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Date: 4 September 2013
Our Ref:
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Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

I refer to the agenda for the above meeting and now enclose the following report(s) which were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No.	Item
6 c)	Council Tax and Business Rates Collection (Pages 83 - 92) Report of the Head of Corporate Finance and ICT
7.	Strategic Asset Management Plan (Pages 93 - 96) Report of the Director of Built Environment
8.	Equalities Review Update (Pages 97 - 100) Report of the Director of Corporate Services
9.	Cabinet Member Reports (Pages 101 - 108) A revised Update Report of the Cabinet Member – Communities and Environment is attached. Additional information is contained in the report relating to the Youth Offending Team.

Yours sincerely,

G. BAYLISS

Director of Corporate Services

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Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services)

Date of Meeting: 10 September 2014

Subject: Council Tax and Business Rates Collection

Report of: Margaret Rawding

Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

NoExempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates for 2013/14. Also included is an update on the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Recommendation(s)

Overview and Scrutiny are recommended to note :-

- 1) The financial position on the collection of Council Tax for 2013/14, as at the end of July 2013;
- 2) The forecast financial position of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2013/14;
- 3) The financial position on the collection of Business Rates as at the end of July 2013.

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How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

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

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Government changes to the Council Tax and Business Rates Schemes in 2013/14, mean that there is a greater financial risk to the Authority should income levels reduce, and financial targets not achieved. Consequently, it is important that Members are kept informed of the financial position for the Authority, on these issues throughout the year.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Should the Authority not collect income from Council Tax and Business Rates in line with the 2013/14 Budget, this will result in a shortfall, which will need to be recovered in the Collection Fund for 2014/15

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal - None	
Human Resources - None	
Equality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1. No Equality Implication	
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD 2538.) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1843.) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No. The Council is currently following the agreed recovery procedures to collect the income due.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet

Contact Officer: Margaret Rawding

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Email: margaret.rawding@sefton.gov.uk

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) introduced in April 2013 requires working age residents to pay an increased amount of Council tax, and in many cases an amount payable for the first time, where they had previously been entitled to the full amount to be met from Council Tax Benefit. The Council, from April 2013, bears the full financial impact of changes in the number and the value of Council Tax reductions which residents can apply for.
- 1.2. This report gives the overview of the collection rates for 2013/14 as at the end of July 2013. Where any updated figures are available for the year to 31st August these will be presented to the Committee as a verbal update.
- 1.3. In summary the Council is achieving a level of collection which is slightly below that of 2012/13 is forecast to achieve an outturn of around 96.4%. The cash value collected is greater than 2012/13 because of the replacement of Council Tax Benefit of which approximately 205 is now paid by working age households. There was a requirement to protect pensioners under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which means that those attracting full benefit continue to pay no Council Tax contribution.
- 1.4. In addition to information on Council Tax, this report also gives an update on the collection of Business Rates. This income to the Council is a key financial risk and early indications show that the Council may not achieve its budgeted level of Business Rates due to the revaluation of some properties since April 2013 and also the level of doubtful debt on some liabilities. The Council, from April 2013 bears 49% of the loss of Business Rate receipts, the remainder being funded by Government.

2) CTRS Forecast Financial Position

- 2.1. The net budget position for the CTRS reflected in the budget monitoring statement is shown in the table below:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (July 2013)	<u>Note</u>	Budget £m	Actual £m	Variation £m
Council Tax Benefit Payments 2012/13		27.6	27.2	-0.4
Caseload Growth in 2013/14		0.4	-0.3	-0.7
Scheme Savings		-3.1	-3.3	-0.2
Impact of Band D increase 2013/14		0.1	0.1	0.0
Cost of CTRS Discounts		25.0	23.7	-1.3

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<u>Adjustments</u>				
Provision for Bad Debts	(a)	0.8	1.2	0.4
Forecast Growth	(b)	n/a	0.3	0.3
Net Position: Surplus (-) / Deficit (+)		25.8	25.2	-0.6

Notes

- (a) The council tax base calculation assumed £0.8m (25%) of CTRS bills would not be recoverable. However, the provision included in the budget monitoring statement has been increased to £1.2m (36%) based on the level non-payment on CTRS accounts at the end of July. **This is for monitoring purposes only – the Council will continue to follow its recovery procedures for all income due to the Council. The Committee should note that overall Council Tax payment levels remain within the top quartile for all Metropolitan Authorities with less than 3% not being collected in year.**
- (b) The council tax base calculation assumed growth of £400k in the level of CTRS discounts during 2013/14. This is being unwound at a rate of £35k per month.

3. Council Tax Collection 2013/14.

- 3.1. The amount to be collected has increased with the introduction of the new CTRS scheme. A comparison of the debt collection position is shown below:-

2012				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Liability</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>%</u>
31.03.2012	115,070,139	843,457	114,226,681	0.73
30.04.2012	115,188,708	12,817,985	102,370,722	11.13
31.05.2012	114,872,958	23,585,105	91,287,852	20.53
29.06.2012	114,844,165	34,389,247	80,494,918	29.94
31.07.2012	114,585,445	45,109,211	69,476,234	39.37
2013				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Liability</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>%</u>
31.03.2013	120,264,751	1,063,584	119,201,166	0.88
30.04.2013	120,581,747	12,960,099	107,621,648	10.75
31.05.2013	120,556,647	23,931,857	96,624,790	19.85
28.06.2013	120,435,179	34,926,522	85,628,873	29.00
31.07.2013	120,414,725	46,138,993	74,275,732	38.32

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4. Collection Against Working Age CTRS Cases

	<u>Passported</u>	<u>Non-Passported</u>	<u>Total</u>
Liability Raised	£1,977,002	£3,154,816	£5,131,818
Amount Paid	£469,402	£849,815	£1,319,217
Percentage Collected	23.74%	26.94%	25.71%

5) Council Tax Reduction Scheme Discounts

Value of CTRS Discounts at 31 July 2013	£23,707,159
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6) CTB / CTRS Caseload Comparison

Year		Pensioners	Working Age	Total
2011/12	CTB	15,823	17,321	33,144
2012/13 (Nov 2012)	CTB	15,566	17,757	33,323
2013/14 (12.08.13)	CTRS	15,047	16,744	31,791

Caseload figures are now being taken from Northgate CTR304 Report. The reduction in the number cases reported this month is largely due to the fact that zero assessed cases have now been stripped out.

7) Summary of Working Age Claimants at 31.07.2013

Number of affected cases	17,657
Paying by direct debit - total	3,429
Paying by direct debit over 12 months	1,040
Paying by cash/cheque over 12 months	1,393
Instalments not yet due (includes some direct debit accounts)	983
Accounts with payments made since annual bills issued	11,659
Accounts with instalments overdue and no payments made	5,015

8) Exceptional Hardship Fund

- 8.1. The following table shows the amount of expenditure committed against the budget at the end of July. A further update will be presented to the Committee when the August figures are available.

Budget	£143,000
Total paid/committed	£55,937
Unallocated	£87,063

9) Council tax Arrears

The level of Council tax arrears and the number of cases is shown below. This should be seen in the context of current annual billing is for £118m and therefore arrears of £3m is less than 3% of the total.

Council Tax Arrears by Year

Year	01.04.2013	01.08.13	Cases O/S
1997/98	£ 3,776.52	£ 3,879.18	10
1998/99	£ 5,661.15	£ 5,198.22	19
1999/00	£ 13,533.99	£ 11,998.06	47
2000/01	£ 24,627.70	£ 23,767.95	87
2001/02	£ 56,926.36	£ 53,383.71	184
2002/03	£ 123,575.53	£ 116,869.02	376
2003/04	£ 183,134.60	£ 177,731.24	571
2004/05	£ 282,841.39	£ 273,145.54	768
2005/06	£ 414,600.15	£ 399,954.67	1048
2006/07	£ 586,789.34	£ 565,400.80	1463
2007/08	£ 841,328.74	£ 806,530.02	1966
2008/09	£ 1,084,880.27	£ 1,042,118.17	2422
2009/10	£ 1,272,856.56	£ 1,219,488.87	3092
2010/11	£ 1,582,925.16	£ 1,497,385.35	4333
2011/12	£ 2,191,050.42	£ 2,007,833.73	5892
2012/13	£ 3,785,149.97	£ 3,215,632.84	10986
	£ 12,453,657.85	£ 11,420,317.37	33264

10. Budget Monitoring Update: Business Rates 2013/14

10.1. In summary the income from Business Rates to the Council is below the budget level by £1.235m. The following tables provide an analysis of the variations. The Table 2 shows that whilst the number of Business rates properties in the Borough has increased the overall tax base has reduced because of the number of appeals being successful in reducing the rateable value.

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MONTH: JULY 2013

TABLE 1: Business Rates Income (Based on NNDR Relief Tracker)	(a) Budget NNDR1	(b) Forecast (01/08/13)	(c) Variation ‘= b - a
<u>Current Year</u>	£000	£000	£000
Gross Charge	-83,811	-83,523	288
Mandatory Relief: Small Business	4,781	5,139	358
Mandatory Relief: Charities	4,254	4,384	130
Mandatory Relief: Empty Premises	3,878	4,328	450
Mandatory Relief: Sports & Rural	34	39	5
Discretionary Reliefs	283	287	4
	-70,581	-69,346	1,235
<u>Previous Year Adjustments (Note 2)</u>			
Gross Rates Payable	n/a	1,405	1,405
Reliefs	n/a	-755	-755
	n/a	650	650
<u>Provisions & Allowances</u>			
Bad Debt Provision	1,143	1,143	0
Cost of Collection Allowance	322	322	0
Cost of Appeals Provision (Note 1)	3,571	2,921	-650
	5,036	4,386	-650
Net Rate Yield (Note 1)	-65,545	-64,310	1,235

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- 10.2. Cost of Appeals Provision (Table 1): At the end of March 2013 the rateable value of properties subject to appeal was £53.217m. As part of the accounts closure process an exercise was undertaken to estimate the size of provision that would be required. See calculation below:

A. Rateable Value of properties subject to appeal	£53,218,000
B. Weighted RV based on the effective date of the appeal	£169,960,000
C. Estimated reduction in RV on appeal	4.25%
D. Standard Multiplier for 2012/13	45.8p
E. Cost of Appeals Provision Required @ 1 April 2013 (= A x B x C x D)	£3,308,000

- 10.3. The provision required at 1 April 2013 is higher than the amount currently available to be set-aside. The short-fall will result in either an increase in the Collection Fund Deficit or will need to be made up in future years. The DCLG have indicated that local authorities will be allowed to spread the cost of making refunds in respect of years prior to 1 April 2013 over the five years 2013/14 to 2018/19, instead of being accounted for in their entirety in 2013/14 (Business Rates Information Letter 1/2013).

- 10.4. The NNDR1 forecast is based on the Rateable Value of businesses at 30 September 2012. The change in rateable value recorded on the Valuation Office Agency List since that date is shown in Table2.

TABLE 2 : Change in Rateable Value on VOA List	Properties	£	%
30 September 2012 (NNDR1 Line 2)	7,539	180,255,141	100
Amendments (Including appeals)	251	-1,830,640	-1.02
Net Additions / Deletions	89	-652,340	-0.36
Net Change	89	-2,482,980	-1.38
31 July 2013	7,628	177,772,161	98.62

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10.5. NNDR Collection (Table 3): This table provides a comparison of monthly NNDR collection rates between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

TABLE 3: NNDR Collection				
2012				
Date	Liability	Credits	Balance	%
31.03.2012	71,750,743	264,362	71,486,381	0.37
30.04.2012	71,526,314	12,974,268	58,552,046	18.14
31.05.2012	71,231,405	19,856,962	51,374,443	27.88
29.06.2012	71,273,072	25,747,379	45,525,693	36.12
31.07.2012	71,024,685	31,529,745	39,494,940	44.39
2013				
Date	Liability	Credits	Balance	%
31.03.2013	71,007,249	1,160,348	69,846,901	1.63
30.04.2013	70,218,631	12,812,611	57,406,020	18.25
31.05.2013	69,667,467	20,566,816	49,100,651	29.52
28.06.2013	69,716,959	26,126,639	43,590,320	37.48
31.07.2013	69,676,040	31,845,912	37,830,128	45.71

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Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date of Meeting:** 10 September 2013
(Performance and Corporate Services)

Subject: Asset Management Plan and Property Asset Disposal Policy/Criteria

Report of: The Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Exempt/Confidential Purpose No

To provide an update report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress towards the development of a new asset management plan including the asset disposal policy/criteria

Recommendation

That the report be received

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

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

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee members as to progress towards the adoption of the new asset management plan including asset disposal policy/criteria.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

N/A

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Implications: N/A

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal – None	
Human Resources - None	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery: N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD/ 2531) has been consulted and has no comments on the report

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD/ 1836) has been consulted and has no comments on the report

Are there any other options available for consideration?

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting

Contact Officer: David Street (Asset and Property Manager)

Tel: 0151 934 2751

Email: David.Street1@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is established best practise that the Council has an asset management plan that sets out a framework by which its valuable property assets can be managed. The previous asset management plan whilst still serviceable requires to be updated and this process of updating and redrafting is ongoing.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the Council has recently adopted a new Capital Strategy and the intention is that the new asset management plan will complement and support this strategy. As such it will act as an “umbrella document” under which a suite of relevant strategy and policy documents will sit. These other key documents, still in draft format, will include;
- The Accommodation Strategy
 - The Asset Disposal Policy
 - The Community Asset Transfer Policy

2.0 Present Position

- 2.1 The new asset management plan is at an advanced stage of drafting and is expected to be submitted to the Strategic Capital Investment Group (SCIG) for comment and review at its scheduled meeting on 16th September. Once the plan has the approval of SCIG it will be reported to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.2 The ancillary strategy and policy documents are in an advanced stage of drafting, but have yet to be subject to officer comment and review in advance of reporting to SCIG.
- 2.3 It is the proposed Asset Disposal Policy that will contain the detailed exposition in terms of how assets will be selected for disposal and which method of disposal will be selected. However for the purpose of this report the following key criteria will be put forward for consideration;
- Operational Assets (sites or facilities) will usually only be disposed if the Council operation has ceased and there is no other council service in need of the site.
 - Non-operational Assets (those held for redevelopment or income potential) will be retained or disposed, either singularly or as a package following a review of their performance as financial assets and their strategic importance in delivering key Council objectives.
 - Disposals will occasionally be triggered by specific requests from interested parties, typically tenants of freehold properties.
 - There will be presumption that the Council will not retain or hold property assets unless there is a compelling reason, e.g. operational necessity, strong financial performance or strategic importance.

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It should be noted that it is intended that Members (Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members) will decide which operational and non-operational assets are released for disposal and ultimately continue to make the decision to sell on the reported terms.

- 2.4 When a decision has been made to dispose, the Council will adopt the most appropriate method to dispose of a particular asset or portfolio of similar assets. The intention will be to secure best value for the Council by way of financial return or other valuable outputs compatible with the Council's established priorities and operational objectives. This may include utilising sites as a Council contribution to a partnership approach such as an asset backed vehicle.
- 2.5 Where appropriate the Council will secure a planning brief or outline planning consent prior to marketing and then seek to ensure that the chosen disposal method enables a sufficient degree of control to be retained in the case of disposals of buildings in need of refurbishment or sites to be redeveloped.

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Report to: Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Corporate Services) **Date of Meeting:** 10 September 2013

Subject: Equalities Review Update

Report of: Director of Corporate Services

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan?
No

Exempt/Confidential

No

Purpose/Summary

To provide an update on the recommendations in the Equalities Review Report presented to Cabinet in June 2010

Recommendation(s)

1. That the update be received

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

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

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed on the actions taken from the Equalities Report

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

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None

Legal	
Human Resources	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

Impact is to ensure that Equalities considerations are embedded within service delivery

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT (FD 2530/2013) has been consulted and notes the report does not indicate any direct financial implications

Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1835) have been consulted and has no comments on the report

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following Committee meeting

Contact Officer: Steph Prewett

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Email: steph.prewett@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Corporate Services) May 2010
<http://sb1msmgov1:9070/documents/s9814/Equalities%20Cov%20Report.pdf>

Paper to Cabinet June 2010

<http://sb1msmgov1:9070/documents/s9932/Equalities%20Cov%20Report%20cabinet.pdf>

1. Introduction / Background

- 1.1 Further to resolution at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) at its meeting on 24 June 2008 a Working Group was established to undertake an Equalities Review

1.2 The final report and recommendations from the Working Group were reported to Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Corporate Services) in May 2010 and recommendations approved by Cabinet in June 2010

1.3 This report updates on the implementation of the recommendations

2. Implementation on Recommendations from Final Report of Equalities Working Group

2.1 Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Corporate Services) and Cabinet agreed the following recommendations from the Working Group and the following information details progress to date in terms of implementation

2.2 Recommendation 1: the Sefton Equalities Partnership be commended for its achievements to date in progressing the Equality Framework for Local Government. Commendations were passed to partners represented on the partnership

2.3 Recommendation 2: the Strategic/Service Directors be recommended to:

- (i) develop the mainstreaming of equality and diversity into the core business of departments; and
- (ii) develop a more consistent approach to training in the application of Impact Assessments across all Council departments.

2.3.1 (i) Continues to progress via commitment from Service Directors, Heads of Service, Departmental Champions and Corporate Equalities Group. All departments aware that equalities is part of core business and that due regard has to be paid to the Public Sector Equality when developing policies, changing services or taking decisions.

Specialist help was made available to departments to advise on process to further embed understanding within departments, but not to undertake the exercise as this would have undermined the commitment to mainstreaming of equality and diversity.

Training has been, and continues to be made available, to all staff around equalities and diversity to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities.

Intention is also to ensure that equalities is embedded within all service plans to maintain focus upon equalities as core business

2.3.2 (ii) Training is available to all staff to consider the importance of consultation when considering equality impact assessment. A more embedded approach to assessing equality impacts has been adopted by the Council to ensure that completing an EIA is not seen as a stand alone process and that equalities considerations are made at every stage and records are kept accordingly. This approach minimises bureaucracy but also ensures that the Public Sector Equalities Duty is given due regard throughout the process of policy making, service development and service delivery.

In order to progress understanding of this approach a workshop was delivered to key individuals across the Council to raise understanding of

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the Public Sector Equalities Duty and the importance of good record keeping to evidence equalities considerations

2.4 Recommendation 3: The Head of Procurement be recommended to amend the Procurement Equalities Questionnaire Form, as indicated in Appendix 10 to the report, in order to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and simplify procedures for small businesses of 5 employees or less, wishing to tender for work with the Council.

2.4.1 An equalities questionnaire is sent out with all Tenders that takes into account the recommendation in the report with regards small business of 5 employees or less (as detailed below)

Please provide a copy of your organisations Equal Opportunities Policy/Statement, and points 6.1 to 6.5 below indicate where in the document each element is evidenced.

		Yes / No	
6.1a	Are you a sole trader or organisation with less than 5 employees? If Yes see go to 6.1b, if no go to 6.2		
6.1b	If yes: Are you willing to sign up to Sefton's equality Principles and work in a fair and respectful manner		
6.2	Do you have a written equality policy		

2.5 Recommendation 4: the Assistant Chief Executive be recommended to consider the inclusion of an Equalities Impact Statement on the Council's Committee Report template and the Sefton Equalities Partnership be requested to give guidance on the suggested content of such statement. All Council Committee reports now have a section on Equalities Impact that must be completed

3 Recommendation

3.1 That the update be received

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Performance & Corporate Services)		
10th September 2013		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Cllr Hardy	Communities & Environment	July - September 2013

CORPORATE COMMISSIONING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATION

Strategic Partnerships

- **Operations Board**

The Operations Board has maintained its focus upon the key priorities:

- Considered impacts of Welfare Reform that have been implemented since April 2013. Under consideration was information on who was accessing foodbanks; impact on agencies such as CAB who are seeing increased demand and reducing volunteer hours due to pressure; increase in void properties and rent arrears for Housing Associations. Pieces of work arising from this session are to look at the possibility of identifying a Sefton Living Wage and how this could work; Council and Housing Associations working together around decision making
- The group shared successes around gun and gang crime in terms of the progress of MARGG and community reassurance activities
- Overarching Council priorities were shared with partners for comment and consideration about areas of shared priority
- The main focus for the Ops Board at its meeting in June was to consider community resilience and what this means for partners in Sefton. Further work to be undertaken on how to identify vulnerabilities within communities and what creates them in order to determine where resilience may need to be developed most
- Ops Board have engaged in the Health and Wellbeing Board peer challenge review and will undertake some joint action planning in August

- **Area Partnerships**

Area Partnership priorities have been identified as follows:-

Sefton East	Health focusing upon access to services and issues of obesity. The 'grow your own' priority is progressing in conjunction with the CCG.
	Anti social behaviour focusing on youth behaviour and youth disorder. An area wide mapping exercise of youth provision has been discussed with the intention of providing better links between providers.
Formby	Safety primarily low level ASB and looking at what is available for young people to engage them. Looking at how the youth bus can be used in the area to benefit the young people.
	Health and well being with a focus on the ageing population and issues around social isolation and support via VCF organisations in the area. It is possible that work ongoing in Church ward in respect of Older People may be used as a framework in Formby.
Crosby	Regeneration of local businesses. The Partnership has been updated on the position with regard to local businesses. A town team has been brought together with a view to overseeing a masterplan for Crosby village.
	Food and fuel poverty. Updates on the Crosby foodbank, looking at how the partnership can help in its development.

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Southport	Private Sector housing stock Jobs and Prosperity - looking at the retail and tourism industry as one. Health and Well being – reducing alcohol related admissions; reducing childhood obesity; and staying well in winter.
South Sefton	Welfare reform - the Partnership will be looking at the roll out of foodbanks in the area, identifying issues or problems that need to be considered. Gang and gun crime (including community safety ASB) – working to develop local approaches to tackling the issues, looking at prevention and exit.

- **Safer Communities Partnership**

- Focus of the last meeting was on Sefton’s provision with regards support for victims, looking at the approaches in relation to victims of ASB, Hate Crime and Domestic Violence. Issue of uncertainty of future resources for this type of work was raised as a key issue for the partnership and one to be raised with the PCC, as arrangements for commissioning (MoJ funding) local victims services on Merseyside will transfer to the Police and Crime Commissioner from 1st October 2014.
- MARGG has continued to meet and has demonstrated positive partnership working in responding to individuals involved or on the periphery of gun and gang crime
- Work is in progress on SIA, Partnership Plan and Domestic Violence strategy
- Continue to meet with colleagues across Merseyside and via Merseyside Community Safety Partnership

Neighbourhood Co-ordination

Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU)

The table below highlights performance figures of the Sefton Anti-Social Behaviour Unit as at June 2013.

ASB Incidents reported on HUB (Police, RSL’s, Elected Members etc)	29
ASB Incidents reported through Sefton Contact Centre (Victim self referrals)	42
Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Not obtained now due to cost implications)	0
Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	8
Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions	1
Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (A.B.C.’s)	9
Parental Control Agreements (P.C.A.’s)	4
Vulnerable Victims (Numbers per Vulnerable Victim, not case loads)	24

Neighbourhood Co-ordination activities have continued in the areas with recent involvement including:

- An event to celebrate Netherton’s Jubilee took place on 25 July at Marian Square, Marian Gardens and the Feelgood Factory. Activities included face painting, horse

riding, go-karts and the event was well attended. The event provided an opportunity to consult with residents about their priorities for the area from the L30's million.

- Community reassurance event undertaken with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, following a double fatality house fire in Southport. A neighbourhood risk assessment carried out in the area identified fly-tipping, obstructed rear alley gates and overloaded skips that have been actioned and formed part of a joint MFRS and Sefton Council action plan for the area. MFRS also carried out home fire safety checks.
- In Southport, four separate Street Games programmes arranged through Southport Operational Group and financed through Area Committee ward budgets. Sessions will run throughout the summer holidays at various parks across Southport.

Town Centres

Southport BID have appointed a Manager from the Private sector and a Council officer to support and work towards the "YES" vote.

£300k has been identified from the Capital Priorities Fund to be used for community resilience within Town and Village centres. Mapping of all shopping areas in the borough has taken place and now proposals are being drafted to support the areas in most need.

Already agreed are:-

- Support to Marian Square in Netherton with Lighting and security updates (£30k)
- Wi-Fi in Formby Town Centre (£15k)

Bootle held its second Market on 26 July. It was well attended and the traders commented that it was busier than the previous Christmas Market. Plans are now being made for an Autumn Market in October and another Christmas Market in December.

Crosby Town Team has started to access their Portas and HIF allocation. Contact has been made with Waterloo and Maghull Town Teams to discuss future plans.

- Waterloo TT is hoping to develop plans to encourage "Another Place" visitors into the shopping and leisure areas of the Town
- Maghull TT are opening a start up incubation space in a vacant shop in Central Square and are looking at developing an idea for a community Radio/TV station to promote businesses
- Crosby TT are working towards a master plan for the Village Centre and are holding events for businesses to share ideas and expertise.

Halloween and Bonfire Night Planning

Further meetings have taken place and will continue up to and including the bonfire period. MFRS have been given the target to reduce incidents by a further 10% this year. The following have been secured:- skips in hotspot areas using last year's data; a minimum of 16 skips provided during the four weeks before Bonfire Night; Street Cage Soccer arranged and funded for Marian Square, Litherland and Ford; Probation Service is providing a vehicle and team for a six week period to assist with removal of detritus - this will be in addition to the core cleansing service providing a team for 3 weeks.

Community Resilience

A series of key projects have been identified under the umbrella of community resilience to consider how we work with specific communities to develop resilience for example through promotion of what activities may be available locally, encouraging independence in travel and social engagement, and addressing potential issues of social isolation.

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Third sector partners are keen to work with the Council around delivering against key needs and priorities and work is to be undertaken to identify the best way to do this.

VCF Thematic Option

A draft framework has been developed to guide how the Council does business with the VCF sector. A piece of work is currently being undertaken to pull together all relevant information on what is being delivered by the VCF sector to better understand the full range of the Council's engagement with the sector and to begin to move forward in working with the sector to deliver against Sefton's priorities. The VCF sector are keen to work with the Council around some of the areas where services are changing and work is currently being done to identify the best ways of taking this forward and achieving it.

Domestic Violence (Vulnerable Victims Advocacy team)

MARAC Referrals

	Number of Referrals	Number of Repeats
April 2013	34	5
May 2013	67	11
June 2013	44	9

The current MARAC repeat rate is 31%

VVA Team Open Cases

As of **30.6.2013**, VVAT currently have 51 open cases.

VVA Team Tracking Cases

As of **30.6.2013**, VVAT currently have 76 tracking cases.

Sanctuary security assessments

Between April and June 2013, 6 Sanctuaries have been installed on behalf of the MARAC.

Equalities

Further to recent training, work is now underway to review the Equality Objectives and refresh them to reflect current circumstance. These will be consulted upon with both the Corporate Equalities Group and Sefton Equalities Partnership to ensure that they are fit for purpose. A simple equalities guide is to be produced to support departments to embed equalities within service plans and delivery and to ensure equality assessments are carried out and documented as required.

The Hate Crime MARAC continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss and agree actions relating to incidents of hate crime. Hate Crime awareness training developed by officers from the agencies attending the MARAC has commenced with two sessions delivered so far and more being booked for the autumn. There is a lot of demand from officers in the Council and other partner agencies for the training and it has been well received so far.

Merseyside Police 'Summer of Action' on hate crime reporting has commenced and this is being promoted with partners. The MARAC Coordinator is working with Sefton VCF groups regarding hate crime reporting, attending meetings of groups who are at risk of hate crime and advising about reporting and the role of MARAC.

Welfare reform – food banks and illegal money lending

Welfare Reform

The Council has created an internal officer group to look at how we mitigate the impacts of Welfare Reform. The officer group first met in June and has held a subsequent meeting in August. It was agreed that a sub-group of this group meet regularly to be a driver of the agreed action plan with the wider group meeting quarterly.

The benefit cap was introduced in Sefton in July. A group of officers and partners from Citizens Advice Sefton and Avarto have been examining ways of how to support those residents affected and how to support them going forward in terms of money management, debt and finding employment. It is expected that between 60 & 70 households will be affected by the benefit cap in Sefton, however, this will fluctuate with on-flow and off-flow claims.

The Council has recently agreed to support Citizens Advice Sefton further to improve capacity for Gateway assessments and to train more volunteers. Citizens Advice Sefton have recently advertised for these positions and are hopeful of recruiting speedily.

A further Welfare Reform Partner workshop will be held on Friday 27 September at Linacre Methodist Mission with a focus upon Digital Exclusion.

Foodbanks

- South Sefton Foodbank opened on Friday 10 May 2013 407 people have been fed. (273 Adults and 134 Children)
- Southport Foodbank opened on Friday 10 May 2013 180 people have been fed. (102 Adults and 78 Children)
- Crosby Area Foodbank opened on the 21 June 2013 18 people have been fed. (14 Adults and 4 Children)

Sefton East Foodbank is planned to open in September.

The National Tesco Foodbank collection took place on 5 and 6 July. All three Foodbanks collected in their local stores and nearly five and a half tonnes of food was collected. Tesco will add 30% to the total.

Illegal Money Lending

Meetings held with the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) have identified both victims and perpetrators of illegal money lending. Based on this information, co-ordinated awareness raising within the Birkdale area is planned with targeted leafleting and delivery of beer-mats advertising the IMLT's services to local public houses. A day of 'awareness raising' is to take place in August at Farnborough Road Children's Centre. A further Community Day is also planned for the October half term period.

Fulfilling lives: Ageing Better – Big Lottery Fund Bid

The Council submitted its Expression of Interest (EOI) by the deadline of 17 May. The Big Lottery have assessed all EOI's received and the Council was informed on 23 July that our Bid had been unsuccessful. Whereas our EOI had been assessed as being suitable for shortlisting, the Panel, who then considered all shortlisted EOI's, preferred others and as a result our Bid will not progress. The final 32 areas progressing to the next stage included some which had strong partnerships in place already and others where BLF wanted to encourage new learning.

Inspection Improvement Plan (Presentation of an update of the plan on the day of the meeting)

Review of progress against the improvement plan August/September 2013

Leadership & Governance – inspection recommendation 1

Review of Management Board: role, vision, membership and terms of reference revised.

Two year strategic plan to support improvement; Board provides sufficient governance to meet post inspection improvement priorities (1st year).

Evidence:

- New chair
- New membership to reflect appropriate senior staff who are proactive in effectively supporting, and holding the YOT to account
- New terms of reference
- Establishment of strategic sub-groups to steer improvements in YOT delivery, accountability and provide an outcome focus across Education, Training & Employment; Safeguarding & Health
- Induction for new members completed

There is a strategic response to the problems with the database – recommendation 2

Evidence

- Improvement plan in place to resolve problems with database
- Progress against timescales delayed

Data on appropriate local outcome measures, including health, education, training & employment and safeguarding, are received, scrutinised by the Management Board and used to improve services – recommendation 3

Evidence

- Management Board sub-groups to support recommendation 3
- Board members inducted (July) on YOT local & national performance measures
- Standard agenda item on Board to receive and scrutinise local performance against measures. SSCP to receive regular reports on practice and performance issues

Improvements are made to strategic and operational safeguarding practice to ensure to work with children & young people – recommendation 4

Evidence

- Revised terms of reference, safeguarding standard agenda item on YOT Board agenda's
- Safeguarding sub-group to provide strategic and operational support and challenge to YOT safeguarding practice
- Comprehensive training plan for YOT managers and front-line staff
- New operational 'working agreement' with Children's Social Care requires operationalising

Practice Assurance – recommendations 5-8

Evidence

- Training and coaching support re practice improvement managers and staff(1st quarter of 2013/14)

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- New quality assurance lead
- Cabinet report to support rationale for service re-structure allied to inspection improvement (recommendation 7, all those involved with a case work together in a way that makes sense to the young person parents/carers)
- Improvements in quality of assessments and plans linked to safeguarding & risk management
- Incremental improvement in management oversight based on 2nd quarter quality assurance findings

Partnership Commitment/Resources:

2013/14 Partner contributions confirmed.

External reductions; -£84k reduction in YJB grant (£52k of this reduction is contribution from Sefton CSP for 1 year, in real terms only a -£34k reduction for 2013/14)

10% reduction in LA contribution to YOT, Police have withdrawn £12k cash contribution, however have agreed to back-fill YOT police officer vacancy, Probation & Health have sustained 2012/13 funding and staffing levels.

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