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Town Hall
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To all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Date: 20 November 2024
Our Ref: PGF
Your Ref:

Please contact: Paul Fraser
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Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - MONDAY 25TH NOVEMBER, 2024

I refer to the agenda for the above meeting and now enclose the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No.	Item
5.	Recycling & Waste Containment (Pages 211 - 216) Report of the Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services
6.	Local Plan Policy – Provision of Community Recycling Facilities in Development Proposals (Pages 217 - 222) Report of the Chief Planning Officer
12.	Cabinet Member Reports - September 2024 to November 2024 (Pages 223 - 242) Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways Report

Yours sincerely,

Phil Porter

Chief Executive

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Report Title: Recycling & Waste Containment

Date of meeting:	25 th November 2024		
Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Skills)		
Report of:	Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services		
Portfolio:	Cleansing & Street Scene		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

To provide an update to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Skills) regarding the current Waste & Recycling Collection Service, waste containment, including project work underway.

To also outline impending national changes within the waste industry and the subsequent impact those changes will have upon the service within Sefton.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Note the content of the report
- (2) Note the national changes within the waste industry
- (3) Note the impact of national changes within Sefton

Agenda Item 5

1. Introduction

Sefton Council collect approx. 118,602 tonnes¹ of household waste from ca. 120,000 properties across the borough on an annual basis. This is a combined total from all waste streams. Approx 98,000 properties participate in the garden waste collection service delivered on a 3 weekly basis.

Sefton's 21/22 recycling rate was 33.2% and each household in Sefton generated 614.9 kgs of waste that year¹. In comparison to the rest of the LCR, Sefton ranked around mid-table but was significantly below the national average for recycling performance which is approx. 45%.

1 – Based on OfLOG published data, sourced from WasteDataFlow

2. Drivers for Change

There are now a range of drivers to change the way waste is collected both in Sefton and as part of a wider LCR approach – to improve performance and environmental impacts as well as driving down costs, as follows:

- **Environmental:** All LCR councils have declared climate emergencies, made a Net Zero Carbon by 2040 commitment, and as part of this have signed up to the LCR Zero Waste Strategic Framework.
- **Financial:** The cost of waste is rising and, without intervention, will increase further from 2028 through a new tax (the 'Emissions Trading Scheme' [UK Emissions Trading Scheme scope expansion: waste - GOV.UK](#) – based on a simpler principle to landfill tax in the 1990's). Housing growth will further exacerbate the costs and carbon impacts of waste, so improving Sefton's recycling rate and lowering the amount of waste generated per household will be key to mitigating against Sefton's increasing waste disposal costs.
- **Local:** Sefton has an ongoing need to standardise how waste services are delivered across the borough, to ensure collections are the same for all wherever possible. Approx 8,500 properties still receive a weekly sack collection service. Properties that receive this service are able to present unlimited residual waste (whereas a standard household collection of residual waste is contained within a 240ltr wheeled bin every 2 weeks), also, many of these properties do not present recycling.

The majority of premises receiving a sack collection are terraced properties with some storage limitations for wheelie bins at the front of the property and rear yards accessed via a shared entry. The industry norm nationwide is

often for rear entries to be utilised for bin storage (if infrastructure allows) with agreed presentation points for residents to adhere to.

3. Legislation

DEFRA have made mandatory changes to how food waste and recycling are to be collected by councils from April 2026 through their announcement of; [Simpler Recycling](#) in October 2023.

In summary, this means that all local authorities will need to provide a kerbside food waste collection on a weekly basis. Additionally, there is a requirement for local authorities to collect a wider range of recycle.

However, before this can happen across the LCR, Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority (MRWA) will facilitate a disposal process for any additional waste streams as they have responsibility for the operation of the waste transfer stations and household waste recycling centres across the region.

Local authorities are also being strongly encouraged to collect paper and cardboard separately (i.e. in a separate container from the brown bin). However, it is currently unclear whether this is the right approach for the LCR and on-going work is underway to ensure this option is costed in its entirety which includes the whole 'waste journey' from collection to disposal and the impact of the potential increased carbon footprint will be considered due to the deployment of additional collection vehicles if this method is adopted.

4. LCR Strategic Waste & Resources Partnership

To harness the benefits of working collectively, Sefton are one of 7 partners in the Liverpool City Region Waste & Resources Partnership, comprising the 6 LCR Local Authorities and MRWA.

The Partnership provide a single voice on waste management affairs, including the implications of new waste management legislation, additional waste due to housing growth, and considerations such as the environment and climate emergency in addition to the financial pressure of regional waste management.

The Partnership are working collaboratively to prepare for the implementation of food waste collections across the LCR and shared procurement will be undertaken for the acquisition of resources such as food waste caddies and vehicles, where appropriate.

Collections of food waste will be undertaken by each local authority respectively to align with their existing methodology of collections – e.g. in-house or 3rd party provision.

5. Corporate Transformation Project – Sefton specific

Agenda Item 5

Within the Waste Management Service, a route optimisation project has recently begun. The purpose of the project is to review current resource utilisation such as vehicles and staff to ensure well balanced and efficient schedule creation. The rounds will also be developed with sufficient capacity for any pre-approved housebuilding sites within the Borough which are due to commence over the next 3 year period.

As part of the route optimisation work, there will be a transition of 'sacks to bins' for properties that can accommodate wheelie bins. These properties, once surveyed, will also be aligned with an alternative weekly collection (AWC) model. This will provide residents with the opportunity to recycle appropriate waste in addition to providing consistent waste containment which will deter vermin and seagulls in coastal areas.

The project for transition from sacks to bins (where appropriate) will be undertaken during 2025 on a staggered basis with appropriate engagement with relevant ward councillors followed by comms to residents ahead of any planned change.

6. Standardised -v- Bespoke collection arrangements

Wherever possible, standardised collection arrangements will be implemented boroughwide. At present, a standardised collection is via a 240ltr wheelie bin on an alternative weekly collection model for residual and recycling waste streams. There is the addition of the green waste bin for premises with gardens, this bin is collected on a three weekly basis.

There are, of course, a variety of premises who do not fit the standardised model. They may range from HMO's, high rise blocks, or shops above commercial premises who do not benefit from outside storage space – there are many different reasons why residents find it challenging to present waste consistently and the crews can find it equally as challenging to gain access and deliver a high quality service.

Moving forward, each location that requires a bespoke collection arrangement / presentation point will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

7. Education and Behavioural Change

Sefton have recently appointed a Waste Minimisation Officer. The main duties of this role are as follows;

- Promoting waste minimisation, reuse and recycling to the residents and businesses of Sefton.
- Assist in developing waste and recycling improvement campaigns. Provide promotional and educational communications in liaison with the Council's Communications Team to encourage a high level of waste minimisation in

the Council's waste collection services to meet Council objectives and government legislation.

- Engaging with the public to encourage behaviour change that reduces waste arising and increases recycling.
- Monitor refuse and recycling collections regarding problems such as excessive waste, non-participation in recycling, recycling container contamination or misuse and other problems caused by residents' lack of understanding of refuse and recycling collection services.
- Communicate with residents through letters, e-mails, phone calls and visits and provide supportive literature to help them use the service correctly. Actively take part in promotional events such as roadshows and talks to encourage residents to become more "waste aware", minimise their waste and increase recycling.
- Identify areas and households of low recycling performance in liaison with the refuse and recycling collection crews and waste officers; target those households with education and support to improve their recycling performance.
- Engage with residents via door-to-door canvassing in areas identified as having lower than average participation levels in kerbside recycling, raising awareness and understanding of the refuse and recycling collection service and motivating them to participate.
- Work with the Council's Environmental Protection Team to bring about appropriate enforcement action where education, advice and encouragement has failed.

8. Corporate Risks

Although significant planning is underway, it should be appreciated that the Council will be procuring products (food caddies and vehicles) in a saturated market as all local authorities that don't currently offer a food waste collection service will be undertaking the same steps.

Although there is no expectation of delay at present, procurement delays could mean failure to achieve the DEFRA deadline for the implementation of food waste collections within the borough.

9. Financial

Sefton has been awarded £2.6m capital monies from DEFRA for the acquisition of food caddies (for both inside and outside use) plus vehicles.

10. Conclusion

There is considerable change on the horizon for residents across the Borough, significant engagement and comms will be delivered timely and through a variety of forums to ensure a wide reach. All partners and

Agenda Item 5

stakeholders will have a role to play in disseminating information and promoting consistent messaging as we prepare for change.

Equality Implications: There are no equality implications
Impact on Children and Young People: Waste containment provides a cleaner environment for all
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a positive impact

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7846/24.) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5946/24.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Contact Officer:	Michelle Williams
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Report Title: Local Plan policy – Provision of community recycling facilities in develop proposals.

Date of meeting:	25 th November 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Chief Planning Officer		
Portfolio:	Housing and Highways		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

On March 5th 2024 Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) agreed the following recommendation:

“the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals.”

This report looks into the feasibility of adding a Local Plan policy on this issue.

This report sets out the current situation and the options that are open to the Council.

Recommendation(s):

(1) that a new policy for communal recycling facilities within major new commercial and housing developments in the next Local Plan and/or Waste Local Plan, is not currently considered appropriate.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Agenda Item 7

- 1.1 On March 5th 2024, Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) agreed the following recommendation:
- “the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals.”*
- 1.2 Whilst it was not specified what types of development proposals the committee referred to, this report will assume that O&S would like to see all major commercial and residential schemes to be considered for whether they could include community recycling facilities.

The current policy framework

- 1.3 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) does not provide guidance on the need for community recycling facilities. The NPPF, however, does allow Local Authorities to address non-strategic issues that arise in their area through the Development Plan process.
- 1.4 The Development Plan for Sefton includes the Sefton Local Plan (2017) and the Merseyside and Halton joint Waste Local Plan (2013).
- 1.5 The Local Plan does not include any requirement for community recycling facilities in new development. The Waste Local Plan, however, does include a policy, WM9 “Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New development”. This policy sets out that the design and layout of new development must, provide for the “facilitation of collection and storage of waste, including separated recyclable materials”.
- 1.6 This policy allows for the provision for recycling and for recycling collection. This is intended to ensure that appropriate space within the planning unit (i.e. an individual home or commercial building) is provided and the wider site is laid out so that waste can be collected safely and effectively. It is not aimed at securing communal waste collection facilities on a development. However, the policy does not preclude the provision of communal recycling facilities if these were proposed. Therefore, if considered appropriate, they could be provided as part of a proposal. However, in practice this would be hard to achieve as the Council would need to justify why developers would have to provide communal facilities when there are already household recycling collections.
- 1.7 The former Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006), an early iteration of the Local Plan, had a policy that related to this issue. Policy EMW9 of that plan, “Recycling Facilities”, stated that communal recycling facilities should be included within all large supermarkets and other large developments that include a large car park. The rationale behind this policy was that large developments that have multiple and regular visits from residents would have the appropriate space and size to include a recycling area and would allow residents to combine their trip to the supermarket with dropping off recycling. The policy was produced to support recycling in the early days of it becoming more widespread and normalised.
- 1.8 The policy was not included in the 2017 Local Plan because it was not seen as a priority as, by then, widespread kerbside recycling collection regimes were in place and evidence was that these communal recycling drop off points were under-used. For example, the recycling point provided at Tesco Litherland was removed due to being underutilised. Additionally, ‘bring sites’ as they are known in the industry often attract fly tipped waste as the public will deposit non-recyclable items as a means of disposal. This impacts the local environmental quality of the location and places greater operational pressure onto the Street Cleansing Service who are often requested to cleanse the area.

Agenda Item 7

- 1.9 In order for a new policy to be put into place, it would need to be either through a review of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan or a new Sefton Local Plan.
- 1.10 There is currently a review of the Waste Local Plan by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) to assess whether a new Waste Plan is required.
- 1.11 It is expected that, with the emerging changes to the planning system, that Sefton will have to start a new Local Plan within the next couple of years. However, the timing of these and the scope of the new Local Plan, remains to be seen. A new National Planning Policy Framework and updated plan making regulations are expected early 2025. In the best-case scenario, a new Local Plan would be unlikely to be adopted for at least three to four years.

Issues to consider for including separate recycling schemes with development

- 1.12 Previously recycling facilities have been secured on commercial development sites. For example, on car parks of large supermarkets and retail parks.
- 1.13 Large supermarkets and retail parks have generally been good places for recycling facilities for the following reasons:
 - 1. The size and nature of supermarkets and retail parks mean that a significant amount of people use the site, and it allows people to take waste for recycling with them on a planned shopping trip, saving time and effort for people.
 - 2. Large supermarkets and retail parks usually have large car parks and so allow people to bring recycling with them in the car. Bringing recycling materials by foot, bike or public transport is not practical for many people. The large car parks also mean there is space for a sizeable facility that can cater for a wide range of recyclable materials.
 - 3. Using retail car parks, away from homes, mean that there is less likely to be complaints with smell, noise and odour and the perception of vermin problems.
- 1.14 Placing communal recycling facilities within both existing and new residential developments can be problematic. Firstly, there are already doorstep collections, provided by Sefton, which each household can use.
- 1.15 Also, the issue of where the recycling facilities would be sited can be challenging. The facility both needs to be readily accessible for anyone to use but not situated immediately next to someone's home. This could cause issues with noise, smells, vermin and increased traffic (as people may drive there). Furthermore, it would be difficult for the facility to be managed and could cause conflict between neighbours. When Operational In-House Services trialled communal bins in 2021 there was significant objection to them being sited near to people's homes for the reasons stated above.
- 1.16 If misused, these sites can also result in inappropriate waste being left (e.g. bulky waste) and if food waste is left, or food packaging that hasn't been washed properly, this can create odours and attract vermin. It is unlikely that many (if any) residents would wish to have such a facility close to their house.
- 1.17 Having a Local Plan policy requiring developers to provide recycling communal recycling facilities would need to be justified in a Local Plan examination. This would be challenging when there are existing household collections.
- 1.18 For the reasons set out above, it is not considered that having a Local Plan policy requiring communal recycling facilities to be provided within new developments is likely to be justifiable. However, it is something that can be reviewed when the next Local Plan /Waste Local Plan is commenced, and the LPA will then engage with the relevant departments and external organisations to explore if there are any possibilities at that point.
- 1.19 Notwithstanding this, the Council will continue to apply existing policies that require the space is included within new premises and homes for the safe and easy storage of

Agenda Item 7

recycling material ready for collection and layouts of new development allow for the collection of waste and recycling.

2. Financial Implications

None.

3. Legal Implications

None.

4. Risk Implications

None.

5 Staffing HR Implications

None.

6 Conclusion

It is not considered that having a Local Plan policy requiring communal recycling facilities to be provided within new developments is likely to be justifiable. However, it is something that can be reviewed when the next Local Plan /Waste Local Plan is commenced, and the LPA will then engage with the relevant departments and external organisations to explore if there are any possibilities at that point.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications. All households have kerbside recycling collections as existing and there is no proposal to change this. This benefits all characteristics.

Impact on Children and Young People:

This report will have a neutral impact upon children and young people.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral.

There are no climate change impacts (positive or negative) likely to result from this report as the proposal will not propose a change from the existing patterns of waste

Agenda Item 7

collections. Waste going to landfill can result in methane being produced, which is a greenhouse gas. There are existing kerbside collections as well as some existing bring sites across the borough to allow for recycling. This helps reduce waste going to landfill.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7827/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5927/24.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Michelle Williams, Assistant Director for Operational Inhouse services has been consulted.

(B) External Consultations

None.

Implementation Date for the Decision :

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

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

None.

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY		
(Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member for Highways and Housing	25 November 2024

STRATEGIC HOUSING

Strategic Housing Partnership – Care Leavers

Following the Strategic Housing Partnership event held in June I am happy to report that a Task and Finish Group has now been established with Registered Providers of Social Housing to progress work to improve housing outcomes for Care Experienced Young People in Sefton. I was included in this group, that met last month, and included a diverse range of Registered Providers of Social Housing, Cabinet Members, the Department for Work and Pensions and also other Council officers.

The group's aim was to share knowledge and experience of existing offers or gaps in service relating to care leavers and care experienced young people, in order to benchmark successful outcomes and ultimately develop Sefton's 'Housing Charter for Care Leavers'.

I look forward to reporting on progress of this work.

Adult Social Care

Officers also recently met with colleagues from the Adult Social Care (ASC) team to discuss a range of issues relating to the interface between each service area.

One of the key priorities highlighted in the recently adopted Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy was provision for complex homeless cases where individuals have capacity but whose behaviour is too challenging for our current rough sleeper service. Officers have been working with the ASC team to try to commission residential provision with intensive support in the north of the borough where it is needed most.

The future provision of Extra Care housing has been a long-standing priority for both services and I have provided an update on this below. In addition, in November Cabinet considered a report relating to the need for specialist housing for adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism. A recent workshop with officers from both the housing service and ASC looked at the need for specialist housing in the borough and as part of range of agreed actions it was also agreed that the next Strategic Housing Partnership meeting which will take place in the new year will be themed around Adult Social Care with an agenda reflected the numerous 'touch points' between the two services.

Agenda Item 11

Homelessness Update

Homeless Pressures

Demand for Homelessness services remains consistently high with the total number of Priority Need households in temporary accommodation increasing from last month to 212. The largest make up of this number is 1-bedroom need with 143 singles.

There have been a number of Registered Provider properties becoming available recently which will also be advertised through Property Pool Plus, which will assist with accommodating these people.

Annual Rough Sleeper Count 2024 Date

Each year each Local Authority is obliged to advise the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) as to the extent of Rough Sleeping in the borough on an annual basis. The Council can do so by way of a formal Count; by way of an estimate, or, an estimate based on a spotlight count.

The estimate is based on a single, typical night between 1 October and 30 November and as we have done in previous years the Councils within the Liverpool City region co-ordinated our Counts on the same night. As it is undertaken on one night it can only demonstrate a snapshot of the extent of Rough Sleeping, which can change on a daily basis. The 'typical night' chosen for the estimate was the evening of the 22nd November to the morning of the 23rd November.

The Local Authorities within the Liverpool City Region have agreed that the Count will take place from Midnight on the Tuesday 12th November into the early hours of Wednesday 13th November.

The Count is usually undertaken by Rough Sleeper Outreach staff, Council staff and Homeless Provider staff. I will update the Group on the results of the Count.

The numbers of rough sleepers in Sefton since 2012 are:

2012 (4), 2013 (7), 2014 (11), 2015 (4), 2016 (4), 2017 (9), 2018 (11), 2019 (2), 2020 (3), 2021 (0), 2022 (0), 2023 (3).

Council Housing Programme

As I have highlighted in previous updates, there is a significant amount of work going on at the moment within the Strategic Housing Team to gear the Council up ready to become a landlord.

Sandway Homes continue to report that they are on programme with their contractor to deliver the 18 apartments at Buckley Hill Lane, meaning that they will be due for handover to the Council in March 2025. Contracts between the Council and Sandway to secure the acquisition are nearing exchange.

On the operational side, Members will recall the recent report to Cabinet setting out further detail to create the Housing Advisory Board. The Board will be a key part of

the governance arrangements for the programme. I am pleased to report that an initial meeting has now been set up for January 2025 and I will be the chair of these meetings. This initial meeting will take place in advance of handover of the first 18 council housing properties but at a key point in time whereby there will be a clear lead in period to handover.

Following approval at Cabinet, I am also now the Council's appointed Member Responsible for Complaints. This is a new role that registered providers of social housing are required to have in place to meet requirements set by the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has been very clear that for Local Authorities this role should sit with the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing within the Council.

Work continues to progress with our appointed Housing Management Agent including setting out and agreeing policies and procedures, drafting of the Council's tenancy agreement, setting up the Council's properties ready for management, and working up the suite of information to be provided to tenants ready for tenancy sign-up and ongoing during the tenancy term.

Officers continue to engage with the Regulator in respect of the housing management contract in anticipation of seeing their formal approval to enter into the contract at the appropriate time. This is something that I can report back on during a future report.

Housing Standards Team

As of 17 October 2024, we have received 3031 licence applications, which is 87 of the expected number of applications. 1652 licences have been issued and 564 compliance inspections have been carried out with many landlords seeking to apply for property accreditation.

The team has taken a very strict approach with landlords that provide properties or services that fall below the expected standards, and we have had a successful prosecution for breach of an Emergency Prohibition Order (where a landlord had placed tenants in a property that was closed due to severely dangerous conditions). The Landlord pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay £22,630, including a fine of £20,000 for breaching the initial order and renting the property out unlicensed. We have applied to have the Landlord entered onto the Government's Rogue Landlord Database. There are a further 9 prosecutions pending for offences including failure to licence properties and failure to respond to Statutory Notices. We also have 4 appeals that remain pending at the First Tier Property Tribunal, where Landlords have appealed against enforcement action, including a Prohibition Order and Civil Penalty Fines for breaches of licence conditions.

There have been 55 requests for service relating to poor housing standards received between 20 Aug 2024 and 17 Oct 2024. Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action. Since 20 Aug 2024 this has included the service of 1 Emergency Prohibition Order, 1 Improvement Notice, 3 Intention to serve Civil Penalty Notices for failure to licence 12 properties within the Selective & Additional (HMO) Licensing Areas and 1 Final

Agenda Item 11

Civil Penalty Notice for failure to licence 2 properties. There have also been 8 further enforcement actions for landlords failing to maintain smoke alarms or provide the necessary Electrical Safety Certificates for privately rented properties.

On 3rd October we held a Landlord's forum which was attended by approximately 30 Landlords. Topics of discussion were the Renter's Rights Bill, Damp & Mould training for Landlords that the Council are providing through the Healthy Homes Grant fund, a Housing Benefits Update and Opportunities to retrofit private rented properties to increase their energy efficiency.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 5 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues. There have been 20 unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments in Sefton since 1 April 2024.

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council's regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land. The report looks at key areas of activity and successes over the past 3 – 6 months and challenges for the few months ahead.

A Planning Services Charter was published in May 2024 [Planning Services Charter 2024 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk). This sets out our values, our service standards, our priorities and how we are accountable.

1. Development Management

- Numbers of planning applications have reduced to below pre-Covid levels
- 100% of Major and 92% of Minor applications were determined 'in time' between July – September 2024, and 99% of 'Other' applications (mainly householder)
- This high level of performance is dependent on staff agreeing 'Extensions of Time'. We are actively seeking ways to improve performance without the need to seek EoTs although this is more difficult for 'Majors' which are often complex and require more time to address key planning issues.
- Without using EoTs, our performance would be 20% of Majors (national target 60%); 54% of Minors (target 65%); 72% of 'Other' applications (target 80%).
- The number of complaints received by the Enforcement Team from July - Sept 2024 is 225. Most have been dealt with without resorting to formal action.

Key Challenges

- The Government's proposal for significantly higher housing target for Sefton will lead to applications for planning permission for housing on land within the current Green Belt which will be designated as 'Grey Belt'. These are likely to be strongly opposed by local communities and, if refused, could lead to 'planning by appeal'. The anticipated rise in applications will put pressure on staff resources, especially as many of the applications are likely to be controversial.

- We regularly receive proposals for children's homes which are often difficult to resist purely on purely planning grounds but pose challenges corporately. We are working closely with colleagues in Children's Social Services to improve how we respond to these proposals.
- Securing timely responses from statutory consultees, in particular some of our internal consultees.

2. Building Control

- The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking, carrying out of site inspections and percentage applications given full or conditional approval.
- The Team's market share remains just above the national average for local authority building control teams.
- In August 2024, the Building Control held interviews for two vacant permanent Building Control Officer positions - one officer started with the Team in early October and another is due to start towards the end of November.

Key Challenges

- The Team is struggling to meet its locally set plan-checking targets, due to long-term staff absence. As the Team comes back to full establishment, performance levels are likely to improve.
- One of the biggest challenges is the implementation of the Building Safety Act, which requires all Building Control Bodies and their individual team members to undergo an assessment of competency. Approximately half of the Team has now been successfully assessed and it is hoped the rest will be successfully assessed in the first few months of 2025.
- The Building Control Team is due to be assessed by the newly established Building Safety Regulator in 2025 to confirm they can continue to operate as a Building Control Body. Work is currently being undertaken by the Team to ensure the assessment is successful.

3. Local Planning

- In its recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Council have been able to demonstrate a 8.69 year supply of deliverable housing land, significantly exceeding the Government's required 5 year supply.
- However, the government is proposing to change the method for calculating the housing requirement for each local authority. This gives a significantly higher housing requirement for Sefton and, if confirmed, would mean Sefton would struggle to demonstrate adequate housing supply in future years.
- A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are currently being progressed, with two to be adopted in December. These are:
 - Boundary Treatments
 - Short Term Holiday Lets
- Additional SPDs are being progressed to secure developer contributions towards visitor infrastructure in Southport; to manage proposals for conversions to Children's Care Homes; an update of the current Nature and

Agenda Item 11

Affordable Housing SPDs; and a city region approach to mitigation at the coast from new housing developments.

- Bootle Area Action Plan - The publication draft of the AAP was approved in July and has been published for public comment from 13th September to 11th November 2024. It is anticipated this will be submitted for examination later this year.
- The Local Plan team are also helping to support the CA in developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is due to be published in January 2025.

Key challenges

- Collating and assessing comments made to the Bootle Area Action Plan, submitting the AAP following an 8-week consultation period and preparing for a public examination early next year.
- Dealing with the implications and making plans for a new Local Plan under the emerging planning system and higher housing requirement.
- Finalising and engaging on a range of Supplementary Planning Documents.

4. Heritage and Conservation

- Southport Townscape Heritage Project – Grants given and building works now on site for 6 retail units and upper floors repaired and reinstated. A further 9 units and upper floors in progress on site and extension given from Lottery Fund to end of December 2025.
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans – Damfield Lane, Maghull Conservation Area and Lydiat Hall and Chapel Conservation Area under initial draft
- Development Management and Enforcement – For last three months 85 DM consultations undertaken. Continuing to work with enforcement to resolve outstanding heritage cases.

Key Challenges

- To unlock difficult Heritage at Risk development sites and facilitate their sustainable future.
- Progress delivery of remaining large scale Townscape Heritage Projects.
- Loss of staff, adding pressure to workload and ensuring adequate levels of staffing and recruitment.

5. Technical Support

- Performance in completing searches has been consistently above target throughout the last quarter.
- Performance in validating minor applications has dipped slightly in the last quarter from 89% within 5 working days in quarter 1 to 74% in quarter 2 (target 80%). This shortfall is due to staff vacancies and sickness absence. We are in the process of recruiting staff and are training new recruits.
- A key success has been consistently in the HMLR gold standard of best performing Local Authorities for maintaining the Local Land Charges register.

Key Challenges

- Ensuring adequate staff levels and training over next 12 months
- Implementing a biodiversity net gain monitoring system and the validation of biodiversity net gain metrics.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT

The current Strategic Transport initiatives aren't specifically set out in this update but clearly there is a link to the development of Transport and Highway schemes. Current initiatives and areas of work include;

- Agreement of a Pipeline of projects for CRSTS2 with the LCRCA following their assessment.
- Work with the CA on the development of the Local Transport Plan 4– now out to consultation.
- Low Carbon Transport Position Statement
- Carbon Assessment work on training of staff.
- Consultation on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Development of an EV Charging policy and roll out of EV infrastructure.
- Use of the agreed process for Engagement and Consultation on Transport Schemes.
- Supporting Public Transport development and access.

Highway Schemes

The development and delivery of highway schemes is undertaken by the Council's Design team supported by the Council's Transport Technical Support Services providers, WSP and Atkins. Efforts are underway to recruit to increase in house resource.

Business Case Schemes

- **Maritime Corridor Scheme**

This scheme involves the delivery of some highway improvements to improve access to the development sites in the area between and including A5036 Dunnings Bridge Road, A59 Ormskirk Road. It was identified by Members as a priority in 2016, the CA approved a Strategic Outline Case in 2018 and an Outline Business Case in 2020. The scheme also includes active travel and safety improvements and has been considered and reviewed by Active Travel England. It is one of the larger schemes in the current CRSTS programme and has attracted funding from the Levelling Up Fund. The funds allocated to the scheme are £21.2m and these need to be expended by March 2027, with the £9.5m LUF by March 2025 (although it is accepted that this won't be expended in its entirety).. The LUF Business Case has been approved, the

Agenda Item 11

CA have completed a Gateway Review and approved the CRSTS allocation to deliver the first Phase of work and a Grant Funding Agreement signed. The Business Case for the remainder has been submitted and is being reviewed. Phase 1 of construction is programmed for starting on site on 25th November 2024.

Main actions since last time;

- GFA for Phase 1 works received and signed.
- Agreement reached with National Highways over Traffic Management Strategy on A5036 and road space booked.
- Formal review of drawings for the A5036 works undertaken on behalf of NH, comments reviewed and agreement reached on most items.
- Legal agreement with National Highways agreed but not yet signed.
- Heads of Terms sent to and verbally agreed by Netherton Park Neighbourhood Centre over lease.
- Report submitted to Cabinet to recommend funding in Capital Programme.
- Internal agreement reached for the use of Bootle Golf Course as a site compound.
- Business Case for all of works submitted and review ongoing.
- Internal land transfers progressed and discussions with affected parties continued with Heads of Terms agreed.
- Cabinet report setting out Acquisition strategy is being reviewed external legal specialists and will be submitted this month.

Action before next update

- Section 6 agreement signed with National Highways.
 - Contract signed for Phase 1.
 - Lease agreements signed with Netherton Park
 - Comms strategy enacted, letters sent out and social media information produced.
 - Social Value Action Plan put into place.
 - Business Case approved and GFA received for Phase 2
- **Southport Eastern Access Business Case:**

This scheme involves the delivery of some highway improvements to reduce congestion on the eastern approaches to Southport. Like the Maritime Corridor, it was identified by Members as a priority in 2016, the CA approved a Strategic Outline Case in 2018 and an Outline Business Case in 2020. The scheme also includes active travel and safety improvements as well as traffic mitigation measures to address changes in traffic patterns resulting from the reopening of Foul Lane. The scheme is wholly CRSTS funded with £19.97m allocated. This needs to be expended by March 2027. The Business Case

has been approved by the LCRCA. Phase 1 of construction is programmed for starting on site in January 2025.

Main Actions since last time;

- Business Case approved and GFA drafted.
- Target Cost received for Phase 1.
- Design work progressed for Phase 2.
- L&R Committee has considered and approved changes to the highway.
- Cabinet report setting out Acquisition strategy is being reviewed external legal specialists and will be submitted this month. Report submitted to Cabinet to recommend funding in Capital Programme.
- Norwood mitigation measures developed and design progressed.
- Engagement session held with Members.
- Engagement with schools in the area to review routes to school and issues of concern.
- Acquisition discussions progressed with all landowners for Phase 2 with heads of Terms agreed with some.
- Contract documents further developed for works.
- Surveys to inform Planning applications currently underway.

Main Actions before next update

- GFA to be signed and agreed.
- Contract signed.
- Social Value Action Plan agreed and signed off.
- Sustrans to continue to engage with schools in the area and report back.
- Design work completed for Phase 2 and progressed for the Norwood mitigation measures.
- Comms strategy enacted, letters sent out and social media information produced.

Corridor or Area Wide Improvements

- **A59/Kenyon's Lane Junctions and Corridor:**

This is part of a wider scheme is aimed at creating cycle facilities along the A59 corridor linking facilities in West Lancs with Switch Island and beyond whilst improving pedestrian and cycle accessibility across the A59 at key junctions. The CA received a Strategic Outline Case for the whole corridor but agreed that the improvements should be delivered in Phases. This phased focusses on the section from Dodds Island to Robins Island and creates a new CYCLOPs junction at Kenyon's Lane.

Main Actions since last time;

Agenda Item 11

- Dowhigh Ltd were formally appointed to complete the works. Works have commenced on site on the 11th November with an expected contract duration through to Spring / Summer 2025.
- Ward Members have been kept informed of progress through the Ward Member Briefing Notes

Main Actions before next update

- Continued work on site. Road closure applications submitted, including the closure of the Kenyon's Lane junction for up to 5 months
- Meeting to discuss Social Value
- Continued engagement of scheme progression to stakeholders and ward members.

- **A59/Dodds lane Junction**

A further part of the wider scheme includes reviewing this junction from a safety and accessibility perspective with a view to improvements to the junction forming part of the next phase of work.

Main Actions since last time;

- Options for improvement received.

Main Actions before next update

- Preferred option to be reviewed and discussed with Cabinet Member.
- Prelim design work and survey work commissioned

- **A565/ Woodvale junction**

This scheme aims to introduce active travel improvements through the junction to enable the previous improvement work to link with the Coastal Road and TransPennine Trail. Consultation has been completed Further preliminary and outline design work is continuing on the section from Southport Road and through Ince Woods.

Main Actions since last time;

- Consultation feedback reviewed
- WSP commissioned to carry out a design review using Active Travel England's Toolkit
- Briefing Note presented to CM (October 2024)

Main Actions before next update

- Scheme details, to be finalised with report submitted in January to L&R.
- Further CM Update before L&R

- **A565 Wider Corridor improvements**

Works is progressing looking at the continuation of an active travel link southwards from Southport Road to Thornton including access improvement work at the various junctions. An offline route has been identified through Ince Woods and negotiations are ongoing with landowners.

Main Actions since last time;

- Opportunities assessment completed following review of report.
- Initial plans drawn up for 4 sections of the corridor
- Briefing note presented to CM (October 2024)
- Consideration of phasing scheme with potential future funding

Main Actions before next update

- Further discussions with landowners over Ince Woods route
- Design to be completed at the Scaffold Land junction to potentially be delivered using local safety scheme funding
- Further discussion around LCWIP to feed into development of schemes

- **Green Bus Corridor:**

The LCRCA commissioned consultants to develop and appraise options for potential bus priority measures commence works on a number of routes in the City Region, including the No 53 bus corridor which travels between Crosby and Liverpool, including Stanley Road. Officers have reviewed the works undertaken and provided comments.

Main Actions since last time;

- No further formal update – currently awaiting LCRCA's confirmation that they are seeking consultancy support to model and develop the design

Main Actions before next update

- Brief for be reviewed and consultation plans in Sefton to be agreed,
- Proposals for Stanley Road to be confirmed to explore synergies with Walkable Bootle and other proposals.

Agenda Item 11

- **Great Georges Road:**

Much of the work (Phase 1) was delivered some time ago. The final design for the remaining work has been completed.

Main Actions since last time;

- Works have commenced on site and are expected to last through to December.
- Additional re-paving works outside the Hotel have been instructed,

Main Actions before next update

- Completion of the works

Town Centre Schemes

- **Les Transformation Phase 1**

The Business Case Submission for the Southport Town Deal identified a series of public realm and accessibility projects in Southport Town Centre under the term 'Les Transformation de Southport'. Phase 1 is focussed around Southport Market with works proposed for Market Street, King Street and Eastbank Street. The scheme includes £2.5m from the Southport Town Fund with the remainder 5m from CRSTS. A contractor has been appointed and works are programmed for starting on site in January 25.

Main Actions since last time;

- Costs received from the Contractor
- Some modifications to the layout influenced by the above.
- Route to programme agreed.
- Communication and Social Value Plans agreed.
- Correspondence agreed.

Main Actions before next update

- Second round of Value Engineering to be explored on quick win items to bring the overall contract value down.
- Target Cost resubmitted to the Council and signed off
- Businesses and other stakeholders to receive an update.
- Contract for works entered into.
- Trial Panel completed.

- Contract facilities established.

- **Les Transformation Phase 2**

Further to the above, the need for public realm improvements improvement on the Promenade around the MLEC building to complement this scheme and improve accessibility to the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians has been identified.

Main Actions since last time;

- Discussion with MLEC team over the details proposed outside the building.
- Programme allocation agreed in CRSTS 1.
- Consultation proposals discussed..

Main Actions before next update

- Consultation plans developed and taken Cabinet Member and Ward Members.
- Plans to be agreed for the Prom to tie in to MLEC aspirations.
- Prelim design commissioned.
- Likely phasing of works to be firmed up.

- **Chapel Street and North- South Cycle route**

The Southport BID and others are keen that Chapel Street be reviewed and some improvement works initiated. There is also a commitment, identified in the report recommending the retain of the current north-south cycle scheme in Southport that consideration be given to a more permanent improvements scheme which does incorporate walking and cycling improvements.

Main Actions since last time;

- Works orders for some minor decluttering near the station entrance.
- Further review of the possible short term measures undertaken following the review by WSP.

Main Actions before next update

- Decluttering works commenced.
- Agreement to be reached on scope of work on Chapel street over and above the decluttering.
- Review to be undertaken of the timing of consultation on the N-S cycle route.

Agenda Item 11

- **Scarisbrick Avenue:**

- This public realm improvement scheme, linked with the Southport Townscape Heritage initiative, was largely completed in 2023. There are some remedial and enhancement works to be completed following a review. These are programmed

Main Actions since last time;

- Discussions have been held with the contractor regarding a return to site however due to capacity issues within the design team and other delivery priorities the timescales for delivery have slipped.

Main Actions before next update

- Revised timescales for delivery to be agreed
- Ward Member updates to be set out.

- **Birkdale Village Improvements**

This is a pedestrian access and safety improvement scheme in Birkdale Village funded from the CRSTS1 programme.

Main Actions since last time;

- Due to capacity issues within the design team and other delivery priorities the timescales for delivery of the design have slipped.

Main Actions before next update

- Revised Programme for delivery to be agreed
- Ward Members updated

- **Crosby Town Centre Improvement Works**

Highway works aimed at improving accessibility and support the proposed new library development proposed for the Green Car Park were completed in late 2023 funded by CRSTS1. Public realm works to introduce higher quality paving are currently being implemented. Further design work has been programmed to redesign the car parks as this work needs to be delivered prior to the construction work progressing on the Green.

Main Actions since last time;

- Public realm works completed.
- Safety Audit completed and reviewed.

Main Actions before next update

- Final Account for the public realm element to be agreed.
- Agreement to be reached on whether the car park modification design (and implementation) works to be delivered.

- **Thornton Improvement Works**

A number of issues have been raised by residents, schools and the Parish Council re traffic and safety concerns in Thornton. These have been reviewed and an Action Plan developed.

Main Actions since last time;

- A Programme of implementation work has been refined.
- Initial discussions held with The Parish Council.

Main Actions before next update

- Minor works to be delivered in the current financial year to be developed further, this is expected to include works at the end of Drummond Road and a signal review along the A565.

- **Bootle Town Centre – Works supporting the Strand development**

Work had been designed and procured to ensure the Strand Service Road can operate from Vermont Way thus enabling a section to be closed and demolition to take place. The design team are reviewing a longer-term plan to create an improved access arrangement which will be completed once demolition has been undertaken. This will involve modifications to one of the car parks and some work on the service road from Washington Parade

Main Actions since last time;

- Further discussions held with the Strand Team over demolition programme and interface with highway works with a demolition start date of March 2025 through to Autumn 2025. There is currently an aspiration for a short transition window between the end of demolition and the start of the next phase of 2-4 weeks.
- WSP have been commissioned to undertake the Preliminary Design for the revised car park exit onto Vermont Way and the subsequent changes to the proposed signal junction.

Agenda Item 11

- WSP have been commissioned to undertake the Preliminary Design for the Service Road works off Washington Parade. Regular monthly meetings focused on highway issues including those impacting on Planning Applications.
- Action Plan developed for Bramley Moor Dock and enhancing links with Everton.
- Plans developed for a possible residents parking scheme in Sefton on matchday.
- Discussion held with LCRCA re potential transport funding for Bootle in CRSTS2.

Main Actions before next update

- Design work to be progressed on all aspects of the enabling works.
- Delivery Programme for the enabling works to be agreed following discussions with the demolition contractor as to what works can be carried out during the demolition.
- Initial costs to be developed to check against transport allocation.
- Action Plan for Everton links to be further developed and actions re bus operation and matchday parking to be progressed.
- Masterplan exercise to be developed over possible links between bus station, train station and Strand.

- **Walkable Stanley Road**

Freshfield Foundation agreed to fund a pilot study to identify a series of measures aimed at encouraging and enabling walking in Bootle to tie in with other initiatives. The Consultants, Urban Movement initially identified 48 possible interventions for further consideration and development.

Main Actions since last time;

- Report further developed to identify some medium-term actions and priorities, i.e., to align with the CRSTS2 major scheme bid for Bootle and funding delivery in 2027-2032).
- Summary note provided to Cabinet Members.

Main Actions before next update;

- Final report to be drafted by Urban Movement, with a particular focus on linking the defined actions to a 'school neighbourhoods' approach (i.e., road safety / safer routes to school focus) and reverting back to a 'Bootle-wide' scale.
- Priority list to be developed for potential early interventions.

- **School Neighbourhoods Work:**

Two schemes have been delivered on the three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. The further scheme, at Stanley High School is subject to further consultation before implementation later in 2024. Engagement work has been undertaken with 5 other schools in the south of the borough and one school street scheme implemented. Work also progressed with schools in Norwood ward impacted on by the Southport eastern access scheme.

Main Actions since last time;

- Continued work progressing with 5 schools in South of the borough (at varying stages of development).
- Continued work with schools in Norwood Ward.
- Fee secured for progressing a prioritised School Neighbourhood area (involving up to five schools and the local community) in Bootle, using ATE Capability Fund and secured from the Freshfield Foundation. Inception Meeting held early November to commence the project.

Main Actions before next update:

- Further school engagement and programme of interventions to be developed.
- Stanley High zebra crossings and new cycle parking on the school grounds to be programmed for installation.
- Reconsider previous school prioritisation process to determine additional schools to engage, in line with appropriate funding availability/opportunities.

Local Safety Schemes

The Local Safety Schemes in the Transport Capital Programme include interventions at Northern Road (Gt Crosby), Hawthorne Road and Prescott Road. These schemes have all been subject to consultation and approved by L&R Committee and are at different stages of development. The programme for 24-25 is being developed.

Main Actions since last time;

- Prescott Road works complete, however additional road marking works are required for the roundabout.
- Northern Road puffin crossing completed.
- Hawthorn Road works programmed for a start in November.
- Outline design started for the proposed zebra crossing locations.

Agenda Item 11

Main Actions before next update:

- Consultation to be started with Ward members and Residents over the new zebra crossings.
- Revised design for the road markings on the approach to the M58 submitted to National Highways for approval.

Highways Development Control

The Highways DC team is currently under pressure from a significant number of applications and legal agreements requiring input. To assist the team, recruitment is ongoing to boost resources. The Council's Transport Technical Support Services providers provide specialist advice, WSP and Atkins. The team is also dealing with high workloads for highway searches, street naming and numbering, Public Rights of Way and highway adoption queries.

Planning Applications

- A total of 72 applications have been responded to in the 2 month period of August and September. This number is based on per planning application and does not include the numerous responses that are provided for a particular planning application (there can be typically up to 5 responses for a major planning application and ones with significant highway issues).

Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. This is exacerbated by developments being split into different phases/agreements which takes a lot longer to process than if everything was considered in a single agreement for a development.
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 46
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 where the developer appears to have ceased trading.
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 2 months - 0
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval – 32
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up – 1
 -

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 80 live full s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council plus 29 minor s278 agreements. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.

Quarterly Update Highways Maintenance October 2024

Since 1st April 2024 which coincides with the start of the new financial year, planned & routine maintenance operations are progressing well and in accordance with allocated programming timeframes.

To date key maintenance improvements have been completed which include the following:

Completion of carriageway Surface Dressing programme which is a recognised preventative type of treatment covering approximately **76,000m²** of carriageway, inclusive of road markings totalling **£518,000.00**.

Resurfacing which involves the removal of one or more surfacing layers in the carriageway has been completed, totalling approximately **85,000 M²** with a spend value of **£3,087,000.00**.

Routine safety inspections continue to operate daily which identifies isolated defects and repairs in accordance with the council's safety inspection policies and other industry guidelines, The volume and value of work does fluctuate monthly, current invoiced values associated with these reactive working operations is totalling **£1,180,782.00**.

Other maintenance operations including grass cutting, gully cleansing and road marking upgrades continue which has a current spend value nearing **£1,100,000.00**.

Winter Maintenance

- This years winter maintenance policy and plan was approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17th September 2024.
- The salt restock has now been completed and we are at maximum levels for the start of the new season. The vehicles have been calibrated and all pre-season checks have been done.
- Discussions have commenced on the specification for the new winter forecasting and bureau services tender, as the current contract expires in July 2025. This is a joint contract with the LCR Authorities with the framework contract being procured by the Combined Authority.

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