so far is available on request from Ruth Harrison, Scrutiny Support Officer (telephone 0151 934 2042 e-mail: ruth.harrison@legal.sefton.gov.uk)

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8.0 Recommendations

- (1) That Foster Carers weekly payment be increased by 30% immediately, over the standard inflation rate;
- (2) That Foster Carers be paid a retention fee of £50/week for a maximum of 12 weeks when they are without placement;
- (3) That further investigations be carried out to examine the costs associated with the Local Authority paying for each Foster Carer to be insured in their professional capacity;
- (4) That the Strategic Director Children's Services be requested to investigate the level of need for respite care for Foster Carers and how this might be met and the findings being reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services);
- (5) That the Council explores entering into a preferential partnership agreement with a suitable provider;
- (6) That an Advocacy Service be established for Foster Carers;
- (7) That 3 Trainee Social Worker posts be funded, per year, in suitable local university's to help with recruitment and retention, this to be continued until no longer required;
- (8) That a complete overhaul of the budget headings for the Fostering Service be agreed in order that the Cabinet Member Children's Services and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) can identify easily where and how the budget is spent;
- (9) That a handbook illustrating equipment available to Foster Carers be designed and a corporate approach enforced;
- (10) That a protocol be introduced to address accommodation issues ensuring that a suitable dialogue takes place between One Vision Housing and any other Social Landlord, Relevant Foster Carer and Management occur;
- (11) That a protocol be introduced to address co-ordination and payment of aids and adaptations where they are necessary to potential Foster Carers homes ensuring the Local Authority commission, co-ordinate and finance any project;

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- (12) That a Foster Carer Support Group be set up and co-ordinated by the Authority to meet quarterly with appropriate representation from the Authority and the Fostering Panel;
 - (a) that the above group reports any recommendations be sent direct to the Cabinet Member Children's Services and for information to Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services)
- (13) That the relevant department be requested to investigate increasing the salaries of the Councils Social Workers, thus reducing the number of agency staff. The findings of the investigation be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) for approval;
- (14) That the relevant department be requested to investigate reducing the case load of the Councils Social Workers. The findings of the investigation be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) for approval;
- (15) That the relevant department be requested to introduce a Marketing Strategy for Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers with an appropriate budget attached to it;
- (16) That the Strategic Director Children's Services be requested to submit reports twice per year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) updating members on progress with agreed recommendations;
- (17) That the Cabinet Member Children's Services and Cabinet be requested to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) on the contents of the Final Report of the Fostering Service Working Group; and
- (18) That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and the Assistant Director be requested to send the Final Report of the Fostering Service Working Group to all of Sefton's Foster Carers.

SEFTON COUNCIL



SCOPING EXERCISE

FOSTERING SERVICE WORKING GROUP

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors R. Hands (Lead Member), S. Bradshaw, Glover and Hough and Mrs S. Roberts (Parent Governor Representative).

Further to Minute No. 20 of the meeting held on 19 August 2008 the Membership was amended as follows:-

Councillors R. Hands (Lead Member), S. Bradshaw, Doran and Hough and Mrs S. Roberts (Parent Governor Representative).

Extract:

Scrutiny and Review Committee (Children's Services) Meeting of 10 June 2008.

RESOLVED: That

The Committee establishes a Working Group to review the fostering service with particular reference to recruitment and retention of Council Staff with the following Members nominated to serve:

Councillors Hands (Lead Member), Bradshaw, Glover and Hough; and
Mrs S. Roberts

Agenda Item 4

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the review is to make recommendations to Cabinet on:

1. The recruitment and retention of Foster Carers in Sefton in order to lead to improvements in the Fostering Service provided to children and young people in Sefton.
2. The recruitment and retention of staff in Children's Social Care.

This will be done by:-

- 1
 - a) A review of current recruitment of Foster Carers, compare methods used in Sefton with those in other local authorities to establish models of good practice.
 - b) A review of payments to Foster Carers in Sefton compared to those made by other local authorities and independent fostering agencies.
 - c) A review of Foster Carers deregistered in Sefton during the last 12 months and the reasons for this.
 - d) To explore, through SWOT analysis and interviewing appropriate Officers, the advantages and disadvantages of out-sourcing the service.
 - e) To examine the Children's Services budget lines including the budgetary figures.
 - f) To explore the reasons why there is a shortage of fostering carers for babies.
 - g) To examine the procedures and methods for advertising vacancies.
- 2
 - a) A review of current staffing levels, number of vacancies, use of agency staff, turnover of staff at various levels in Children's Social Care.
 - b) A review of current staff recruitment methods to identify good practice approaches.

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METHODS OF ENQUIRY

To receive background information in relation to:-

- Ofsted Report on Fostering Service (March 2008) and subsequent action plans
- Numbers of children fostered and foster carers
- How a child becomes fostered
- Current staff structures, numbers of vacancies and use of agency staff, turnover of staff
- Examination of Children's Social Care budget
- Information on current and planned recruitment activity

The Working Group will write to foster carers and former foster carers alerting them to the review and requesting comments, this may include a public meeting. Site visits will be made to Social Care offices. Meetings will be held via video link with relevant national bodies.

A presentation will be made on the Children's Social Care budget.

T

Lead Officer: Margaret Loughlin

Overview and Scrutiny Officer: Ruth Harrison

OTHERS WHO WILL BE INVOLVED

• Fostering Improvement Board	Derek Jones & Jean Massam
• Ken black, Assistant Director – Social Care	
• Steve Sheridan	outsourcing
• Foster Carers	Public Meeting
• Council Staff	Meeting
• Michael Evans	Financial Info
• Nick Cabonara	Financial Info
• Phil Cunningham	
• Social Work Association	
• National Foster Care Association	Gill Guy-Edwards
• British Association of Adoption and Fostering	
• North West Employers Organisation	Report recently done
• Barnardos	

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPORTING TO CABINET/COUNCIL

- Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) 28 October 2008.
- Report to Cabinet 30 October 2008.

Agenda Item 4

- **PLANNING CHART**

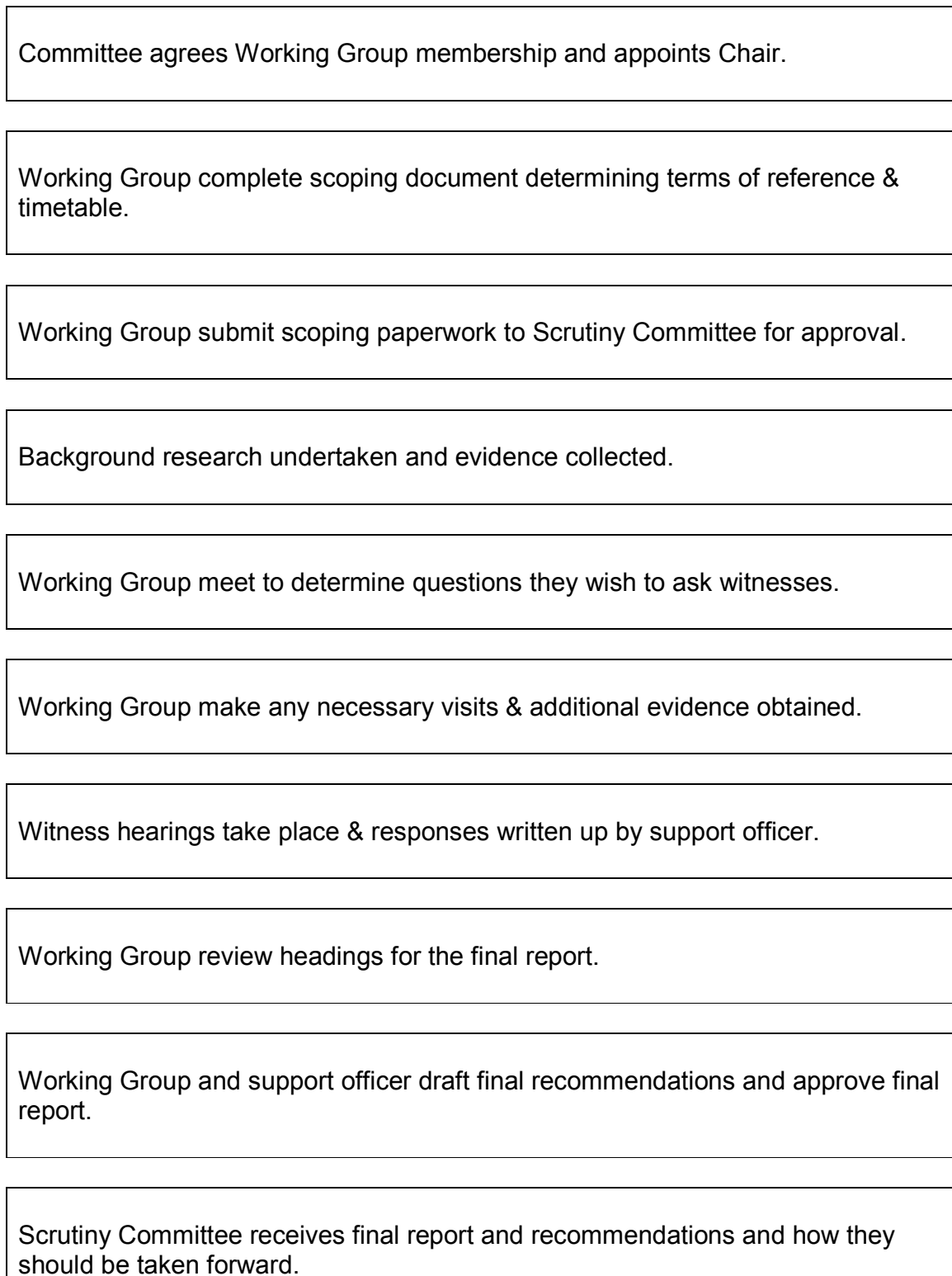
The Planning Chart is an example of the way reviews could/should be planned.

It is recommended that realistic time frames in which to carry out tasks should be considered including possible delays for public holidays and Council business. Effective planning suggests that more planning time be built into the chart.

Activity	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Scoping				
Consider Docs				
Witnesses				
Site Visits				
Initial Findings				
Draft Report				
S&R Cttee				
Submit to Cabinet				

Agenda Item 4

Ten Step Process Flow Chart



WITNESSES INTERVIEWED

Foster Carers

National Fostering Agency

Social Workers – Family Placement Team

Chair – Fostering Panel

Sefton Advocacy

Social Workers

Support Workers

Assistant Director

Children's Services Group Accountant

Local authority	Age range						Holiday	Birthday	Festival
	0-4	5-10	11-15	16+	16+	16+			
BLACBURN	£131.82	£131.97	£163.97	£212.40	£212.40	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
BLACKPOOL	£91.12	£104.10	£129.54	£165.27	£249.66-£452.84	£249.66-£452.84	1/2 WR	1 WR	
BOLTON	£99.62-£76.23	£76.23	£89.44	£118.33	£200.00-£300.00	£200.00-£300.00	£90.00-£101.13	£118.00-£202.26	
BURY	£100-£102.00	£113.00	£129.00	£151.00	£200.00-£415.25	£200.00-£415.25	1/2 WR	1x WR	
CESHIRE	£94.28	£96.04	£119.96	£145.25	£210.70-£363.13	£210.70-£363.13	1x WR	1x WR	
CUMBRIA	£106.40	£121.24	£150.92	£183.54	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
HALTON	£114.53	£130.47	£162.42	£202.04	£168.75-£371.62	£168.75-£371.62	50% of WR	1x WR	
HAVESLEY	£118.60	£135.10	£168.18	£204.35	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
LANCASHIRE	£91.53	£101.26	£125.98	£163.15	£224.20-£448.96	£224.20-£448.96	50% of WR	1x WR	
LIVERPOOL	£95.00	£105.00	£125.00	£150.00	£265.00-£450.00	£265.00-£450.00	1x WR	1x WR	
MANCHESTER	£118.60	£135.10	£168.18	£204.35	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
OLDHAM	£118.58	£135.10	£168.14	£204.54	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
ROCHDALE	£114.87	£130.85	£162.89	£198.11	£161.84-£265.96	£161.84-£265.96	£29.43-£48.98	£98.88-£36.78	
SALFORD	£100.00-£102.00	£113.00	£129.00	£151.00	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
SEFTON	£100.00-£102.00	£113.00	£129.00	£160.65	£163.20-£306.00	£163.20-£306.00	1x WR	2x WR	
ST HELENS	£114.87	£130.85	£162.78	£198.11	2x WR	2x WR	1x WR	1x WR	
STOCKPORT	£117.32	£117.32-£128.52	£138.66-£151.06	£201.46	£158.78-£272.35	£158.78-£272.35	£23.33-£50.36	£98.88-£100.73	
TAMESIDE	£100.00-£102.00	£113.00	£129.00	£151.00	£275.00-£415.25	£275.00-£415.25	50% of WR	1x WR	
TINIFFORD	£100.00-£102.00	£113	£129.00	£151.00					
WARRINGTON	£118.60	£135.10	£168.18	£204.55	£217.30-£380.28	£217.30-£380.28	£49.20-£81.49	£90.46-£135.81	
WIGAN	£100.00-£102.00	£113.00	£129.00	£151.00					
WIRRAL	£79.52	£90.65	£112.84	£132.66	£159.04-£265.32	£159.04-£265.32			
GRAND TOTAL	£116.80	£195.10	£168.16	£204.56	£204.56	2 x WR	1 x WR	1 x WR	

The Footballing Network OCTOBER 2007

Agenda Item 4

Appendix 4

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF TRAINEE SOCIAL WORKER POSTS

Proposals

This note considers a proposal to create 6 full-time trainee social worker posts as a means of overcoming staffing shortages and recruitment difficulties in the Councils Children's Services Directorate.

It is proposed to designate the posts as Trainees Social Workers and establish them at SCP 4 (£11,961). The grade has been determined by carrying out a job evaluation exercise and this reflects the fact that they would be in a learning role and closely supervised in any workplace situation. They would be taken on to complete a three-year full-time degree in social work and at the end of this period it would be the intention to slot them into a vacant social work position. Work experience would be provided when the occupants were not at college.

Other authorities are being contacted to see if social work trainee schemes are operating in neighbouring councils.

Analysis of Costs for Each Post

Salary@ SCP4	11,961
On Costs @ 23%	2,751
Course Fees etc.	3,500
Total	18,212

Total funding required is estimated at £110,000 per year for 6 posts. There is no provision in Children's Services budget for this sum. Personnel Department has submitted a bid to the Learning and Skills Council to extend the Council's apprenticeship programme. If this bid is successful it may be possible to incorporate this initiative within the programme and off-set some of the anticipated costs.

Recruitment

Suitable applicants could be drawn from the school leavers population and would also be available to more mature students. The next intake for the full-time degree course is in September but it is understood that the college the Council uses (Liverpool Community College) is fully subscribed for this course so it may be necessary to look elsewhere.

B J Marsh, Strategic Director, Children's Services
M H Fogg, Personnel Director

Agenda Item 5

Meeting: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

Date of Meeting: 28 APRIL 2009

Title of Report: WORK PROGRAMME
KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN-
1 MAY 2009 TO 31 AUGUST 2009

Report of: C.J. Elwood
Legal Director

Contact Officer: Ruth Harrison
(Telephone No.) 0151 934 2042

This report contains	Yes	No
CONFIDENTIAL Information/		√
EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph(s)..... Of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		√
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?	√	

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To submit to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the latest Key Decision Forward Plan, to seek the views of Members on the current Work Programme scheduled for this Committee and to update Members on the progress made with the current Working Groups.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To allow Members the opportunity to request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan and review progress in relation to the Work Programme and Working Group reviews.

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RECOMMENDATION(S): That:-

- 1 the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the attached Key Decision Forward Plans; and
- 2 progress in relation to the Work Programme and Working Groups be recognised.

Corporate Objective Monitoring

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1.	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2.	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3.	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4.	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5.	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6.	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7.	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8.	Children and Young People	√		

Financial Implications

	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

None

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report

None

SEFTON M.B.C.

Agenda Item 5

1. **PRE-SCRUTINY - PRIOR CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BEFORE THEY GO TO CABINET**

Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan. The items must fall under the remit (Terms of Reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A for this purpose. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by providing opportunities for issues to be examined beforehand and recommendations to be made, if appropriate, by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to a determination being made.

For ease of identification, items listed within the document for the first time appear shaded.

2. **UPDATE ON CURRENT WORKING GROUPS**

- **Fostering Service Working Group**

2.1 The Fostering Service Working Group have completed the review and the report will be considered elsewhere on the Agenda.

- **Corporate Parenting**

2.2 Councillors Cummins (Lead Member), Barber and Howe and Mrs S. Cain agreed to serve on the Corporate Parenting Working Group. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer will organise the first meeting of the Working Group in the next few weeks, it is proposed that a date be agreed at this meeting.

3. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

3.1 Further to Minute No. 86 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services) held on 17 March 2009 Members requested an update on Sefton's young carers and how that service operates, this report is still outstanding.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That:-

1 the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the attached Key Decision Forward Plan; and

2 progress in relation to the Work Programme and Working Groups be recognised.



FORWARD PLAN

**For the 4 month period 1st May 2009 to 31st August 2009.
Published on 15th April 2009.**

This plan contains all the key decisions, which the Council expects to make over the next four months. The plan is rolled forward every month. It will next be published on 15th March 2009, and will contain all the key decisions for the period 1st May 2009 to 31st August 2009.

A key decision as defined in the Council's constitution is: -

- any Executive decision that is not in the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme approved by the Council and which requires a gross budget expenditure, saving or virement of more than £100,000 or more than 2% of a Departmental budget, whichever is the greater;
- any Executive decision where the outcome will have a significant impact on a significant number of people living or working in two or more Wards.

Minutes identifying each key decision will be published within 5 working days of it having been made. These are open for public inspection at the Council Offices, Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1DA

The law and [Council's constitution](#) provides for urgent key decisions to be made. Minutes will be published for these in exactly the same way.

NOTE:

For ease of identification, items listed within the document for the first time will appear shaded.

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KEY DECISION:	To Review the Council's Accommodation Strategy to take account of the implications of the developing partnerships with Arvato, Capita Symonds and NHS Sefton
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	April/May 2009 and ongoing
Proposed consultation	Arvato, Capita Symonds and NHS Sefton
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	<i>Councillors Robertson, P. Dowd and Mrs. Parry</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	<p>Joint report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environmental Services and Finance and Information Services Director</p> <p>Contact Officers: Kevin Shutter Corporate Property Manager Tel: 0151 934 2754 Email: Kevin.shutter@capita.sefton.gov.uk</p> <p>Mike Martin Strategic Finance Manager Tel: 0151 934 3506 Email: mike.martin@finance.sefton.gov.uk</p>

KEY DECISION:	North West and Yorkshire Consortium for the supply and servicing of materials to Public Library Authorities
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member – Leisure and Tourism
Expected Date of Decision	22 April 2009
Proposed consultation	Finance Director Legal Services Director
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	<p>Councillor Lord Fearn, Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism, Liberal Democrat Party, c/o Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. E-mail: libdems@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2252, Fax: 0151 934 2251</p>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	<p>Report of the Leisure Director Contact Christine Hall, Head of Library and Information Services christine.hall@leisure.sefton.gov.uk Tel 0151 934 2376</p>

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KEY DECISION:	Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – Executive Arrangements
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	April/May 2009
Proposed consultation	To be confirmed
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Caroline Elwood, Legal Director Tel: 0151 934 2032 caroline.elwood@legal.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	Charging for Transport Services
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member (Health and Social Care) Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	May 2009 May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Health and Social Care
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Charging for Transport Services Charlie Barker, Director of Health and Social Care 934 3707 Contact Officer Colin Speight 934 3743 colin.speight@hsc.sefton.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

KEY DECISION:	Fostering Service Working Group – Final Report
Decision Taker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services) Cabinet Member, Children’s Services Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	April 2009 May 2009 May 2009 .
Proposed consultation	Finance Director Legal Director
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Final Report – Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services) Contact: Ruth Harrison Overview and Scrutiny Officer Ruth.Harrison@legal.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 2042

KEY DECISION:	Housing Market Renewal Business Plan for 2009/11
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	April 2009
Proposed consultation	
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Contact Alan Lunt, Housing Market Renewal Director E-Mail: Alan.Lunt@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

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KEY DECISION:	Sefton Integrated Investment Strategy
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	April 2009
Proposed consultation	Full Public & stakeholder consultation; Planning Committee
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Contact Alan Lunt, Housing Market Renewal Director E-Mail: Alan.Lunt@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	Community Involvement – Licensing Act Working Group – Final Report
Decision Taker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	May 2009 May 2009 May 2009 .
Proposed consultation	Finance Director Legal Director
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Final Report – Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Contact: Ruth Harrison Overview and Scrutiny Officer Ruth.Harrison@legal.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 2042

Agenda Item 5

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for General Capital Schemes at Various Schools
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009. 16 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report on the Outcome of Sefton's Expression of Interest for Building Schools for the Future
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009. 16 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Basic Need Schemes
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009. 16 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	To Report on the Outcome of the Proposals to Change the SEN Designation of Resourced Provision at Rimrose Hope CE Primary School and Waterloo Primary School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report on the Outcome of the Proposal to Change the SEN Designation at Presfield Special School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report on the Outcome of the Consultation for the Proposal to Close Thornton Primary School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	Supported Housing Needs Working Group – Final Report
Decision Taker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Health & Social Care Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 April 2009 7 May 2009
Proposed consultation	Principal Managers, Health & Social Care Head of Central Services, Health & Social Care Supporting People Manager, Health & Social Care
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Final Report – Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Health & Social Care Contact: Janet Borgerson Overview and Scrutiny Officer Janet.Borgerson@legal.sefton.gov.uk 0151-934 2176

KEY DECISION:	Acceptance of tenders and approval of funding for the provision of new Sure Start Children’s centre at Freshfield Primary School, Formby. The funding will be provided from specific Capital resources.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	16 th April 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member: Children’s Services Finance Department
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of Tenders for Proposed new Sure Start Children’s Centre at Freshfield Primary School, Formby. Contact David Kay Tel: 0151 934 4527 Fax: 0151 934 4220

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KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for a Primary Capital Programme Scheme at Aintree Davenhill Primary School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009. 16 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	Schools Access Initiative Capital Allocations 2009/10: To Seek Approval for Proposed Schemes
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	14 April 2009. 16 April 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report on a Bid for Funding to Support a Low or Zero-Carbon School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	5 May 2009. 7 May 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for the Demolition Arrangements for Bootle High School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	5 May 2009. 7 May 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report Further on Schemes for TCF 14-19 Diploma Allocation
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	5 May 2009. 7 May 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	Extended Schools Allocation 2009/10: To Seek Approval for Proposed Schemes
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	5 May 2009. 7 May 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	Replacement/upgrade of the Library Management System. Sefton's Library Management System has been in operation since 1982. It needs to be upgraded or replaced in order to fulfil functions now required and to ensure its future reliability
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism
Expected Date of Decision	May 2009
Proposed consultation	Finance and Information Services Director
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillor Lord Fearn, Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism, Liberal Democrat Party, c/o Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. E-mail: libdems@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2252, Fax: 0151 934 2251
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Leisure Director Contact Christine Hall, Head of Library and Information Services christine.hall@leisure.sefton.gov.uk Tel 0151 934 2376

KEY DECISION:	Acceptance of tenders and approval of funding for the provision of new Sure Start children's centre at Valewood Primary School, Crosby. The funding will be provided from specific Capital resources.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 th May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member: Children's Services Finance Department
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of Tenders for Proposed new Sure Start Children's Centre at Valewood Primary School, Crosby. Contact David Kay Tel: 0151 934 4527 Fax: 0151 934 4220

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KEY DECISION:	Acceptance of tenders and approval for an increase in the Capital funding allocation for proposed new kitchen, dining room and Sure Start Children's Centre at Farnborough Road School, Southport. Additional funding will be provided from specific Capital resources.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 th May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member: Children's Services Finance Department
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of Tenders for Proposed New Kitchen, Dining Room and Sure Start Children's Centre at Farnborough Road School, Southport. Contact David Kay Tel: 0151 934 4527 Fax: 0151 934 4220

KEY DECISION:	Sefton's Housing Strategy for the period 2009 – 2013
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 th May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care. Cabinet Member – Regeneration.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at end of the Plan</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Joint Report of the Strategic Director of Health and Social Care, Housing Market Renewal Director, Environmental Protection Director and Planning and Economic Regeneration Director. Contact Officer: Jim Ohren, Principal Manager. Tel: 0151 934 3619 E Mail: jim.ohren@hsc.sefton.gov.uk

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KEY DECISION:	Acceptance of tenders and approval of funding for the provision of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Forefield Junior School, Crosby. The funding will be provided from the schools own resources.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 th May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member: Children's Services Finance Department
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of Tenders for Proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Forefield Junior School, Crosby. Contact David Kay Tel: 0151 934 4527 Fax: 0151 934 4220

Key Decision	Thornton Switch Island Link – ECI Procurement Process – Appointment of Contractor
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	10 00am on Thursday 10 th May 2009, Town Hall Southport
Proposed Consultations	The procurement process has involved advertising the Council's proposals through formal EU procedures.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Strategic Director Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive Contact Stuart Waldron, Assistant Director (Transportation and Development) Tel: 0151 934 4006 e-mail; stuart.waldron@technical.sefton.gov.uk

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KEY DECISION:	Changes to Sefton's Housing Allocation Policy and Choice Based Lettings system.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	7 th May 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at end of the Plan</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Strategic Director of Health and Social Care Contact Officer: Jim Ohren, Principal Manager. Tel: 0151 934 3619 E Mail: jim.ohren@hsc.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	To Report on the Modifications to the Primary Capital Strategy
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	5 May 2009. 7 May 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	Analysis and Early Mechanisms in Health & Social Care Systems – Final Report
Decision Taker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Health & Social Care Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	19 May 2009 TBC
Proposed consultation	Director of Health & Social Care Head of Adult Services
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Final Report – Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Health & Social Care Contact: Janet Borgerson Overview and Scrutiny Officer Janet.Borgerson@legal.sefton.gov.uk 0151-934 2176

Agenda Item 5

KEY DECISION:	On how a stage 2 HLF submission for King's Gardens might be progressed, should the stage 1 submission be accepted
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	May (ongoing)
Proposed consultation	Cabinet member for Tourism and Leisure, Regeneration and Communities Finance Director, Legal Service Director
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, P. Dowd, and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Head of Tourism Contact – Peter Sandman e-mail: Peter.Sandman@tourism.sefton.gov.uk Tel 0151 934 2321

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Changes to the 'Play Naturally in Sefton' Play Pathfinder Scheme
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Leisure & Tourism. Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	20 May 2009. 2 June 2009. 11 June 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services. Cabinet Member, Leisure & Tourism.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	Strategic Housing Land Availability Study
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	Full public & Stakeholder Consultation; Planning Committee
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Contact Officer : Alan Young Tel : 0151 934 3551 Alan.young@planning.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	Full public & Stakeholder Consultation; Planning Committee
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Contact Officer : Alan Young Tel : 0151 934 3551 E-Mail: Alan.young@planning.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	Sefton Employment Land and Premises Study
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	[The draft study will be subject to a public and stakeholder consultation before being finalised.]
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Final Study Report Contact Officer : Alan Young Tel : 0151 934 3551 E-Mail: Alan.young@planning.sefton.gov.uk

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KEY DECISION:	Award Of Tender For Construction Of Litherland High School – One School Pathfinder Project
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member, Children’s services Finance and Legal Directors
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, P. Dowd and Mrs. Parry
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report on the tender submission and evaluation.

KEY DECISION:	Crosby Coastal Park Master Plan and Phase 1 works
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	Public and Stakeholder consultation, Crosby Area Committee.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillor Lord Fearn, Cabinet Member Leisure and Tourism, Liberal Democrat Party, c/o Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. E-mail: libdems@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2252, Fax: 0151 934 2251
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Leisure Director Contact – Phil Esseen, Head of Landscape Development and Management Phil.esseen@leisure.sefton.gov.uk Tel 0151 934 2392

Agenda Item 5

Key Decision	To seek approval to Making a Compulsory Purchase Order and the purchase of new rights pursuant to Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, of part of the land and interests known as Bedford Road/Queens Road Phase 3 in the Queens Road area of Bootle.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed Consultations	Cabinet Member Regeneration
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Supplementary Planning Guidance: South Sefton Housing Market Renewal: Bedford Road and Queens Road, July 2004. Supplementary Planning Document: South Sefton Housing Market Renewal: Bedford Road and Queens Road: Development Brief: November 2004. Report of the Housing Market Renewal Director Contact Officer: Tom Clay, HMRI Programme Manager; tel: 0151 934 4849; e-mail: tom.clay@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

Key Decision	To seek approval to Making a Compulsory Purchase Order and the purchase of new rights pursuant to Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, of land and interests known as Klondyke Phase 1B in the Klondyke and Hawthorne Road area of Bootle.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed Consultations	Cabinet Member Regeneration
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Supplementary Planning Guidance: South Sefton Housing Market Renewal: Klondyke and Canal Corridor, July 2004. Supplementary Planning Document: South Sefton Housing Market Renewal: Klondyke and Canal Corridor: Development Brief: November 2004. Report of the Housing Market Renewal Director Contact Officer: Tom Clay, HMRI Programme Manager; tel: 0151 934 4849; e-mail: tom.clay@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

Key Decision	To seek approval to tenders for the demolition of vacant residential property forming part of the Queens Road and Bedford Road redevelopment area Phase 3, Hawthorne Road, Bootle.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed Consultations	Cabinet Member Regeneration
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Housing Market Renewal Director Contact Officer: Tom Clay, HMRI Programme Manager; tel: 0151 934 4849; e-mail: tom.clay@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

Key Decision	To seek approval to enter into a funding agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for grant funding for the remediation of contaminated land for residential purposes at the Tannery site, Hawthorne Road, Bootle.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed Consultations	Cabinet Member Regeneration
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Housing Market Renewal Director Contact Officer: Tom Clay, HMRI Programme Manager; tel: 0151 934 4849; e-mail: tom.clay@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

Key Decision	To seek approval to tenders for the remediation of contaminated land for residential purposes at the Tannery and Penpoll sites, Hawthorne Road, Bootle.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed Consultations	Cabinet Member Regeneration
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Report of the Housing Market Renewal Director Contact Officer: Tom Clay, HMRI Programme Manager; tel: 0151 934 4849; e-mail: tom.clay@hmr.sefton.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

KEY DECISION:	To seek approval to a new Private Sector Housing Strategy for the Borough, which will form a sub-strategy to the new Borough Housing Strategy.
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member – Regeneration & Cabinet Member – Health & Social Care. The Borough Housing Partnership. Healthy Communities and Older People Thematic Group.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at the end of the Plan.</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Joint report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care and Director of Housing Market Renewal. Contact Officers; Neil Davies, HMR Strategy Manager, tel 0151 934 4837, neil.davies@hmr.sefton.gov.uk Jim Ohren, Housing Strategy principal manager, tel 0151 934 3619. Jim.Ohren@housing.sefton.gov.uk

KEY DECISION:	Sefton's Home Improvement Assistance Grants/Loans Policy
Decision Taker	Cabinet
Expected Date of Decision	June/July 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care. Cabinet Member – Regeneration.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. <i>See contact details at end of the Plan</i>
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Joint Report of the Strategic Director of Health and Social Care, Housing Market Renewal Director and Environmental Protection Director. Contact Officer: Jim Ohren, Principal Manager. Tel: 0151 934 3619 E Mail: jim.ohren@hsc.sefton.gov.uk

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KEY DECISION:	To report on Targeted Capital Funding for School kitchens and to seek approval for the proposals.
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009 11 June 2009
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services Schools Forum (January 2009)
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Further Capital Schemes to be Funded from the Basic Need Capital Allocation 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Schemes to be Funded from the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant: Quality and Access 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Further Capital Schemes to be Funded from the Extended Schools Capital Allocation 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Capital Schemes to be Funded from the Fair Play Playbuilder Capital Allocation 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Leisure & Tourism. Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	17 June 2009 23 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Capital Schemes at the North and South City Learning Centres to be Funded from the Excellence in Cities Capital Allocation 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Report on Sefton's Revised 'Readiness to Deliver' Document to be Submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families for Early Entry into the BSF Programme
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	2 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	To Seek Approval for Capital Schemes to be Funded from the Youth Capital Fund 2009/10
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services. Cabinet.
Expected Date of Decision	23 June 2009. 9 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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KEY DECISION:	Determination of the Proposal for the Closure of Thornton Primary School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	Determination of the Proposal for the Change of SEN Designation at Presfield Special School
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

KEY DECISION:	Determination of the Proposals for the Change of SEN Designation at Rimrose Hope CE and Waterloo Primary Schools
Decision Taker	Cabinet Member, Children's Services.
Expected Date of Decision	14 July 2009.
Proposed consultation	Cabinet Member Children's Services.
How to make Representations to the Decision Taker	Councillors Robertson, Dowd and Mrs Parry. See contact details at the end of the Plan.
Documents to be considered by Decision Taker	Not applicable. Contact: Christine Dalziel School Organisation and Capital Programme Manager chris.dalziel@cs.sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3337

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Contact Details - How To Make Representations To Decision Taker

Political Leadership

Councillor Robertson, Leader, Liberal Democrat Party and Leader of the Council, c/o Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1DA

E-mail: libdems@sefton.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 934 2252. Fax: 0151 934 2251

Councillor P. Dowd, Leader, Labour Party, c/o Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE

E-mail: peter.dowd@sefton.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 934 3361. Fax: 0151 934 3459

Councillor Parry, Leader, Conservative Party, c/o Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport PR8 1DA

E-mail: conservatives@sefton.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 934 2061. Fax: 0151 934 2060

NOTE Additional contact details are also enclosed within the body of the document.

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Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services)

Date of Meeting: 28th April 2009

Title of Report: Children's Social Care

Report of: Bryn Marsh

Contact Officer: Margaret Loughlin
(Telephone No.) 0151 934 3161

This report contains	Yes	No
CONFIDENTIAL Information/		√
EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph (s) of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972. (If information is marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public)		√
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?		√

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information on an incident in 2005 which resulted in the death of a child
2. To refer to this Committee the report to Children's Services Cabinet Member on Children's Social Care, 20th January 2009, which will be considered in Part B of the agenda for this meeting following the exclusion of the press and public

Recommendation(s)

The following reports are noted:

1. Serious Case Review (TWC)
2. Cabinet Member Report, 20th January 2009, Children's Social Care

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Corporate Objective Monitoring

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1.	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2.	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3.	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4.	Improving Health and Well-Being		√	
5.	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6.	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7.	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		√	
8.	Children and Young People	√		

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications of this report.

	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Links to ensuring integration

This reports refers to the most vulnerable children and young people in Sefton. Services that ensure their safety will also contribute to their integration within the community and potential to achieve positive outcomes. These services are increasingly delivered in partnership with other organisations including health and the police as well as across departments within Children's Services though the common assessment framework process.

Impact upon Children's Services targets and priorities

Safeguarding children and young people is a high priority for Children's Services, the Children's Trust

Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

None

List of background papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report

None

SEFTON M.B.C.

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Background

1. Child TWC

At the meeting of 27th January 2009, members of Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services) requested information on an incident in 2005, which resulted in the death of a child. In these circumstances the Local Safeguarding Children's Board is required to conduct a Serious Case Review, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1.

Members will be aware that Serious Case Reviews are assessed by Ofsted, this report has been judged 'adequate' overall

2. Children's Social Care

A report was submitted to Children's Services Cabinet Member on 20th January 2009 to provide an update on Children's Social Care and the proposed service improvement plan. Significant service improvement is required in Children's Social Care to secure the statutory duties of the Council in terms of safeguarding and associated social care issues. The report included a recommendation that it should be referred to Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services) for review. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 2.

The report sets out a number of performance issues in Children's Social Care and the steps that are underway to manage performance and deliver statutory requirements.



Serious Case Review

Executive Summary Report into
circumstances surrounding the death
of Child A
age 3 months

Approved by the Strategic Board on 7 May 2008

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Every local authority area in England and Wales has a Local Safeguarding Children Board which consists of senior representatives from all agencies responsible for safeguarding children. Statutory membership consists of the Local Authority, District Councils, the Police, Health Services, the Probation Service, Connexions, the Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, and any secure training centre or prison in the local area. Other relevant organisations can also be invited to join the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Details of the membership in Sefton can be found elsewhere on the web site.

The various duties of the board are contained in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" published by Her Majesty's Government. One of those duties is to undertake a Serious Case Review whenever a child dies or has sustained a potentially life threatening injury through abuse or neglect. The purpose of this Review is to establish how well local agencies worked together and whether there are lessons to be learned for the future.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to publish an Executive Summary in respect of any Serious Case Review undertaken, so that information on the review process and its findings, together with any recommendations for improvements and actions that need to be taken, can be made public.

The Serious Case Review which was written following the tragic death of Child A was undertaken by an experienced professional who was independent of Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board. His recommendations have formed the basis of a detailed action plan which all relevant agencies are now following.

The attached Executive Summary is an anonymised version of the full Report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is a brief and anonymised summary of a fuller report commissioned by Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 1.2 Reports of this nature are required and shaped by the statutory guidelines contained in a Government Document entitled 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (available from The Stationery Office – www.tsoshop.co.uk).
- 1.3 Working Together sets out expectations of organisations and individuals who have particular responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 1.4 Chapter 8 of these guidelines is headed 'Serious Case Reviews' and sets out the circumstances when a child's death should prompt a review of the involvement of organisations and professionals with the child and family, in order to consider whether there are any lessons to be learnt.
- 1.5 Serious Case Reviews are not inquiries into how a child dies or who is culpable. That is a matter for Coroners and criminal courts to determine as appropriate.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The midwife for the mother of Child A first identified concerns in the early stages of pregnancy. She was aware of mother's longstanding drug misuse and her reluctance to seek support. The midwife was aware also of mother's partner, the child's father, using drugs and also reported that mother had an older child by a previous relationship.
- 2.2 The midwife reported her concerns to children's social services and requested a 'pre-birth assessment'. An assessment was completed and determined that continued support could be offered by health and drug services. Checks confirmed that the couple were also known to the Probation Service and had a lengthy history of drug related criminal convictions.
- 2.3 When Child A was born prematurely she was experiencing withdrawal symptoms as a result of her mother's substance misuse in pregnancy (neonatal abstinence syndrome) and was supported initially on the 'highest level of morphine'. She remained with mother on the maternity ward for approximately 2 weeks, during which time ward staff noted and reported 6 occasions when mother 'fell asleep' whilst feeding or holding the baby.
- 2.4 These events prompted further referrals and assessments by children's social services who responded and concluded that there were no child protection concerns. The family returned home to a one bedroomed

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flat, where they were later joined by mother's teenage daughter by her previous relationship.

- 2.5 A number of further referrals followed, from various sources, relating to incidents with this older daughter, and also problems registering the family with a G.P. All referrals prompted quick contact and further assessments by social workers, but no child protection procedures were used or formal multi-agency meetings held. Child A was reported as progressing well, apart from low weight.
- 2.6 On the day/night of her death Child A had been placed to sleep for the night on one end of a small sofa that she was sharing with her mother; the child was pale and still when mother woke early the following morning. Emergency services were quickly summoned but the child was pronounced 'dead on arrival' at hospital.
- 2.7 The Coroner reported an 'open verdict'. He described a child slightly below weight but well nourished and well cared for. There was no evidence of injury or any toxic substance in her system.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding this presentation, the Coroner had been alerted to previous concerns about the parents' history of drug misuse, including their use of drugs during the day and evening before A's death. Considering this, and the circumstances in which the child died, the possibility of 'accidental overlay' through neglect was considered and a police investigation was requested.
- 2.9 At the conclusion of the police investigation papers were prepared for the Crown Prosecution Service which subsequently decided there were no criminal charges to answer.

3.0 THE PROCESS

- 3.1 Following notification of A's death a meeting of all relevant organisations was arranged to brief the organisations and to consider any immediate issues of family support and to also consider the care and safety of other children in the family.
- 3.2 A Serious Case Review Panel was convened a week later and met on several subsequent occasions; the Panel decided in January 2006 that the circumstances of A's death met requirements for a full review, but, at the request of the police, agreed to delay the Review until the criminal investigation had been completed and the Crown Prosecution Service had considered its findings.
- 3.3 When the outcome had been confirmed in December 2006, each agency was then asked to complete a review of its involvement and identify any key issues or lessons to emerge. Those completed reviews were considered by the Panel in July 2007 and in August an independent overview writer was appointed to draw together the information and to make recommendations.

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- 3.4 Unfortunately, the independent overview writer subsequently withdrew because of conflicting work commitments. The independent overview writer for this Report and summary was approached in October 2007; an interim report was shared with Panel in December 2007 and a target date agreed for the final report to be prepared by February 2008.

4.0 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The review has acknowledged areas of good practice, not least the early recognition of concerns and the appropriate health requests for assessment and support. All referrals to Children's Services were allocated promptly; the family was seen quickly and, for the most part, assessments were concluded within agreed timescales.
- 4.2 Joint visits took place when requested and a number of support services responded promptly and positively to the requests emerging from assessments.
- 4.3 Communication within and between agencies was, at best, mixed. Checks on previous parenting were not completed, resulting in a 'pre-birth assessment' that was not fully informed and probably relied too much on unchecked information and assurances from parents.
- 4.4 Subsequent concerns and referrals prompted repeated 'initial assessments'. However, no consideration was given to the completion of a fuller 'core assessment' and no thought was given to a 'multi-agency meeting' of some sort to ensure that all background information was fully collated and considered. As a result, the assessments that were completed provided only a 'patchy picture' of events surrounding specific reported incidents, rather than a fuller and more considered view of parental capacity and prospects short term and long term for Child A. Previous parenting of the older half sibling could have been collected and considered at such a meeting and would have been a very important indicator in the assessment of Child A's likely parenting
- 4.5 In addition to these shortfalls in assessment, the completed management reviews suggested a confused picture about the levels and significance of the parents' drug use. Several entries suggested their use was 'low' and/or 'managed'. Yet baby 'A' was born with significant levels of withdrawal, mother 'fell asleep' with baby on numerous occasions on the ward and the couple had already accumulated more than 150 drug related convictions. Their parental history with A's half-sibling had already highlighted concerns and problems relating to drug use.
- 4.6 In short, the assessments were poorly informed; they relied on optimistic accounts from parents and did not focus on the very particular needs of a dependent infant. Whilst a fuller assessment and the use of a multi-agency meeting might not have changed the course of events, they almost certainly would have provided a more informed and more robust platform for the planning, support, supervision and safeguards that would have followed.

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5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 As a result of the review findings completed in this specific case:-

- All agencies are to be reminded of the importance of good communication and the prompt sharing of key information to assist the assessments of risk
- Sefton Children's Services has specifically been asked to review its assessment practice and training, to emphasise the importance of collecting all key information, particularly past parenting, and conducting assessments as a continuous and cumulative process
- Sefton Children's Services has also been asked to review guidance and training that would inform the decisions of practitioners and managers in relation to multi-agency meetings where the nature and/or volume of information can be collated and evaluated more effectively.
- All agencies have been alerted to the importance of good record keeping and the health review, mindful of families with frequent moves, has addressed issues of cross boundary registrations with GP's and Health Visitors as well as better guidance on the effective use of prescribed drugs for new mother's still using illicit drugs
- The Sefton Safeguarding Children Board has also been asked to review current guidelines on the impact of parental drug misuse and safeguards. Specifically they are asked to consider if criteria could be established to routinely trigger multi-agency meetings and/or core assessments where very young children are involved, alongside significant levels and histories of drug misuse.
- The Sefton Safeguarding Children Board has also been asked to reinforce and support the role played by Serious Case Review Panels to avoid changes in membership and unnecessary delays.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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