

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)

DATE: Tuesday 14th September, 2021

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall Bootle

Member

Councillor
Councillor Bradshaw (Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bennett
Councillor Brennan
Councillor Grace
Councillor Howard
Councillor Killen
Councillor Lewis
Councillor McKinley
Councillor Morris

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor McGinnity
Councillor Murphy
Councillor Irving
Councillor Myers
Councillor Roche
Councillor Page
Councillor Friel
Councillor Brodie - Browne
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Sir Ron Watson

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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See overleaf for COVID Guidance and the requirements in relation to Public Attendance.

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

We endeavour to provide a reasonable number of full agendas, including reports at the meeting. If you wish to ensure that you have a copy to refer to at the meeting, please can you print off your own copy of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

COVID GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

In light of ongoing Covid-19 social distancing restrictions, there is limited capacity for members of the press and public to be present in the meeting room indicated on the front page of the agenda at any one time. We would ask parties remain in the meeting room solely for the duration of consideration of the Committee report(s) to which their interests relate.

We therefore request that if you wish to attend the Committee to please register in advance of the meeting via email to paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk by no later than **12:00 (noon) on the day of the meeting.**

Please include in your email –

- Your name;
- Your email address;
- Your Contact telephone number; and
- The details of the report in which you are interested.

In light of current social distancing requirements, access to the meeting room is limited.

We have been advised by Public Health that Members, officers and the public should carry out a lateral flow test before attending the meeting, and only attend if that test is negative. Provided you are not classed as exempt, it is requested that you wear a mask that covers both your nose and mouth.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested at a meeting where a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest arises, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests, to declare any interests that relate to an item on the agenda.

Where a Member discloses a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, he/she must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest, except where he/she is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of a dispensation.

Where a Member discloses a personal interest he/she must seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or staff member representing the Monitoring Officer to determine whether the Member should withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest or whether the Member can remain in the meeting or remain in the meeting and vote on the relevant decision.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021

4. Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - September Update (Pages 9 - 24)

Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services

5. Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations (Pages 25 - 42)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

6. Work Programme 2021/22, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan (Pages 43 - 70)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

7. Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Reference Group - Update (Pages 71 - 72)

Briefing Note of the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services

8. Cabinet Member Report - August 2021

(Pages 73 -
90)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)

MEETING HELD AT THE BALLROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 15TH JUNE, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Grace, Howard, Killen, McKinley and
Morris

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Lappin and Page

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett, Brennan (and his Substitute Member Councillor Myers) and Lewis.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Bradshaw welcomed Members to this first physical meeting of the Committee in the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Bradshaw welcomed specially Councillors Bennett, Brennan, Howard and Morris who were new members of the Committee; and offered her thanks to Councillors Brodie-Browne, Brough and Doyle and former Councillor McCann for their help and support on the Committee during 2020/21.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 16 of 20 October 2020 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that updated on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group that was approved by Council in February 2020.

The report highlighted responses from the Head of Strategic Support in relation to recommendations concerning the adoption of revised

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statements of ethical procurement principles/policy; and the adoption and implementation of a Social Value Action Plan.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- The Government Commercial Function document “Guide to Using the Social Value Model”, published in December 2020, which indicated that following a review of its outsourcing processes in 2018 government committed to extend the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 in central government to ensure that all major procurements explicitly evaluate, where appropriate, rather than just consider it
- Social value within the National Planning Policy Framework and Spatial Development Strategies to recognise that the role of planning policy was to ensure development was engaging with, uniting and benefiting the local area
- Sefton’s Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group be noted;
- (2) the Chief Planning Officer be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee updating on Sefton’s Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document; and
- (3) a further update report be submitted in six months.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2021/22; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and providing an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- A Working Group could potentially be established to review the Council’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was anticipated that many other local authorities, together the Local Government Association, would be looking at this issue to find out how local Councils coped during the pandemic to help their local residents

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and businesses. Any work undertaken in Sefton could be fed into the national debate

- The community centred approach to local economic development, Community Wealth Building, was referred to and particularly the “Preston Model”; and it was suggested that it may be beneficial in the future for the Committee to receive a report on Sefton’s work towards Community Wealth Building

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

7. WELFARE REFORM AND ANTI-POVERTY REFERENCE GROUP - UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 29 of its meeting held on 12 January 2021 the Committee considered a Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty update of the Head of Health and Wellbeing and Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

The update provided information on the latest meeting of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- A Motion approved by Council on 4 March 2021 regarding Poverty Emergency
- Childhood poverty
- Healthy Start vouchers
- Breathing Space
- Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented the update.

Members of the Committee commented on the following issues:

- The up to date position in respect of the call for action relating to childhood poverty
- Whether the Breathing Space initiative offered tenants protection from eviction from their homes. It was noted however that protection to social and private tenants by delaying when landlords could evict tenants was governed by Government legislation
- Concern was expressed at the proposed cessation, at the end of September, of the £20/week uplift received by universal credit claimants. It was anticipated that this would have a dramatic effect

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on claimants, coupled also with the ending of the furlough scheme, and would have an impact on the Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her update.

8. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - JUNE 2021

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services presented her report; and commended the Business Grants and ICT Teams for their dedicated work during the pandemic.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Council staff were praised for their swift responses to queries raised by staff working on behalf of Bill Esterson MP
- The debt recovery section of the report was referred to and the potential for the situation to worsen once the furlough scheme had ended
- Concern was expressed at the high level of referrals to the Occupational Health Unit that were stress and mental health related. It was noted that 50.3% of referrals were for this reason and that pandemic associated issues could test the service further

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	14 September 2021
Subject:	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - September Update		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Leader of the Council		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To inform **Overview and Scrutiny** of:

1. The current financial implications of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget;
2. The current position relating to the 2021/22 revenue budget;
3. The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2021/22;
4. The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2021:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end;
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members;
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.

Recommendation(s):

Overview and Scrutiny is recommended to:

Revenue Budget

- 1) Note the current financial implications of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget together with the key issues that will influence the final position;
- 2) Note the current position relating to the 2021/22 revenue budget;
- 3) Note the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2021/22 revenue budget and acknowledge that the forecast outturn position will continue to be

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reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved;

Capital Programme

- 4) Note the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 7.1);
- 5) Note the recommendation by Cabinet to Council that they approve a supplementary capital estimate of £1.875m for the development of Southport Town Deal projects (paragraph 7.10);
- 6) Note the recommendation by Cabinet to Council that they approve a supplementary capital estimate of up to £2.500m for the pre-development phase of the Marine Lake Events Centre, subject to the bid to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to fund the works being successful (paragraph 7.10);
- 7) Note the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 July 2021 of £9.316m (paragraph 7.3); the latest full year forecast is £45.475m (paragraph 7.4).
- 8) Note explanations of variances to project budgets (paragraph 7.7); and,
- 9) Note that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraph 7.13).

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure Overview and Scrutiny are informed of the current position in relation to the 2021/22 revenue budget, including COVID19 pressures and additional funding being made available to the Council.

To provide an updated forecast of the outturn position with regard to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

To keep members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2021/22 and agreed allocations for future years.

To progress any changes that are required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme.

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The report indicates that for 2021/22 an underspend position of £0.583m is currently forecast but that mitigating actions may be required if the position subsequently moves to a deficit position.

(B) Capital Costs

The Council's capital budget in 2021/22 is £46.142m. As at the end of July 2021 expenditure of £9.316m has been incurred and a full year outturn of £45.475m is currently forecast.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): It is currently expected that an underspend position of £0.583m will be achieved for 2021/22. However, it should be noted that significant pressure and risk remains in four key business areas, namely Children's Social Care, Children with Disabilities, Education Excellence and Locality Services. If these budgets experience further demand pressure during the remainder of the year corresponding savings may need to be identified. If this cannot take place there may be a call on the Council's General Balances.</p>									
<p>Legal Implications: None</p>									
<p>Equality Implications: None</p>									
<p>Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>N</td> </tr> </table> <p>The allocations of capital funding outlined in section 7 may be spent on projects that will have a high climate change impact as they could relate to new build, rebuild, refurbishment, retrofit and demolition proposals. Environmental consideration will be taken into account when specific projects are designed and tendered – which will help to mitigate negative impacts.</p>		Have a positive impact	N	Have a neutral impact	Y	Have a negative impact	N	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N
Have a positive impact	N								
Have a neutral impact	Y								
Have a negative impact	N								
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N								

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Effective Financial Management and the development and delivery of sustainable annual budgets support each theme of the Councils Core Purpose.

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: See comment above</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: See comment above</p>

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<u>Commission, broker and provide core services:</u> See comment above
<u>Place – leadership and influencer:</u> See comment above
<u>Drivers of change and reform:</u> See comment above
<u>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</u> See comment above
<u>Greater income for social investment:</u> See comment above
<u>Cleaner Greener:</u> See comment above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Customer Services is the author of the report (FD 6490/21)

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD 4691/21).

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

Contact Officer:	Paul Reilly
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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2021, Council approved the budget for 2021/22. This report provides an update on the forecast revenue outturn position for 2021/22, including the significant impact of COVID-19 on the Council's 2021/22 budget, and reflects the position at the end of the first quarter of the financial year.
- 1.2 The report also outlines the current position regarding key income streams for the Authority, namely Council Tax and Business Rates. Variations against expected receipts in these two areas will also affect the Council's financial position in future years.
- 1.3 The capital section of the report informs Members of the latest estimate of capital expenditure for 2021/22 and forecast expenditure for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The capital budget to date is presented in paragraph 7.1. Paragraphs 7.13 and 7.4 review progress of the capital programme. Finally, paragraph 7.10 confirms that there are adequate levels of resources available to finance the capital programme.

2. Impact of COVID 19 on 2021/22 Budget

- 2.1 As part of the Council Budget Report presented to the Budget Council meeting in March, Members received details of the full range of financial issues that were being faced by the Council in 2021/22 arising from the pandemic, and how this cost would be funded. A summary is shown below:

	2021/22
	£'m
Sales, Fees and Charges Income	
Estimated Net Losses	1,500
Use of 2021/22 Emergency Funding	-1.500
	0.000
Collection Fund deficit in 2020/21 arising from COVID-19	
Net losses after government compensation scheme	5.812
Collection Fund Surplus from 2019/20	-1.072
	4.740
Collection Fund deficit re. 2021/22	
Reduction in Council Tax Base	3.564
Council Tax Support Grant	-3.471
Business Rates forecast losses	3.000
	3.093
Temporary Mitigating Measures to Offset Council Tax / Business Rates Losses	
Use of 2020/21 Emergency Funding	-4.000
Framework for Change 2020 – Council of 2023 Savings	-0.890
Forecast Underspend in 2020/21	-1.000
Vacancy Management	-0.500
School Closure Reserve	-0.500
Use of 2021/22 Emergency Funding	-0.943

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	-7.833
Net Impact on 2021/22 Budget	0.000

2.2 An update on the pressures is provided below:

Sales, Fees and Charges Income

2.3 There was a significant impact on income from sales, fees and charges for a range of services during 2020/21. Whilst some income streams temporarily recovered when lockdown was eased and would expect to do so again once we come out of the national lockdown, others are expected to remain impacted whilst measures are still in place for social distancing, etc.

2.4 The government has announced that the compensation scheme in place in 2020/21 to provide support for a proportion of losses will be extended until the end of June 2021. Therefore, an element of losses will be funded through the compensation scheme. The Council is currently finalising the claim for April to June.

2.5 It is currently forecast that this could result in a net loss of income of **£1.500m** during 2021/22, which is unchanged from the figure assumed in the Budget Report. This forecast will be reviewed as there is more experience of the impact on reopened facilities, especially now all restrictions were eased from 19 June 2021. Any balance of losses not funded by the scheme will need to be covered from the emergency funding received by the Council in 2021/22. It is currently assumed that income levels will return to normal from 2022/23, however, this will continue to be assessed based on the experience once all restrictions are eased.

Collection Fund deficit in 2020/21 arising from COVID-19

2.6 The Council, in line with all other local authorities, is experiencing significant reductions in income from both Council Tax and Business Rates. This relates to increases in households eligible to claim under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and some increases in Business Rates appeals as well as reductions in collection rates.

2.7 The government announced financial support would be provided to offset 75% of irrecoverable losses. However, Council Tax losses relating to non-collection aren't eligible for compensation under the scheme, neither are adjustments relating to previous years. The Budget Report estimated that net losses not covered by the scheme would therefore be up to £5.812m and would need to be funded. The final deficit position for both Council Tax and Business Rates, along with the amount of financial support that has been claimed from the government, have now been finalised and has resulted in a net loss of **£6.858m**. However, it is anticipated that some of these losses will be reversed in 2021/22 so the net impact will be within the £5.812m previously estimated.

Council Tax Base

2.8 The Council Tax Base is set by Council in January each year. It reflects changes in the number of properties and the value of exemptions and discounts. In recent years the Council Tax Base has increased steadily due to housing growth. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 on the number of CTRS claimants, the reduced collection

rate and the slowdown in housing growth, there has been a significant reduction in the Base for 2021/22. This reduced the Council Tax Requirement by **£3.564m**.

- 2.9 The government has announced additional funding to support the loss of income due to increased numbers of CTRS claimants. Sefton's allocation is **£3.471m** and will be used to offset the majority of reduced funding due to the decrease in the Council Tax Base.
- 2.10 Currently, the number of CTRS claimants hasn't increased as forecast (this is mainly due to the government's "furlough" scheme being extended which may have delayed any increase) and collection rates are slightly ahead of expectations. If these factors continue then a surplus may be generated, although due to regulations this would only be credited to the Council in 2022/23. Section 4 highlights that currently a surplus of £1.369m is forecast.

Business Rates

- 2.11 Business Rates collection rates reduced in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 and are expected to remain lower than normal in 2021/22. In addition, at the time of the Budget Report there were significant numbers of appeals in 2020/21 due to restrictions being in place. It was estimated that based on the 2020/21 position that £3.000m of the Council's income will be at risk as businesses no longer exist or cannot afford to pay business rates.
- 2.12 However, central government have announced that appeals relating to COVID19 won't be allowed under amended regulations. Therefore, it is forecast that the income now at risk is only **£1.600m**.

Cost of responding to the pandemic

- 2.13 The Council has received £8.063m of emergency funding to assist with covering the financial pressures it will face in 2021/22 due to the pandemic. The budget assumes that £2.443m of this will be required to fund the potential losses described above. This leaves £5.620m to fund any further financial pressures.
- 2.14 Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 it is anticipated that the remaining emergency funding will be fully utilised in directly supporting the Council's response to the pandemic and any further loss of income that is anticipated between now and the end of the year. Cabinet in June 2021 agreed that the further use of this funding be delegated to the Leader of the Council following advice from the Chief Executive and the Council's s151 officer.

Summary

- 2.15 It should be noted that the figures included above are still an early indication of the position in 2021/22 and will continue to be reviewed on a monthly basis. A full review of the position, and the use of emergency funding received in 2020/21 and 2021/22, is currently being conducted and will be reported to Cabinet in October.

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3. Revenue Budget 2021/22 – Forecast Outturn Position as at the end of July 2021

3.1 Members are provided with updates of the Council's forecast financial revenue position each month during the financial year from July.

3.2 In 2020/21, as in previous years, significant pressures were identified in several service areas at an early stage of the year, particularly Children's Social Care, Communities (Children with Disabilities) Education Excellence (Home to School Transport) and Locality Services. These pressures, and the unprecedented financial challenges faced by the Council in relation to COVID-19, meant the Council had to implement a remedial action plan was adopted to ensure a balanced budget position would be achieved. In addition, a number of financial principles that had been implemented in previous years were also adopted.

3.3 In response to these pressures, Budget Council approved that additional resources be added to the 2021/22 budget for these services, with the amounts shown below:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Budget Pressure</u>
	£m
Children's Social Care – Placements & Packages	7.280
Communities – Children with Disabilities / PSR2	1.050
Education Excellence – Home to School Transport	1.100
Locality Services – Security Force	0.350
	9.780

3.4 Initial indications are that the additional resources will be sufficient to ensure that there will be no significant impact on the Council's overall budget in 2021/22. However, as these are demand led services this will need to be carefully monitored during the year, with the biggest risk being the cost of Children's Social Care – Placements and Packages. Any pressures arising will need to be managed as it is still vital that the Council is able to achieve a balanced forecast outturn position for its normal activities, ignoring the impact of COVID-19 pressures. Therefore, the approval of mitigating actions, and the adoption of financial principles used in previous years, may need to be implemented at some point during the remainder of the year.

3.5 As at the end of July, the forecast outturn shows an underspend of £0.583m. The table below highlights the variations:

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance to June Position
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>				
Strategic Management	3.136	3.098	-0.038	-0.003
Adult Social Care	97.000	97.000	0.000	0.000

Children's Social Care	42.323	42.323	0.000	0.000
Communities	19.873	19.594	-0.279	-0.083
Corporate Resources	9.102	9.039	-0.063	-0.063
Economic Growth & Housing	5.942	5.882	-0.060	-0.075
Education Excellence	11.135	11.092	-0.043	-0.006
Health & Wellbeing	18.703	18.618	-0.085	-0.085
Highways & Public Protection	11.103	11.103	0.000	0.000
Locality Services	12.951	12.817	-0.134	-0.075
Total Service Net Expenditure	231.268	230.565	-0.703	-0.423
Budget Pressure Fund	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
Council Wide Budgets	-13.213	-13.093	0.120	0.000
Levies	34.568	34.568	0.000	0.000
General Government Grants	(62.858)	(62.858)	0.000	0.000
Total Net Expenditure	190.765	190.182		
Forecast Year-End Deficit			-0.583	-0.423

3.6 The key areas relating to the outturn position are as follows:

- **Adult Social Care** – The current forecast assumes that the Adult Social Care budget will break-even during 2021/22. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties as a result of COVID-19 that could impact on this position before the year-end.

As part of the Demand Management Programme, savings of £3.300m were identified and delivered during 2020/21. Work on the Programme is continuing, and further savings are being identified that will have a part-year impact in 2021/22 and will therefore impact on the forecast outturn position. The current forecast of these savings in 2021/22 is £1.416m. Due to the significant assumptions and uncertainties within the forecast outturn position, these savings have not been included in the forecast outturn at this time.

- **Children's Social Care** – The current forecast shows a potential overspend of £1.124m. However, it is estimated that this level of overspend is attributable to the impact of COVID-19. Therefore, as reported to Cabinet in July, these temporary costs will be met by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Elsewhere on today's agenda is a report highlighting the need for additional temporary and permanent staffing resources within the service. The report forecasts that additional costs of £2.008m will be incurred in 2021/22, with £1.500m of these costs being funded from the reserve approved at July's Cabinet meeting. The remaining costs, relating to some of the temporary posts, are expected to be funded from residual cost of change and new burdens funding received in 2020/21.

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The impact of this means that the Children's Social Care budget is forecast to break-even during 2021/22.

However, as has been regularly reported over the last three years, the cost of Placements and Packages is the largest risk to the Council's budget position. The Council is currently working on developing a range of options to address the inherent demand and costs of Looked After Children whilst supporting the most vulnerable residents, but this budget remains under pressure and purely from a financial point of view this is likely to continue during this year and into the next financial year.

4. **Council Tax Income – Update**

4.1 Council Tax income is shared between the billing authority (Sefton Council) and the three major precepting authorities (the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Authority – Mayoral Precept) pro-rata to their demand on the Collection Fund. The Council's Budget included a Council Tax Requirement of £143.037m for 2021/22 (including Parish Precepts), which represents 84.1% of the net Council Tax income of £170.167m.

4.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2021 is a surplus of -£1.369m. However, it should be noted that the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 was reduced to reflect lower collection rates and increased Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants. Therefore, this surplus is forecast in the context of a reduction in Council Tax income of £3.564m (see paragraph 2.7). This variation is primarily due to: -

- The deficit on the fund at the end of 2020/21 being lower than estimated (-£0.421m);
- Gross Council Tax Charges in 2021/22 being higher than estimated (-£0.662m);
- Exemptions and Discounts (including a forecasting adjustment) being higher than estimated (-£0.286m).

4.3 Due to Collection Fund regulations, the Council Tax surplus will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2021/22 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

4.4 A forecast deficit of £5.179m was declared on the 21 January 2021 of which Sefton's share is £4.355m (84.1%). This is the amount that will be recovered from the Collection Fund in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2022/23 and future years.

5. **Business Rates Income – Update**

6.1 Since 1 April 2017, Business Rates income has been shared between the Council (99%) and the Fire and Rescue Authority (1%). The Council's Budget included retained Business Rates income of £67.919m for 2021/22, which represents 99% of the net Business Rates income of £68.606m. Business Rates income has historically been very volatile making it difficult to forecast accurately.

6.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2021 is a deficit of £24.297m on Business Rates income. This is due to:

- The deficit on the fund at the end of 2021/22 being higher than estimated (+£3.467m);
- Decrease in the gross charge on rateable properties (+£0.397m);
- A number of additional reliefs were announced after January 2021 to support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include expanded retail discount, pub relief, newspaper relief, and private nursery relief. The loss of income as a result of these reliefs will be covered by Section 31 grant payments. Due to the timing of these announcements the impact of these reliefs could not be incorporated into the budget figures reported in the NNDR1 return (+£20.433m).

6.3 When taking into account the additional Section 31 grants due on the additional reliefs, a net deficit of £3.851m is forecast.

6.4 Due to Collection Fund regulations, a Business Rates deficit will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2021/22 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

6.5 A forecast deficit of £39.206m was declared in January 2021. Sefton's share of this is £38.814m. This is the amount that will be distributed from the Collection Fund in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in future years.

6. Capital Programme 2021/22 – 2023/24

Capital Budget

7.1 The Capital Budget and profile of expenditure for the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24 is as follows:

2021/22	£46.142m
2022/23	£18.279m
2023/24	£7.411m

7.2 The following updates have been made to the capital programme budget since the previous report to Cabinet in July:

- £1.128m has been added for a new externally funded scheme for a sports hub at Orrell Mount following approval by Council in July.
- £0.795m had been added for The Strand Business Plan following approval by Council in July.
- £0.834m has been added to the 2021/22 budget for the next phase of the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme following approval by Council in July. £4.865m has been added to future years' budgets with allocations to be confirmed by the Environment Agency in each year.
- £0.195m has been added to the outgoing Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme following approval by Cabinet in July.
- Revised allocations have been added to the Highways budget for the Key Route Network (£0.471m) and Pipeline Development Fund (£0.368m) following approval by Cabinet in July.

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- £2.457m has been phased from 2021/22 to future years for the LED Street Lighting Upgrade project due to delays in appointing the project team.

Budget Monitoring Position to July 2021

- 7.3 The current position of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of July 2021 is shown in the table below. It should be noted that budgets are profiled dependent upon the timing of when works are to be carried out and the anticipated spend over the financial year. For example, Education Excellence will typically carry out most of its capital works during key school's holiday periods such as the summer recess, whilst Highways and Public Protection will complete most of its programmed works during quarters two and four of the financial year. The budget to date in the table below reflects the profiles of each individual scheme.

Service Area	Budget to Jul-21	Actual Expenditure to Jul-21	Variance to Jul-21
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	1.139	1.160	0.021
Communities	0.020	-	-0.020
Corporate Resources	0.011	0.042	0.031
Economic Growth & Housing	1.807	1.598	-0.209
Education Excellence	1.051	1.114	0.063
Highways & Public Protection	1.563	1.562	-0.001
Operational In-House Services	3.741	3.840	0.099
Total Programme	9.332	9.316	-0.016

Capital Programme Forecast Outturn 2021/22

- 7.4 The current forecast of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of 2021/22 and the profile of budgets for future years is shown in the table below:

Service Area	Full Year Budget 2021/22	Forecast Out-turn	Variance to Budget	Full Year Budget 2022/23	Full Year Budget 2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	4.647	4.058	-0.589	3.039	0.764
Children's Social Care	0.100	0.100	-	-	-
Communities	2.865	2.877	0.012	0.279	-
Corporate Resources	5.383	5.383	-	0.404	-
Economic Growth & Housing	7.121	7.121	-	1.063	0.040
Education Excellence	5.160	5.072	-0.088	4.628	1.831
Highways & Public Protection	11.213	11.213	-	3.742	3.605
Operational In-House Services	9.653	9.651	-0.002	5.124	1.171
Total Programme	46.142	45.475	-0.667	18.279	7.411

A full list of the capital programme by capital scheme is at **appendix A**.

- 7.5 The current 2021/22 budgeted spend is £46.142m with a budgeted spend to July of £9.332m. The full year budget includes exceptional items such as £6.4m for vehicle replacement, £1.9m for Green Homes Local Delivery, previously approved amounts for essential repairs and maintenance (£3.924m), a scheme to upgrade to LED Street Lighting (£0.815m), and leisure schemes for a new sports hub and improvements to an existing football pitch (£1.378m).
- 7.6 Typically, on an annual basis the capital programme spends in the region of £20m. Given this typical annual level of spend it is likely that reprofiling of spend into 2022/23 will occur as the year progresses.
- 7.7 An underspend of £0.589m is forecast on Adult Social Care. This is largely due to a lower estimate for Disabled Facilities Grants for 2021/22. A target of £1.474m has been set for the year based on improved performance over the previous year's target (£0.975m) when adaptations could not be progressed or were delayed due to Covid-19. Current delivery however, is being impacted by vacancies in the Home Improvements and Occupational Therapy teams. It is anticipated that spend may increase once recruitment has been completed and revised estimates will be reported on future budget updates.

Southport Town Deal

- 7.8 In the Government's budget statement, published on 3 March 2021 it was confirmed that Southport was offered a Town Deal up to the value of £37.5 million. Subsequently on the 1 April Cabinet agreed to the non-binding heads of terms outlining the proposed spend and projects. Following this Cabinet further approved to progress with Option 5 for the new Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC) that is the anchor project of The Southport Town Deal.
- 7.9 The Council have recently been informed that it can draw down 5% of the £37.5 million in advance of March next year to assist in the preparation of business case development. The £1.875m will be used to develop the Town Deal projects consisting of the MLEC, Enterprise Arcade and Les Transformations de Southport (public realm). Further to this the Council have been invited by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to submit a pre development bid up to £2.5m for the MLEC as also approved by Cabinet on 29 July 2021 . This will mean the Council could spend up to £4.375m on predevelopment activities in order to submit the required Town Deal information to Government by March 2022.
- 7.10 Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council that Supplementary Capital Estimates be approved for £1.875m and up to £2.500m for the work outlined above.

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Programme Funding

7.11 The table below shows how the capital programme will be funding in 2021/22:

Source	£m
Grants	29.852
Contributions (incl. Section 106)	1.065
Capital Receipts	5.688
Prudential Borrowing	9.537
Total Programme Funding	46.142

7.12 The programme is reviewed on an ongoing basis to confirm the capital resources required to finance capital expenditure are in place, the future years programme is fully funded, and the level of prudential borrowing remains affordable.

7.13 The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services will continue to manage the financing of the programme to ensure the final capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council.

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

Capital Project	Budget		
	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Adult Social Care			
Care Homes - Fire Alarms & Emergency Lighting	98,310	-	-
Core DFG Programme	1,473,566	572,370	-
Wider Social Care Programme	3,075,089	2,466,532	763,750
Children’s Social Care			
Support for Fostering Placements	100,000	-	-
Communities			
Dunes Splashworld – Essential Repairs	1,388,874	-	-
Litherland Sports Park – 3G Pitch & Lighting	250,000	-	-
Orrell Mount Sports Hub	1,128,047	-	-
Libraries - Centres of Excellence	20,000	279,301	-
S106 - Netherton & Orrell – Abbeyfield Park	11,942	-	-
S106 - Linacre - Strand Living Wall	10,665	-	-
S106 - Sudell – Moorhey Shops Parking Scheme	16,625	-	-
S106 - Ford – Stanton Avenue One Way System	9,000	-	-
S106 - Litherland – Play Equip Orrell Mount Pavilion	30,000	-	-
Corporate Resources			
Council Wide Essential Maintenance	2,308,330	-	-
STCC Essential Maintenance	87,680	-	-
Victoria Baths Essential Works	138,974	-	-
Bootle & Southport Town Hall Retrofit Energy Saving	788,087	-	-
Green Homes Grant Local Delivery Scheme	1,900,000	-	-
Public Sector Reform	160,000	404,337	-
Economic Growth & Housing			
Strategic Acquisitions - Bootle	434,473	-	-
The Strand Business Plan – Mtce and Improvement	640,000	115,000	40,000
Cambridge Road Centre Development	795,123	-	-
Crosby Lakeside Development	2,791,997	-	-
Town Centre Commission Bootle	150,000	-	-
Southport Market Redevelopment	813,938	20,039	-
Strategic Acquisitions - Ainsdale	299,500	891,859	-
Housing Investment	15,188	36,180	-
Brownfield Fund for Housing Development	1,050,000	-	-
Southport Pier Project	130,886	-	-
Education Excellence			
Healthy Pupils Fund	1,486	-	-
Schools Programme	3,813,856	2,756,034	1,830,682
Planned Maintenance	482,364	859,043	-
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	862,518	1,012,374	-
Highways and Public Protection			
Transport Schemes	10,398,001	-	-
LED Street Lighting Upgrade	815,000	3,742,035	3,605,580

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	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Operational In-House Services			
Burials & Cremation Insourcing - Vehicles & Equip	90,663	-	-
Formby Strategic Flood Risk Management Prog	-	43,851	-
Merseyside Groundwater Study	31,508	-	-
Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme 2016-2021	391,654	-	-
Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme 2022-2026	834,000	735,000	1,058,000
The Pool & Nile Watercourses	124,121	-	-
Crosby Flood & Coastal Scheme	34,641	785,839	-
Hall Road & Alt Training Bank - Rock Armour	-	45,775	-
Ainsdale & Birkdale Land Drainage Scheme	25,973	-	-
Surface Water Management Plan	18,000	81,445	-
Surface Water Modelling & Mapping	13,601	-	-
Small Watercourse Works	7,638	-	-
Water Level Monitoring Pilot	13,000	5,000	-
Parks Schemes	139,687	154,700	-
Hesketh Park Conservatory	20,407	-	-
Tree Planting Programme	68,747	126,783	-
Golf Driving Range Developments	398,822	280,280	-
Ainsdale Coastal Gateway	351,538	-	-
Crosby Marine Lake Improvements – Phase 1	155,000	-	-
Litter Bin Infrastructure	22,358	-	-
Green Sefton – Plant & Machinery	131,152	-	-
Vehicle Replacement Programme	6,359,737	1,635,493	113,000
Wheeled Bins	420,000	1,230,000	-
TOTAL PROGRAMME	46,141,766	18,279,270	7,411,012

Agenda Item 5

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) **Date of Meeting:** 14 September 2021

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) 21 September 2021

Subject: Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations **Wards Affected:** (All Wards);

Cabinet Portfolio: Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services
Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills

Report of: Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

Is this a Key Decision? No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No
Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To provide a monitoring report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation:

That the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with a decision of Cabinet to submit monitoring reports on a six-monthly basis setting out progress made against each of the recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. Cabinet has requested the submission of monitoring reports.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

Implications:

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

Financial	
Legal	
Human Resources	
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"/>
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable:
 Digital inclusion is a principal and approach that aims to ensure that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them on a day to day basis - whether they be individuals, businesses or other entities e.g. the voluntary sector. Likewise digital inclusion aims to reduce digital exclusion and the digital divide that can exist within society for a variety of reasons
 The government’s Information Economy Strategy called for greater focus on digital inclusion in order to:

- help businesses make smart use of information technology and data;
- ensure citizens benefit from the digital age; and

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• underpin economic growth Digital inclusion will be one of the areas that the Council will seek to contribute to and enable within the Borough of Sefton and as such help residents to improve their chances to gain employment.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above
Place – leadership and influencer: As above
Drivers of change and reform: As above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above
Greater income for social investment: As above
Cleaner Greener: None directly associated with this report

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 6480/21) has no comments on the report

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 4681/21) is the author of this report

The Head of Economic Growth and Housing

Sefton CVS

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Contact Officer: Paul Fraser

Tel: 0151 934 2068

Email: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 At its meeting held on 13 June 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of a Joint Working Group. The commencement of the Working Group was deferred to enable the objectives of the ICT Development Programme to be progressed and thereafter aspects of the Programme to be included in the Working Group's Scoping Document to review the topic of Digital Inclusion. The objectives of the Working Group were as follows:

- Identify the opportunity for the Council in supporting and enabling Digital Inclusion within the Borough of Sefton and the wider City Region;
- Identify how this can feed into the Councils future ICT and Digital Strategies;
- Confirm the strategic themes that should be addressed as part of this work e.g. connectivity and skills;

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- Identify potential council activities that could be provided on a more digital basis and the enabling activity that will be required to support this; and
- proactively engaging with the Combined Authority and their advisors/consultants to ensure that opportunities identified for Sefton are incorporated in to the Liverpool City Region Digital Infrastructure Action Plan to ensure positive outcomes for the borough and its constituent communities

it was noted that all proposals would need to take account of resource requirements and be within the parameters of the current Medium Term Financial Plan.

1.2 Accordingly, the Working Group met on numerous occasions to gather evidence and produce its [Final Report](#) Because of the cross-cutting nature of the Working Group the Final Report was also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills). Approval of the Final Report and associated recommendations was given by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services), Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) and Cabinet at their meetings held on 11 September 2018, 6 November 2018 and 6 December 2018 respectively. The approved recommendations are set out below:

1. The Working Group was impressed with the Visitor Economy (VE) 'Passport to Success' scheme aimed at college students across the Liverpool City Region coming into the tourism industry; whereby students are able to achieve a bronze, silver or gold passport standard to provide them with a range of opportunities to either gain quality work experience, an interview, apprenticeship or a full-time job.

The Working Group, at its meeting held on 23 May 2018 acknowledged that literary and numeracy skills should be embedded as a priority along with digital skills.

Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- (A) The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board be requested to consider the development of a Digital Skills Passport Scheme (incorporating numeracy, literacy and communication skills) to help Sefton residents to gain future employment, via the Learning and Skills budget to be devolved from 2019; and
 - (B) Sefton Council, via Sefton@Work, in conjunction with local organisations such as Sefton Community Learning Service, work with the Liverpool City Region with the aim of exploring the application of such a Skills Passport for the benefit of Sefton employers and residents;
2. Using the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion "Mosaic" data, areas of high unemployment be targeted to enable those Sefton residents excluded from the labour market to develop their ICT skills to improve their opportunities for gaining future employment;

3. To facilitate the above the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be requested to devolve sufficient funding to Sefton Council to appoint a project worker with the clear objectives of:
 - (A) Working with local employers to map ICT/digital skills;
 - (B) Working with local partners such as Sefton Community Learning Service to develop and deliver bespoke training programmes to target residents in the areas identified in the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic” data;
 - (C) Identifying, using the data from the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic”, a number of residents who would benefit from and be able to undertake training as referred to in 3. (B) above; and
 - (D) Working with local employers to develop a compact agreement to enable those residents who successfully complete the bespoke training programme(s) to gain relevant employment;
4. If further opportunities arise for a roll out of the Include-IT project and to support the objectives of recommendation 2 then Sefton CVS be requested to consider such roll out to the priority areas identified within the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document; and
5. the Head of Regulation and Compliance be requested to submit a monitoring report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Resources to be held on 5 March 2019, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report and that thereafter, monitoring reports be submitted to the Committee on a six-monthly basis.

1.3 In accordance with recommendation (5) above the table attached to the report sets out progress made against each of the recommendations.

2. Update

2.1 Two update reports have previously been submitted to both Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) and (Regeneration and Skills) at meetings held in 2019 and 2020.

2.2 The table below details responses to the recommendations reported to the meetings in 2019 and 2020 together with updates received following recent consultations with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Sefton CVS and the Head of Economic Growth and Housing.

PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Recommendation	Progress Made at September 2019	Progress Made at October 2020	Progress Made at September 2021
<p>The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board be requested to consider the development of a Digital Skills Passport Scheme (incorporating numeracy, literacy and communication skills) to help Sefton residents to gain future employment, via the Learning and Skills budget to be devolved from 2019</p>	<p>Correspondence has been received from Frank Rogers, Chief Executive of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The following comments have been made:</p> <p>“I am pleased to report that the we have now published an updated Liverpool City Region Digital & Creative Skills for Growth Action Plan, a key element of which is a commitment for the Combined Authority to establish a Digital Skills Partnership to enhance collaboration and agree a Digital Skills Passport for the whole City Region.</p> <p>We look forward to Sefton Council’s engagement with this Liverpool City Region Digital Skills Partnership, which will also focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map provision using LCR Learn as basis. • Promoting diverse role models in the tech. sector 	<p>The Policy Lead: Employment and Skills at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has advised that LCR has nothing further to update</p>	<p>The following information has been received from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:</p> <p>“Improving digital skills at all ages and levels remains a priority as highlighted within the recently approved Liverpool City Region Digital Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 and we are grateful to Sefton Council for their contribution to its development.</p> <p>The action plan builds on the LCR Digital & Creative Skills for Growth Action Plan and retains the commitment to establish a Digital Skills Partnership to enhance collaborative approaches and progress the concept of a Digital Skills Passport.</p> <p>Unfortunately, COVID-19 has impacted on the establishment of the Digital Skills Partnership. However, recent events have highlighted the need for enhanced digital skills and this is set out in</p>

- Better promoting engagement within digital inclusion provision
- Evaluating existing engagement delivery, and identifying both targeting and progression gaps
- Considering how to ensure tutors and teachers are kept up to date with tech development
- Working with the National Digital Skills Partnership to ensure that curricula and apprenticeship standards required by employers are in place.
- Developing future digital trends labour market information for all sectors
- Developing Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance to include digital fusion job roles.

Linked to the above, we are looking at collective and collaborative City Region wide skills development solutions, rather than by devolving funding to individual Local Authorities. In this regard, I would also draw your attention to the positive

more detail in the Local Skills Action Plan 2021/22.

Partners across LCR also remain actively engaged in innovative pilot approaches to the delivery of digital skills. The digital Test & Learn pilots such as those delivered by Sefton's Adult Community Learning Service and Sefton@work have been evaluated across the City Region, the outcomes of which are feeding through to future skills planning.

The LCR Digital Skills Bootcamps have also commenced, which are expected to deliver £1.5m of employer led digital skills training for 1,000 people across the City Region, linked to specific job roles such as coding and cyber security".

	<p>recent extension of the Big Lottery and ESF-funded Include-IT Mersey project delivered by a consortium led by Sefton CVS. This will be able to use the information generated by the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic” data in order to identify need across Liverpool City Region, and target digital inclusion activities accordingly.</p> <p>Please also note that Sefton Council has been represented from its outset on the CA-convened “Core Group” that brings together representatives from all the LCR Local Authorities. This has hitherto focused on development of the pan-LCR core fibre network project, however its remit may be extended in the future to look at the wider digital agenda”.</p>		
<p>Sefton Council, via Sefton@Work, in conjunction with local organisations such as Sefton Community Learning Service, work with the Liverpool City Region with the aim of exploring the application of such a Skills Passport for the benefit of Sefton employers and</p>	<p>The Head of Economic Growth and Housing has advised that “Sefton Council is a recipient of Adult Education Budget which is used to support the Sefton Adult Community Learning Service. With effect from August 2019, this funding has been</p>	<p>The Head of Economic Growth and Housing has advised that following a recent IT specific workshop organised by Corporate Services and Agilisys, there may be some new opportunities for supporting</p>	

<p>residents</p>	<p>incorporated into the LCR Devolution deal on employment and skills, and therefore the accountability lead for this function will sit with the LCR Combined Authority from this year.</p> <p>In this context, Sefton has been successful in securing pilot funding from the LCR Combined Authority to develop a new project which will focus on the development of English, maths and digital skills featuring a partnership approach between the Adult Community Learning Service and Sefton@work. The aim of this pilot is to flag up alternative delivery mechanisms to promote the digital inclusion of learners and enhance their employability, working with employers across a number of different occupational sectors to progress the concept of the “digital passport” identified by the working Group.</p> <p>The outcomes of the pilot will be learning points which will be evaluated by the Combined Authority as part of the wider development on digital inclusion and will be fed into the</p>	<p>businesses which can be explored.</p> <p>The Test and Learn funding for digital skills pilots has been deployed but unfortunately the scheme was interrupted as a result of COVID.</p> <p>However, after negotiation with the LCR CA, the funding has extended to allow the Community Learning Service to undertake the pilot fully in 2020/21. Plans are in place to re-start delivery and build upon the early actions. One of the first activities was a specific employability-related intervention which was successfully co-designed and delivered for clients of Sefton@work prior to lockdown. Furthermore, additional test and learn pilot resource has also now been secured from the LCR CA. This will fund the design, delivery and implementation of interactive technology programmes which will be installed at the Cambridge</p>	
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	<p>architecture of future skills programming.</p> <p>Furthermore, InvestSefton, as part of its ongoing business support activities, have delivered workshops to businesses to help them maximise the benefits of digital technology including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook advertising • Google advertising platforms • Video production • Social media branding and marketing”. 	<p>Road Community Learning Hub as part of the renovations of this centre during 2020/21.</p> <p>The Community Learning Service has embraced a variety of new technologies in order to continue its delivery during the lockdown period. Many of these have enabled learners to have greater choice over their means of engagement with learning and have been transformative for many in their approach to understanding the benefits of digital skills. The delivery of blended learning using a bespoke learning platform where learners can attend in person and /or attend online wherever they are at home or work has been very well received by learners who have given feedback that this change has boosted digital confidence and access to a wider range of applications. The rapid</p>	
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		<p>rise in job losses in Sefton is expected to boost demand for learning new digital skills and the Service is currently devising new content to respond to his demand. Furthermore, InvestSefton, as part of its ongoing Covid-19 business support activities, are delivering webinars to businesses to help them maximise the benefits of digital technology including:</p> <p>How to Facilitate Business Gains, through Stress Management; Covid-19: Starting Your Business Up Again Safely; Digital Marketing Tools for Small Businesses; HR for Small Business Managers; Mental Health and Wellbeing for Business Managers and Teams; Maintaining an Effective Virtual Office; Managing Business Finance and Cashflow for SMEs; and Promoting Your Business Online</p>	
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<p>Using the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic” data, areas of high unemployment be targeted to enable those Sefton residents excluded from the labour market to develop their ICT skills to improve their opportunities for gaining future employment</p>	<p>Correspondence has been received from the Chief Executive of Sefton CVS which states that:</p> <p>“Sefton CVS have just recently received notification that the Building Better Opportunities Digital Inclusion programme for the LCR Region has been extended until June 2021. We have been awaiting confirmation of this news for a number of weeks.</p> <p>Further to your correspondence, I can confirm that Sefton CVs has included Ravenmeols, Ford and Derby Wards in the proposed delivery going forward focused on the eligible targeted recipients in the overall programme and in line with the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document referred to in your letter”</p>	<p>The Chief Executive of Sefton CVS has advised that Include-IT Mersey, the LCR Building Better Opportunities Digital Inclusion programme, has further been extended, with active delivery to participants now planned to continue until September 2022. Sefton participants have mostly been from the high unemployment Wards of Bootle, Litherland and Netherton, with a smaller proportion from other South Sefton Wards and Southport. To date, 144 unemployed Sefton residents have attended courses run through the project and improved their basic IT skills. Over 100 have received a free tablet and some also provided with mobile data bundles to enable them to get online at home.</p> <p>Hundreds of Sefton residents have also benefited from the support of the project’s volunteer</p>	<p>The Chief Executive of Sefton CVS has advised as follows:</p> <p><u>Support to get online</u></p> <p>Include-IT Mersey project Following the National Lottery Community Fund’s recent confirmation of the extension of the Building Better Opportunities programme, due the consistent good performance of the Include-IT Mersey project, the Lottery has increased investment to enable its extension until March 2023, which is very positive news.</p> <p>Face to face delivery of basic digital and employability skills courses has now restarted having temporarily been paused or moved to remote delivery due to the various Covid lockdowns and social distancing restrictions over the last 16 months. The WEA is now delivering in Sefton following 3tc’s closure in 2020, currently delivering out of the Feelgood Factory in Netherton, with other courses to be planned in other parts of the borough over the coming months.</p> <p>During the pandemic, all</p>
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		<p>Digital Champions who, prior to the Coronavirus lockdown operated a network of digital drop-ins in Bootle (Library, Liferooms and Akenside Supported Accommodation), Netherton (Feelgood Factory) and Southport (The Atkinson & Southport Community Centre).</p> <p>The drop-ins unfortunately had to be suspended in March and are unlikely to reopen this year due to the prolonged social distancing restrictions that remain in place. However, the project quickly developed an alternative approach to supporting people's requests for digital advice and support during the lockdown. The remote telephone support service was rolled out in April, with four Digital Champions still active in assisting people remotely.</p> <p>Although a city region wide service, uptake in Sefton</p>	<p>participants have been provided with a free tablet and mobile data bundles to enable them to get online at home in order to support their continued engagement and learning during the periods of lockdown and social distancing. New participants will continue to receive a free tablet when they enrol on a course.</p> <p>In total, 173 Sefton residents have been supported through the project to date, with 26 having progressed to work, 41 to further training and 12 in to active job search. The majority of Sefton participants have been from the high unemployment Wards of Bootle, Litherland and Netherton, with a smaller proportion from other South Sefton Wards and Southport.</p> <p>Volunteer-led face-to-face digital drop-ins have been suspended since the April 2020 and are yet to reopen. Our aim is to gradually start to reopen them from September, adhering to Public Health Covid-safe guidance. While the face-to-face drop-ins have been on hold, we have rolled out a telephone support</p>
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has been much higher than in the other five boroughs, with 71 Sefton residents supported to date. Initially, the majority of enquiries were for help with online shopping but since then, there has been a mixture of enquiries relating to shopping, video calls (e.g. Zoom), connection issues and getting online in general, including using emails and internet search engines.

In partnership with VOLA, Sefton CVS also secured LCR Cares funding to help get socially and digitally excluded Sefton residents online, providing 32 tablets and a short-term mobile data allowance to Sefton Households. A further 3 households received kit that we secured through another digital initiative. All 35 devices were set up prior to distribution and all recipients provided with remote support to help them learn the basics of how to use them.

service, run by Digital Champion volunteers, who have supported 174 people since it was first launched in during the first national lockdown in April 2020, with a range of advice and support provided around the use of IT and getting online. 95 of these were Sefton residents, where take up has been stronger than other boroughs.

Get Yourself Online project

Alongside the Include-IT Mersey project, Sefton CVS also took part in another Digital Inclusion project in the summer of 2020, funded by the Community Foundation for Merseyside through the LCR Cares Fund, which was established by the Combined Authority in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The project was developed to benefit the most excluded and vulnerable in society, with no internet access at home and who cannot afford to buy a device and/or connectivity.

Sefton CVS distributed 32 free tablets with four-month internet access and technical support to

		<p>Information packs were also provided including a dos & don'ts guide, staying safe online, and financial awareness.</p>	<p>Sefton households, as part of the wider project which, in total, supported 320 households (600 people) to get online across the Liverpool City Region.</p>
<p>To facilitate the above the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be requested to devolve sufficient funding to Sefton Council to appoint a project worker with the clear objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Working with local employers to map ICT/digital skills; (B) Working with local partners such as Sefton Community Learning Service to develop and deliver bespoke training programmes to target residents in the areas identified in the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion "Mosaic" data; (C) Identifying, using the data from the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion "Mosaic", a number of residents who would benefit from and be able to 	<p>As referred to above in the response of Frank Rogers, Chief Executive of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the following comments were made:</p> <p>"Linked to the above, we are looking at collective and collaborative City Region wide skills development solutions, rather than by devolving funding to individual Local Authorities. In this regard, I would also draw your attention to the positive recent extension of the Big Lottery and ESF-funded Include-IT Mersey project delivered by a consortium led by Sefton CVS. This will be able to use the information generated by the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion "Mosaic" data in order to identify need across Liverpool City Region, and target digital inclusion activities accordingly.</p>	<p>The Policy Lead: Employment and Skills at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has advised that LCR has nothing further to update</p>	<p>The following information has been received from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:</p> <p>"LCRCA commissioned bespoke Digital Inclusion research to establish a baseline of current digital skills and use across the City Region, enhancing the local evidence base to inform the development of digital inclusion and digital poverty initiatives. Between November 2020 and January 2021, fieldwork was undertaken than resulted in over 800 detailed responses (including 148 from Sefton) across a representative sample of respondents based on age and location.</p> <p>Whilst the Mosaic profiles have been useful, the research approach aims to deepen our understanding by asking a set of themed questions drawing on what we already know about digital exclusion. The conclusions</p>

<p>undertake training as referred to in 3. (B) above; and</p> <p>(D) Working with local employers to develop a compact agreement to enable those residents who successfully complete the bespoke training programme(s) to gain relevant employment;</p>	<p>Please also note that Sefton Council has been represented from its outset on the CA-convened “Core Group” that brings together representatives from all the LCR Local Authorities. This has hitherto focused on development of the pan-LCR core fibre network project, however its remit may be extended in the future to look at the wider digital agenda”.</p>		<p>set out a range of demographic factors that should be considered in targeting digital initiatives, including age, working status, housing type, education, disability and ethnicity.</p> <p>We are now looking to test our analysis with key partners, including Sefton MBC before sharing more widely.</p>
<p>If further opportunities arise for a roll out of the Include-IT project and to support the objectives of recommendation 2 then Sefton CVS be requested to consider such roll out to the priority areas identified within the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document</p>	<p>Correspondence has been received from the Chief Executive of Sefton CVS which states that:</p> <p>“Sefton CVS have just recently received notification that the Building Better Opportunities Digital Inclusion programme for the LCR Region has been extended until June 2021. We have been awaiting confirmation of this news for a number of weeks.</p> <p>Further to your correspondence, I can confirm that Sefton CVs has included Ravenmeols, Ford and Derby Wards in the proposed delivery going forward focused on the eligible targeted</p>	<p>The Chief Executive of Sefton CVS has advised that most courses/ participants and digital drop-ins to date have taken place in Bootle. Delivery has taken place from Community By Nature and the Swan Women’s Centre, based in Linacre and Litherland, which border the Derby Ward and are both easily accessible to its residents. As soon as we are able to resume face-to-face delivery, we intend to return to these venues as they have worked well to date.</p> <p>Prior to the Coronavirus</p>	<p>See information provided by the Chief Executive of Sefton CVS in this column above</p>

	<p>recipients in the overall programme and in line with the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document referred to in your letter”</p>	<p>lockdown the project had been planning towards delivering courses in the Feelgood Factory to capture Ford and Netherton residents. Long-term closure of community settings and subsequent prolonged social distancing measures post lockdown, coupled with the subsequent closure of our Sefton project delivery partner, 3tc, who unfortunately ceased trading earlier this year have all contributed to delays in implementing these plans. Contingency plans are currently being progressed to revive Sefton delivery in the coming months, if considered feasible and safe to do so in the context of recently increased local social distancing restrictions.</p> <p>Following initial investigation, the project has been unable to target the central Ward of Ravenmeols due to its</p>	
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		population demographics not having a fit with the target groups of the Building Better Opportunities programme, on which the project is closely monitored and funded. Digital skill provision in this Ward might be better catered for through other training providers with more flexible funding regimes, such as Adult and Community Learning and/or the Adult Education Budget.	
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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	14 September, 2021
Subject:	Work Programme 2021/22, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2021/22, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and to update on topics considered previously by the Committee

Recommendation:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) consideration be given to the selection of a topic for a Working Group review; and appoint at least 3 Members of the Committee to serve on such Working Group;
- (3) Consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) the Chief Planning Officer be requested to submit a report to Committee regarding Sefton's Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document once direction from Government has been received as to changes to the planning system, part of which will provide clear guidance on the role of planning in

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achieving social value

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2021/22 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None	
Legal Implications: None	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of recommendations contained in Digital inclusion Working Group Final Report will help with the aim of ensuring that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them on a day to day basis - whether they be individuals, businesses or other entities e.g. the voluntary sector; and aim to reduce digital exclusion and the digital divide that can exist within society for a variety of reasons.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the presentation on the update on the Commissioning and the Procurement Policy will raise awareness of associated issues with Members. The Working Group established by the Committee to review the Council’s Ethical Business Practices will look into ethical procurement. See also reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the submission of the report on Air Quality Monitoring will raise awareness of associated issues with Members.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

This report is not subject to LD and FD comments. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

Chief Planning Officer
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2068
Email Address:	paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/22
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

- 1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2021/22 was approved by the Committee on 15 June 2021 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2021/22 and updated, as appropriate.

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2021/22

- 2.1 It is usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 2.2 The last Working Group established by this Committee was to review the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices. This review has been completed and the Working Group's Final Report was approved by Council on 27 February 2020.
- 2.3 The Committee's views are therefore sought on the establishment of a new Working Group.
- 2.4 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

- 3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The

Forward Plan which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.

- 3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 3 for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 22 October 2019 (Minute No. 20).
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 4.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.
- 4.4 **Role**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by the Combined Authority in May 2017 in accordance with the Combined Authorities Order 2017.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;

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- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

4.5 **Membership**

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Hansen, Howard and Waterfield. Councillor Howard is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

Councillor Sir Ron Watson is the representative of the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

4.6 **Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. Councillor Steve Radford, a Liberal Party and Independent Group Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

4.7 **Quoracy Issues**

In the past a high number of meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been inquorate.

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

Following an update request to the LCRCA the positive news is that last year (20/21) was the most successful yet as only one meeting had been inquorate. A potential reason is that the remote meetings provided greater flexibility for Members and so supported increased attendance.

The membership for this year's LCRCAO&S has seen quite a big change, with only five of the 20 Members returning. An introductory session for Members has been held and the importance was stressed about attending the Committee so that business could be transacted.

The M9 Group is the collective body for the Mayoral CA's who meet frequently with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The quoracy issue was raised by the M9 Group with MHCLG back in March 2020. However, since then other matters including the Covid-19 pandemic have become more pressing.

4.8 **Meetings**

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained

using the following link

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

Since the last meeting of the Committee two meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been held on 14 July and 8 September 2021.

Matters considered at the meeting held on 14 July 2021 related to:

- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Metro Mayor S Rotheram's Update
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Corporate Plan 2021-24
- Work Programme 2021/22
- Appointment of Scrutiny Members to the Audit And Governance Committee 2021/22

Matters to be considered at the meeting to be held on held on 8 September 2021 relate to:

- Verbal Update from Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram
- Liverpool City Region - Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Work Programme 2021/22

4.9 The next meeting of the LCRCAO&S will be held on 3 November 2021.

4.10 The Committee is requested to note the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. ITEMS CONSIDERED PREVIOUSLY BY THE COMMITTEE

5.1 Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document

5.2 At its meeting held on 15 June 2021 the Committee considered a report updating on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report. The updates related to recommendations concerning the adoption of revised statements of ethical procurement principles/policy; and the adoption and implementation of a Social Value Action Plan.

5.3 During consideration of the item Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- The Government Commercial Function document “Guide to Using the Social Value Model”, published in December 2020, which indicated that following a review of its outsourcing processes in 2018 government committed to extend the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 in central government to ensure that all major procurements explicitly evaluate, where appropriate, rather than just consider it
- Social value within the National Planning Policy Framework and Spatial Development Strategies to recognise that the role of planning policy was

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to ensure development was engaging with, uniting and benefiting the local area

- Sefton's Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document

5.4 The Committee resolved that the Chief Planning Officer be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee updating on Sefton's Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document.

5.5 The Chief Planning Officer has advised that local authorities are currently awaiting direction from Government as to changes to the planning system, part of which will provide clear guidance on the role of planning in achieving social value. It is prudent therefore to wait until Government direction has been received so that we have a steer before embarking on the production of a Supplementary Planning Document. An update can be provided once Government direction has been received.

APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

	15 JUNE 21	14 SEPTEMBER 21	2 NOVEMBER 21	11 JANUARY 22	8 FEBRUARY 22 (BUDGET MEETING)	1 MARCH 22
Cabinet Member Update Report - Paul Fraser	X	X	X	X		X
Work Programme - Update Paul Fraser	X	X	X	X		X
Service Operational Reports:						
New Ways of Working Dominic Ellis		X				
Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Stephan Van Arendsen/Diane Turner				X		
Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy Stephan Van Arendsen/Dom Ellis			X			
“Manage my Requests” (iCaseWork) system – Statistical Update Report – Jan McMahon/Wayne Leatherbarrow			X			
Members’ Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update Margaret Jones	X	X	X	X		X
Update on Sefton’s Social Value from						

APPENDIX 1

Development Supplementary Planning Document Derek McKenzie						
Scrutiny Review Progress Reports:						
Air Quality Monitoring - Peter Moore/Greg Martin				x		
Public Health Annual Report Margaret Jones/Helen Armitage				x		
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring - Mark Dale						x
Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations - Paul Fraser			x			
Update on Progress of LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy - Stuart Barnes				x		
Ethical Business Practices Working Group - Update on Recommendations - Paul Fraser			x			x
“Tool-Kit” for Armed Forces Covenant - Shaun Pimblett				x		
Financial Scrutiny:						
Budget Report 2022/23 to 2025/26 - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	

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Financial Performance Monitoring - Stephan Van Arendsen		x	x	x	x	
Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Prudential Indicators - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Treasury Management Policy and Strategy - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Capital Strategy 2022/23 and Future Years - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy – Update Position Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Robustness of the 2022/23 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – local Government Act 2003 – Section 25 - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Presentations						
Corporate Communications Update - Elena Lloyd				x		

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APPENDIX 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

Criteria for Selecting Items
▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints)
▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)
▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels)
▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints)
▪ Public interest issue covered in local media
▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends
▪ Council corporate priority area
▪ Central government priority area
▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports
▪ New government guidance or legislation
▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue
▪ Others

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items
▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet
▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent
▪ Issue being examined by another internal body
▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year
▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year
▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues.

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APPENDIX 2

SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

DO
◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process◆ Is not opposition
◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction
◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture
◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities
◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions
◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information
◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies
◆ Be persistent and inquisitive
◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental
◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services
◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these
◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority
◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders
◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party
◆ Take time to review your own performance

◆ DON'T
◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment
◆ Be party political/partisan
◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity
◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on
◆ Get bogged down in detail
◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions
◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth
◆ Start without a clear brief and remit
◆ Underestimate the task
◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny
◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders
◆ Succumb to organisational inertia
◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development
◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview, and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help.

APPENDIX 2

KEY QUESTIONS

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-

Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want?
Are users' needs central to the service?
Why are we doing this?
What are we trying to achieve?
How well are we doing?
How do we compare with others?
Are we delivering value for money?
How do we know?
What can we improve?

INVESTIGATIONS:-

To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met?
To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended?
To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets?
Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy?
Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating?
Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it?
Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified?
How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence?
How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences?
Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed.
Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users?

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2021 - 31 JANUARY 2022

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Officers expect to take during the next four month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public at least 28 days before the beginning of each month.

A Key Decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

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

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each Key Decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision may not be taken, unless:

- it is published in the Forward Plan;
- 5 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- if the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, 5 clear days notice of the meeting has been given.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 26 (General Exception) and Rule 28 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE or accessed from the Council's website: www.sefton.gov.uk

- Council Constitution
- Forward Plan
- Reports on the Key Decisions to be taken
- Other documents relating to the proposed decision may be submitted to the decision making meeting and these too will be made available by the contact officer named in the Plan
- The minutes for each Key Decision, which will normally be published within 5 working days after having been made

Some reports to be considered by the Cabinet/Council may contain exempt information and will not be made available to the public. The specific reasons (Paragraph No(s)) why such reports are exempt are detailed in the Plan and the Paragraph No(s) and descriptions are set out below:-

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1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
8. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under—
 - (a) the Companies Act 1985;
 - (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
 - (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
 - (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
 - (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
 - (f) the Charities Act 1993.
9. Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992
10. Information which—
 - (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Council which are held at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle or the Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.sefton.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Section on telephone number 0151 934 2068.

NOTE:

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

Dwayne Johnson
Chief Executive

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Item Heading	Officer Contact
Pavilion Buildings Southport	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247
Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247
Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - October Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Award of North West Topographic Coastline Surveys	Andrew Martin andrew.martin@sefton.gov.uk
Land at Holgate Thornton	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247
Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - November Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2021/22	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100
Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - December Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Electricity Procurement (Corporate Portfolio) for the period 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2028	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552
Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106

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Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - January Update	
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Details of Decision to be taken	Pavilion Buildings Southport To seek approval to the terms and conditions provisionally agreed for the sale of the Council's freehold interest in the premises.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Oct 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Fully exempt			
Wards Affected	Cambridge; Dukes			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Strategic Capital Investment Group; Councillors			
Method(s) of Consultation	Previous Asset Disposal Reports and updates			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Pavilion Buildings Southport			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale Seek Cabinet approval to the terms and conditions for the disposal of the premises
Decision Maker	Cabinet
Decision Expected	7 Oct 2021 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/09/2021 to 07/10/2021. Reason: Further information is awaited to formulate the terms and conditions for disposal

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Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Fully exempt			
Wards Affected	Ainsdale			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Councillors as part of the above			
Method(s) of Consultation	Updates on disposal previously reported to Cabinet			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - October Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Oct 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial		Community Impact	
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			

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Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - October Update
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106

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Details of Decision to be taken	Land at Holgate Thornton To seek approval to the terms and conditions provisionally agreed for the sale of the Council's freehold interest in the land for housing development			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	4 Nov 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Fully exempt			
Wards Affected	Park			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Councillors			
Method(s) of Consultation	Previous reports submitted for Asset Disposal and subsequent updates.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Land at Holgate Thornton			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - November Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	4 Nov 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - November Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2021/22 This report provides Members with a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 30th September 2021.
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council

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Decision Expected	4 Nov 2021 18 Nov 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Not applicable			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2021/22			
Contact Officer(s) details	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - December Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	2 Dec 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			

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Wards Affected	All Wards
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - December Update
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Electricity Procurement (Corporate Portfolio) for the period 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2028 Report to show officer recommendation on procurement of electricity for the corporate estate, schools and New Directions			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	6 Jan 2022 20 Jan 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer; Council's Procurement Team; and National Framework Providers			

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Method(s) of Consultation	Emails; online meetings
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Electricity Procurement (Corporate Portfolio) for the period 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2028
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - January Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Jan 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial		Community Impact	
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2021/22 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2021/22 including the Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021/22 Budget - January Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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<p style="text-align: center;">Cabinet Member Brief Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) 14 September 2021</p>

Welfare Reform & Anti-Poverty Update

The Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Cabinet Member Reference Group met on 24 June 2021. The following updates were received:

Updates from the Welfare Reform & Anti-Poverty Steering Group

Officers from Public Health and Communities provided an update from discussions regarding community shop, community pantry model and summer food programmes.

Childhood poverty in Sefton and the impacts of COVID-19 were also discussed with members of the Partnership Steering Group.

Poverty Emergency & Childhood Poverty in Sefton

Following a report to Cabinet regarding Childhood Poverty in Sefton and the declaration of a poverty emergency, discussions have taken place between officers and Cabinet Members to consider how the Council moves towards the development of a Childhood Poverty Strategy and action plan.

A partnership event with a focus on collective responsibility is being planned as part of the consultation and engagement activities that will inform the development of a Childhood Poverty Strategy.

Community Shop

Cabinet Members and Officers provided feedback following visits to community pantries in the south of the borough managed by Ykids (Bootle), and Emmanuel Baptist Church (Netherton). It emphasised that the community pantry is a respectful and sustainable model and that it is smaller and easier to manage.

Members of the Reference Group agreed by consensus that the community pantry model is the most suitable way forward in Sefton and should be supported instead of the community shop model. Councillors emphasised the need to ensure the community pantry approach is implemented in a strategic way to meet the needs and breadth of access required across the borough. This approach is also supported by members of the Partnership Steering Group.

Holiday Activity Fund and Summer Food Programme

Officers from Communities reported that the Department for Education (DfE) are supporting with holiday activities during the school summer holidays. Focus has been upon keeping the funding allocation in Sefton and on delivering where need is greatest.

The Council is engaged with schools and is supporting the provision of holiday clubs. Youth provision has been commissioned as well as community and faith sector being approached to take part in holiday programmes.

DfE has requested provision for the Christmas period. It was discussed that this will present a challenge due to service availability over the period. It was suggested that a virtual offer could be created in addition to hampers with activities included.

Provision is also being considered for October and February half terms.

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Welfare Benefits Team Recruitment

Recruitment within the Welfare Benefits Team has been completed and that two staff have been appointed.

ELAS

Cabinet Members received the annual ELAS report providing a summary of performance information for the Council's local welfare support scheme since its implementation in April 2013, to the 31 March 2021.

Officers reported that current daily applications have increased by 38% when compared to the same period last year. Additional funding has been made available to maximise the number of awards.

Requests for action

Transport

Cabinet Members requested further information regarding transport in relation to poverty, social exclusion, and ability to access services. It was emphasised that transport is a cross-cutting issue which is strongly linked to the poverty agenda.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	14 September 2021
Subject:	Cabinet Member Report – August 2021		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report for the period June 2021 to August 2021 relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered because the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Any financial implications associated with the Cabinet Member report that are referred to in this update are contained within the respective reports.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

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(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Legal Implications:	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
<p>There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from matters referred to in the Cabinet Member report will be contained in reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.</p>	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Lappin’s portfolio during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to her portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council’s Core Purpose.</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services: As above</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: As above</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: As above</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above</p>

Greater income for social investment: As above
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Cleaner Greener: As above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Cabinet Member Update Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the attached Cabinet Member update report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2068
Email Address:	paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

Cabinet Member - (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) update report – to follow

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 The most recent Cabinet Member report for the Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services will be submitted to Members in due course.

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CABINET MEMBER REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) - 14 September 2021		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	August 2021

The service, as with the rest of the Council, has been focussed on supporting members, staff, residents and business in responding to and dealing with the pandemic.

Finance

Within the finance service, there has been significant activity on a number of key issues, namely

- Understanding issues relating to COVID-19 that need to be met from the emergency fund and other funding sources provided by the Government;
- Understanding the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on the Council's income sources; and,
- Reviewing the Budget Plan for 2021/2022 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan, including the potential ongoing impact of COVID-19.

From July reports have been, and will continue to be, presented to Cabinet on monitoring the Council's revenue and capital budgets for 2021/2022, including the impact of COVID19, and outlining new funding streams being made available to the Council.

The latest report to be presented to Cabinet on 2nd September indicates that an underspend of £0.583m is currently forecast against the Council's revenue budget.

The closure of the accounts for 2020/2021 was completed in June, with the revenue and capital outturn position reported to Cabinet in July.

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/2021 was published at the end of July. Due to delays in the completion of the internal valuations of the Council's assets, it was agreed with the Council's external auditors (EY) that we would publish the Statement of Accounts without the impact of any of the completed valuations. All valuations have now been completed and the draft Statement of Accounts have been updated. EY are currently undertaking their audit and the final Statement of Accounts will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee in September for approval.

Customer Centric Services

Business Support Grants

The application window for COVID-related business support grants ended on 30th June 2021.

The table below summarises the payments made for the various schemes between April 2020 and July 2021:

Grant	No. of Payments	Value of Payments
Small Business Grant	3,284	£ 32,840,000.00

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Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant (£10k)	397	£ 3,970,000.00
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant (£25k)	529	£ 13,225,000.00
Local Authority Discretionary Grant	340	£ 2,237,500.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) (Tier 2 & 3 Restrictions)	598	£ 426,372.68
Local Restrictions Grant (Sectors)	8	£ 9,049.42
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum - Nov 2021	1,816	£ 2,788,272.00
Christmas Support Payments for wet led pubs	102	£ 102,000.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum - 5 Jan to 15 Feb 21	1,988	£ 4,592,033.00
Closed Business Lockdown Payment	1,992	£ 9,207,000.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open)	467	£ 2,045,556.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum - 16 Feb to 31 Mar 21	1,974	£ 4,771,512.00
Restart Grants - Non-Essential Retail	651	£ 2,039,495.00
Restart Grants - Hospitality, Leisure, Accommodation, Sports & Personal Care	1,202	£ 10,954,000.00
Taxi Drivers - Round 1	2,620	£ 262,000.00
Taxi Drivers - Round 2	3,242	£ 648,400.00
Hospitality & Leisure Round 1	231	£ 407,500.00
Hospitality & Leisure Round 1 - Top-up	219	£ 1,476,910.00
Hospitality & Leisure Round 2	1	£ 1,334.00
Hospitality & Leisure Round 2 - Top-up	153	£ 280,822.00
LCR Local Business Support Grant (Round 3)	476	£ 1,921,500.00
LCR May Top-up	726	£ 3,027,287.15
Care Providers	149	£ 520,000.00
Totals	23,165	£ 97,753,543.25

Test and Trace Self-Isolation Support Payments

The Department of Health and Social Care has further extended the scheme to 30th September 2021. In line with the increase in the number of positive COVID-cases, there has been an increase in the volume of applications received from residents advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

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As at 9th August 2021, 4,358 claims have been received, with decisions made in 3,844 cases, i.e. 942 mandatory awards, 717 discretionary awards and 2,185 refusals where applicants have not met eligibility criteria. Total payments made to date are £471,000 mandatory payments and £358,500 discretionary payments.

Rules around payment eligibility are due to further change with effect from 16th August 2021 when those who are fully-vaccinated and identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive are no longer required to self-isolate.

The team dealing with the scheme continue to telephone most applicants to discuss their claim, and when a claim is refused, offer other welfare support, especially support towards Council Tax through the Council's exceptional hardship fund.

Customer Services

Bootle One Stop Shop continues to support the taxi-trade by offering appointments to drivers who are required to attend in person to renew licenses. The One Stop Shop-service in Southport continues to be provided from The Atkinson.

COVID-related telephone calls into the Contact Centre again increased as more residents enquired about how to apply for the Test and Trace self-isolation payment.

Revenues & Benefits Software system implementation

Following the new contract that was awarded to NEC (previously known as Northgate Public Services) from 1st April 2021, staff from Customer Centric Services, ICT, Agilisys and Northgate have been working together to finalise the project plan and complete the project initiation stage before moving to implementation.

Breathing Space

Legislation came into effect on May 4, 2021 to provide respite to those with problem debt the right to legal protections from their creditors. The first notification that a resident in debt to the Council had entered Breathing Space for 60-days was received on 5th May 2021.

35 cases have been referred to the Council up to July 31, 2021 with total debts amounting to £83,033. Of the 35 cases, Breathing Space has expired on 8 cases without any payment arrangement being offered, the debts on those cases totals £34,778.

Risk and Audit

The **Internal Audit** team are continuing to work on delivering the internal audit plan with a current focus on providing assurance on the Covid related business grants that have been provided to local businesses both nationally and from Liverpool City Region. The Team have recently completed a corporate governance review which included work on the development of the Annual Governance Statement. The Team are working with colleagues across the Liverpool City Region so that there is a consistent approach to counter fraud steps that should be in place. We are currently recruiting two temporary Principal Auditors which is taking longer than we anticipated due to the current jobs market.

Insurance Team have completed and are working on the following initiatives to improve the Council's risk management.

- The team completed a tender exercise in December 2020 to value a sample of Council properties for insurance purposes to ensure that the current rebuild values used are accurate and will protect from insurers using average clause in the event of major loss. The result of the exercise has identified significant differences against the current revaluations. The revised figures have been included in the insurance renewal.

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The team are currently drawing up a proposal to complete a revaluation of a further sample of properties which will be brought forward for approval.

- We are working with insurers and the Council's liability insurers to robustly defend claims and in limited circumstances will pursue through the Courts claimants to recover Council costs where the claims are proven to be exaggerated
- Team also continues to work extensively with Service Teams including Highways and Tourism to improve the management of insurable risk in areas where there are high numbers of claims or areas of concern.
- The Team are currently in the process of completing the insurance renewal for the Council which is due on the 29 September 2021. The insurance market remains "hard", with significant cost increases arising on all cover levels, insurers appetite for risk reducing and insurers pricing for profit not markets share. As a result, despite having a relatively good claims experience it is likely that we face cost increases above the annual inflationary uplift or limits on cover unless we carry out actions to reduce risk to the insurer.

The **Risk and Resilience Team**. The Emergency Planning focus during the quarter has been on following up on the training for the loggists and volunteers. We are currently developing succession planning and a training plan for the loggists as well as further planned training for the volunteers. Business Continuity Plans have been completed in the first wave and we are now working through a programme of refreshing the existing plans as well as bringing forward plans to test the activation of the plans and undertake exercises.

The **Risk and Resilience Team** are also working on developing a proposal for the Council's Risk Appetite as well as facilitating the updates of the Council's Corporate Risk Register working with the Risk Owners to update the risk register. Other work includes:

- Working with the Merseyside Resilience Forum
- Developing revised Emergency Plan for the 2022 Grand National

The **Assurance Team** have been involved in the development of fraud risk assessments following the self-assessment against the CIPFA Code of Practice on Fraud for each Service Area. The team have also been involved in providing support to the provision of Covid related grants to local businesses.

Assurance officers from the Risk and Audit Team have been providing support with the NFI Blue Badge mortality checks exercise, with the latest progress update being:

Number of matches received 905
Numbers investigated 201
Badges cancelled 172
Earliest date cancelled from 22 February 2019

There is potentially financial savings generated as well as enhancing the Council's reputation as a result of intervention to detect and stop the potential misuse of Blue Badges. The saving relates to the loss of parking revenue to the Council as a result of the abuse of Blue Badges. Most importantly, the impact of any misuse has on genuinely disabled persons who cannot park and drive further distances to find suitable spaces.

In the programme for the current year is the completion of the Council's Counter Fraud Strategy with consultation with the Strategic Leadership Board with final approval of the Cabinet later in the financial year.

For the Health and Safety Team there will be a continued focus during the next quarter of delivering the Health and Safety Improvement Plan and also the ongoing recovery programmes from COVID-19 with planned priorities:-

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- Continue to support to assist Managers with the recovery programmes from COVID-19.
- Continue to review, update and monitor the Health and Safety Standards and Policies, with focus on working from home, display screen and workstation assessments and stress risk assessments.
- Continue to develop the Council-wide training needs assessment which will eventually build into the health and safety training plan and provision.
- Undertaking a planned review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and completing the Annual Health and Safety report.
- Focus on improving the accuracy of incident reporting across the Council will continue to ensure incidents of threatening and abusive behaviours towards staff are reported.
- Continue to deliver a health and safety management audit and inspection regime across the Council, to schools with a Service Level Agreement with the Council and those schools where the Council retains responsibility for the health and safety as the employer. This will provide assurance that health and safety management systems are suitable and effective.

The Council has a contract with its liability insurers which includes an allocation of free training or service days to assist with implementing effective risk management across the Council. Health and Safety training for new Heads of Service will be provided from the allocation as well as using some of the days to help develop a e-learning content for a risk management course.

ICT

The ICT Service continues to respond to changing business requirements in line with the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. This includes supporting the Economic Growth and Housing team in the implementation of ICT systems to support grants for local businesses in line with regional plans.

In June the Client team played a key role in the completion of the Electrical testing at St Peters House, this included a full power down of the Data Centre hosted in this building, the challenge was significant and there was an impact on a number of projects whilst resource was redirected. However, the work went very well, and the team managed to maintain a skeleton ICT Service, including access to email and Cloud Telephony during the outage.

Further deployment of the new CXP solution is now planned for the forthcoming period, the new Anti-social behaviour process is now signed off for deployment with go live planned for August and go live of the Bins not emptied process is now scheduled for September this year. The team are now working to transfer all current business processes in Northgate to CXP with work scheduled to complete across all areas for first quarter of 2022.

In addition, the team has supported the migration and upgrade of the corporate website to the Umbraco platform. UAT is now completed and the Client team continues to work in partnership with the Communications and Agilisys team to resolve any snagging issues identified prior to go live.

The statement of work for the Cloud Migration project is now signed off and the project starts week commencing the 9th of August, with a new temporary Project Manager due to start with the authority on the 1st of September. The project will see migration take place in 3 waves running from Autumn 2021 through to March 2022. The team has also secured the services of a third-party security company to complete independent validation of the design and associated security infrastructure.

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Cloud Telephony deployment continues at pace with deployment completed across Corporate Resources, Adults and Children's Services Teams. Remaining council services are due to go live at the end of August, with a small number of Schools scheduled for early September. The main risk to deployment is a worldwide shortage of the specialist handsets required. Although most users will access the system via their device (PC or Laptop) and a headset Sefton still does require a number of handsets for areas such as reception spaces, members rooms and Leisure Centres. This means we cannot exit the existing Virgin contract until these handsets are in place. Feedback in relation to the solution has been overwhelming positive across all teams.

Schools ICT – implementation of the new Connectivity Service for schools is now underway, for those schools who have taken the SLA for Connectivity. The schools already live are reporting significant improvements in the speed of their connections. Due to the aforementioned Electrical Testing deployment has been delayed with completion now due in September 2021.

Further procurement activity continues at pace and the forward plan for the forthcoming period is complete and has being signed off by members of ELT and SLB. A key challenge in this area is capacity, with the resignation of the Procurement Manager. Work is in progress to secure a temporary resource whilst the new structure for Commissioning and Procurement is established.

Property Services

The Property Services Department are a Multi-Disciplinary team delivering various services, professional advice and initiatives across the Borough of Sefton. Below are some examples of ongoing pieces of work throughout the department.

Asset Management/FM

- Ongoing work to deliver Phase 1 Asset Disposals Consultant appointed to assist. Three sites on Forward Plan for Cabinet reports later in the year.
- Asset records input and liaison with Building Maintenance colleagues for new (property based) IT system in support of Corporate Landlord Implementation Ongoing. Approval obtained for Property Management Assistant to be appointed to assist with input work
- Agreement of terms and reporting for Lease of various assets Ongoing.
- Asset Valuations completed for end of year accounting
- Negotiated and agreed Heads of Terms for sub Lease of part of first floor Magdalen House to CCG with physical decant now being developed Completed. Break Notice served on landlord for termination of Leases of third and fourth floors
- Let a number of seasonal refreshment concessions throughout the Borough.
- The 1st floor right hand wing of Magdalen House is now clear to facilitate the CCG's move from their temporary home on the 4th floor to their permanent office on the 1st floor. They do however require five offices to be built that will require Landlord's approval prior to construction, which will delay their move.
- Most of the departmental submissions have been received for the Future Ways of Working to inform decisions on Agile Working and Building Capacities. These are now being scrutinised to ensure nobody has been missed and whether their requests are in line with the corporate strategy for agile working.
- Ongoing management of 'day to day FM operations' to also include the COVID-19 measures and management within buildings.

Maintenance Management and Building Services

- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Corporate Buildings.
- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Education Capital programme.
- Delivery of reactive maintenance and statutory compliance services to Corporate and Educational buildings.

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- Professional advice and support on a broad range of regeneration programmes.
- Development and implementation of a new coordinated (property based) IT system in support of Corporate Landlord Implementation.
- Managing remedial works scheme
- Reviewing essential maintenance work requirements for Corporate buildings, including phasing at Bootle Town Hall.
- Delivering services in support of major adaptation to vulnerable and disabled residents.

Project Management

- Continued professional support to Growth Board on several projects.
- Project manage various Education capital schemes.
- Provide support to other teams on Asset Disposal, Building Maintenance, Asset Management and Statutory Compliance colleagues.
- Developing a revised agile model proposal.

Energy Management

- Continued active support of those in fuel poverty and the most vulnerable – taking place remotely.
- ERDF Retrofit for the future – on track. Due to end Nov 2021.
- Local Authority Delivery of Green homes Grant (LAD, GHG)
 - LAD1b consortium of LCR LAs secured funding to retrofit low income homes to 30 homes. Delays on finalising contract – now expected to be delivered by Oct 2021
 - LAD2 direct award of funding from the CA to Sefton to retrofit ~215 low income private homes. Works due to start in August. Estates in Netherton, Litherland and Bootle with problematic insulation issues have been targeted. Wider campaign to be launched to offer loft and cavity wall insulation to wider low income homes. Scheme to due to end December 2021, but a 2-month ext. likely.
 - LAD3 and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) – Now called ‘Sustainable warmth’ competition. A consortium bid led by the LCR has been submitted 4 August, results due to be announced in November 2021
- Works to upgrade roof insulation and improve glazing at Southport and Bootle Town Halls progressing – initially delayed due to budgeting issues but now resolved. Aligned with essential maintenance works to avoid additional costs. Works now due to commence August 2021 and conclude by March 2022.
- Bid submitted to expand the work on decarbonising buildings – result due end of August 2021. Climate Emergency
 - Preparations underway for COP 26 conference Nov 2021
 - Action plan projects progressing well (will be reporting to Member Ref group 26 August 2021)
- Air Quality Education and behaviour change – Immersive room to be installed September 2021 at Southport Eco centre. Work ongoing to promote the clean air crew website to schools across the LCR progressing well.

Legal Services

- The Legal Contracts Team remains extremely busy at working at full capacity, in particular advising on all of the Council’s major projects including the proposed Marine Lake Events Centre development, the redevelopment of the Enterprise Arcade, the continuing Bootle/Strand regeneration, green homes projects and various high profile and important Liverpool City Region schemes.

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- The Covid pandemic continues to have a very significant effect on the Council's procurement and contracting activity which Legal Contracts supports, including ongoing variations reacting to the pandemic, extensions of existing contracts to endure service continuity and numerous post-Covid recovery schemes particularly around social care provision, work restart schemes, mental health schemes and affected contractors' performance. Brexit also continues to have a transformative effect on the Council's contracting and procurement activity and Legal Contracts continues to provide proactive advice around forthcoming changes to the UK's public procurement regime (both the general regime, and the proposals for a bespoke health and social care regime) and new subsidy control (formerly state aid). The Legal Contracts team has also provided strategic advice on best practice and risk mitigation in light of the Caller Report.
- The Employment Team continues to advise on a wide range of employment tribunal claims for both the Council and Schools in the borough. In addition, the Team provides a high quality legal advisory service on day to day employment matters.
- The Property Team remain busy continuing to support the Council's estates team and property portfolio during the coming out of the Covid period, including an increase in matters relating to recovery of rent, and potential forfeiture proceedings when the moratorium ends. Planning matters also continue at pace with the construction recovery, the continuing number of large and significant developments coming through, and the return to face-to-face committee meetings.
- The Childcare/Adults and Education Legal Team have worked through a very difficult period for the client departments/schools throughout the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic has brought increased pressures and there has been a significant rise in court proceedings which has been a very challenging time for the team. Nationally there has been a 20% rise with children being harmed during Covid and Sefton have had a rise in care proceedings during this period which together with cases not being able to be concluded due to Covid restrictions has brought increased workloads for the Team. There also continues to be a rise in international cases. Overall, there has been an unprecedented rise in the volume of work impacting the Team.
- With the lockdown restrictions beginning to ease, the Adults Team have noticed an increase in work across a range of issues. They have issued welfare applications in the Court of Protection and handled a protracted and expensive historical child sexual abuse matter. Covid has seen the increase of Ordinary Residence queries due to the Government's Hospital Discharge Policy and the Team have also noticed the impact of the pandemic on Mental Health queries. The Adults Team await the much-anticipated Code of Practice for LPS. (Liberty Protection safeguards) and the Children's Team are currently working with the Family Court on the Family Justice reforms.

Debt Recovery:

- Continued hard work to chase debtors coming to fruition with a final payment being made to clear a debt of £28,000.
- The completion of a sale of a 'problem property' by the Council has recouped £9,837.63 in unpaid business rates with wider benefits for the local area.
- The Team have secured payments in full for two debts which were due to be written off.

Prosecutions and Regulatory:

- A successful prosecution of a business selling counterfeit cigarettes resulting in a costs award and a community service order.

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- A number of enforcement notices have been served on properties in breach of planning control.
- An application to appeal the decision of the Council to refuse to grant a private hire driver's licence was successfully opposed.
- Licensing and Regulatory Committee were provided with training and support at their recent meeting.

Electoral Services

Preparations for the annual canvass have been completed and process of updating the register electors has started. A national data match is carried out as part of the process to measure the accuracy of our records against those held by the Department of Work and Pensions. Our results are high at 84.9%, and slightly up on last year 84.6%. Voter Registration will now go out to all households and from all the information received and collated, the 2022 Register of Electors will be published on the 1 December 2021.

Democratic Services Team – Overview

- The Team have been working hard in ensuring the safe return to Physical Meetings whilst adhering to COVID health and safety requirements.
- The Induction of Newly Elected Members went extremely well, all Members enjoyed the programme, documents and short videos can be accessed on the Councils library by following the link: <http://smbc-modgov-03/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13976>
- Councillor Clare Louise Carragher was Elected the Mayor of Sefton for 2021/22 and Councillor Burns was Elected Deputy Chair at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 18 May 2021.
- The appointments of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and Sub Committees were approved at the adjourned Annual Meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2021.
- The Team is now preparing for the next cycle of meetings during the current Municipal Year 2021/22 in relation to Committees and in that respect the following Committees will continue with their individual Work Programmes for 2021/22:
- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)**

At the Adjourned Annual meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2021, Councillors Carla Thomas and Greg Myers were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Committee. The Committee's first meeting was held on 22 June 2021 and its main task was to set the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The Committee's Mental Health Issues Working Group has just completed its review and a new Working Group can be considered at the next meeting.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)**

At the Adjourned Annual meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2021 Councillors Sue Bradshaw and Les Byrom were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Committee. The Committee's first meeting was held on 15 June 2021 and its main task was to set the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year; and to consider the establishment of working groups.

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- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)**

At the Adjourned Annual meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2021 Councillors John Sayers and Janis Blackburne were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Committee. The Committee's first meeting was held on 29 June 2021 and its main task was to set the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The Committee currently has two Working groups: Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity and Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People. The Committee has agreed that no new Working Groups will be established until the current two have completed their reviews. At the time of drafting this report a Special meeting of the Committee is scheduled to consider a "called-in" item on a Proposed Temporary Traffic Regulation Order.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)**

At the Adjourned Annual meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2021, Councillors June Burns and Paula Spencer were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Committee. The Committee's first meeting was held on 22 June 2021 and its main task was to set the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The Committee agreed to defer further work on the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group until data is available in twelve months' time and a new Working Group can be considered at the next meeting.

- **Admission Appeals**

- In addition to the provision of administrative support for meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and Committees, the Section has also continued to organise and clerk school admission appeal hearings.

The start of the new academic year continues to be an extremely busy time for the Clerk to Education Appeals. The week commencing 6 September has over 30 LEA appeals scheduled. Archdiocese appeals are scheduled for the following week, with the possible addition of more LEA appeals too. A full report on the progress be submitted to the next cycle.

- **Civic and Mayoral**

The Mayor's Office is now underway on arranging Charity Fundraising events for Cllr Carragher's term of office, we have three events planned, Friday 15th October is the Charity 'Oktoberfest' Night, Friday 16th December, is the Mayor's Charity Christmas Quiz and Mayor of Sefton's Gala Charity Ball on Saturday 26th March 2022. Tickets will be going on sale shortly for the Oktoberfest & Charity Ball.

Plans are now underway for Remembrance Sunday 2021, the Mayor of Sefton will be attending the Bootle Service this year

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Operational Issues

Advice and support continues to be provided to all service areas. Predominantly, issues have been, and continue to be, related to the Coronavirus pandemic and the impact on resources in terms of staffing and service provision in all areas. Regular discussions are taking place at departmental management team meetings and with the trade unions. Meetings are being conducted through Microsoft Teams.

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The majority of staff are working from home with occasional agile working at office sites as required, with social distancing measures in place. Advice to staff is that working from home is to continue until proposals for future ways of working have been agreed. Reviews and restructures across the organisation are being dealt with in the context of the current situation.

Matters relating to disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work have been lesser than usual, but where necessary, formal meetings have been held via Microsoft Teams. Advice and support in the management of sickness absence, particularly Covid-19 related absences, has been the main focus. Formal action under the sickness absence policy and procedures is being gradually progressed.

Pay and Grading and Establishment Control Team

Job evaluation is undertaken relative to all Council and School posts for new or revised roles and relative to any operational and service reviews to maximise efficiencies as part of restructuring exercises across the Council. Team members are involved in service reviews and work to support transformational proposals and potential changes to service delivery. Current restructuring exercises include Education Excellence and Children's Services.

The Establishment Control team are then responsible for building any revised structures and changes to reporting hierarchies into the Councils operating systems. The team members have been heavily involved in the project of implementing the new iTrent Payroll and HR system.

The Establishment Control Panel takes place every 2 weeks to consider requests in relation to the release of vacancies and the approval of any changes to the Councils Establishment. All establishment changes are mapped to ensure correct payments are made, hierarchical organisational structures are appropriate and operational processes are effectively maintained.

Establishment Control review safeguarding checks held against posts e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service, Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) etc. with Heads of Service and amend as required. The team manages and controls the temporary end dates relative to all fixed term contracts and provides establishment control information reports for the Council and schools.

Regrading applications and appeals are processed in line with the Council protocol.

The team undertakes the review of HAY graded positions for new posts and the evaluation of HAY posts stemming from any revised proposals to the HAY grading structure.

The team manage the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of Agency workers. Agency recruitment is currently at an all time high to deal with the demands across Children's Services and the new Government initiative Kickstart programme offering 6-month job placements for young people aged 17-24 on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

The team manage sickness absence data, including production of management reports, sickness absence analysis and quarterly absence figures for SLT. A review of the Sickness absence systems will be undertaken in line with the implementation of the new iTrent payroll and HR system.

One of the Team members is on the project team responsible for mapping future ways of working for Council staff when Covid-19 is no longer placing restrictions on how the workforce can behave and building on the changes and adaptations made since March 2020 and how they can be reviewed, refined or extended to further the ambition of the Council for maximising a flexible approach to how it functions.

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Transactional HR Payroll and Pension (THRP) Services

A decision was taken In December 2020 to move from ResourceLink to Midland iTrent for the Payroll HR System.

Parallel runs took place for April, May, June and July 2021. There are 53 separate payrolls and 12,500 people paid and each payslip was balanced between the old and new systems.

THRP went live in the new system in a staggered approach in July and August 2021.

The staff have had to learn the new system and still ensure everyone was paid on time from the legacy system and the team have worked extremely hard and long hours to make this happen.

Most THRP staff are continuing to work from home this has gone well. Some processes have had to be changed and the staff have embraced these changes There are some staff who have to still go into the office due to various issues, Internet, paper etc. The number of staff going into the office is being closely monitored.

Employee Self Service (ESS) has been roiled out to the majority of employees, for viewing of payslips and to amend address, bank details etc. and paper payslips have been produced for staff who are unable to access the Internet

The team are currently looking at the following:

- Expenses claimed via ESS and approved via Manager Self Service (MSS)
- Teachers pensions Monthly data collection (MDC) moving to Monthly Contribution Reconciliation (MCR) from 1st November 2021

Occupational Health

Health Unit

During May, June and July 2021, a total of 183 referrals for SMBC employees were made to the Health Unit. This is approximately 4% more than the same period 12 months previously.

The majority of referrals during this period were from Education Excellence (50.2%%), Locality Services (10.9%) and Communities (9.8%). As usual the main reasons were stress and mental health related (46.9%), chronic medical illness (20.8%) and musculoskeletal (19.7%).

The Unit is now involved in the progression and build of the OH element of the new ITrent system. Live rollout for this is anticipated mid-September.

Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)

Apprenticeships

Staff enrolled on the **Level 6 Social Work Apprenticeship Degree** and the **Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship Degree programme (MBA)** are continuing with their studies and are making good progress.

We've launched a new apprenticeship standard called the **Coaching Professional Level 5 qualification** and the first briefing session will be held on Thursday 16th September 2021.

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We are getting ready to procure the **Level 7 Senior Leader in Schools Apprenticeship Degree** and will make this available to Sefton schools in Autumn 2021.

Training delivery

The Workforce Learning and Development Team have worked incredibly hard since the Covid-19 outbreak to adapt the way we deliver classroom training – this includes offering virtual training using MS Teams and adapting existing classroom courses to eLearning, pre-recorded webinars, self-help guides and commissioning new eLearning courses. Examples include:

- **Safeguarding Adults and Children’s Awareness eLearning** will replace the pre-recorded webinars/classroom courses from September 2021.
- **Performance Development Review (PDR) for Staff and Managers eLearning** will be launched end of August/early September 2021. The eLearning will help employees get the most out of the new PDR process, scheduled to go live on 1st September 2021.
- **Equality and Diversity for Managers eLearning** – we are currently working with a training provider and the Corporate Equality Group to refresh and update this course in line with current Equality legislation.

We continue to work closely with the Care Homes cell to develop an **Education and Training Programme** for Care Homes, Community Services and recipients of direct payment affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The programme includes local and national resources covering the following topics:

- Infection, Prevention and Control
- Medication
- End of Life Care
- Bereavement
- Moving and Handling
- Look after You - Health and Wellbeing Resources
- Further sources of support

The resources are updated on a monthly basis and are available in PDF format and as separate eLearning modules on Me Learning.

Workforce/Organisational Development

Currently supporting Children’s Social Care to deliver on a number of identified improvements following the recent Ofsted Inspection. We are also involved in the Council of 2023 programme and are getting ready to launch the Council’s new PDR process called My Sefton, My Space. This is a key part of the opportunity’s employees will have to help them develop, grow and thrive in their role.

Strategic Support

The Communications team continue to be at the heart of all activity across the Council and are playing a critical role in supporting all areas of the Council in order to ensure that residents and business are informed at the earliest opportunity of all key issues and information is provided in a clear and concise manner. All internal and external communication channels are being used extensively.

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The team has worked closely with national colleagues (DHSC and PHE) and local partners from the Merseyside Resilience Forum and our 2 local CCGs, to ensure clear, concise and timely information is available to all our communities in relation to the lifting of Covid restrictions (step 4), encouraging vaccination take up and how to access local testing sites. The team are working closely with ICT and Agilisys colleagues to progress the website reskin project. A number of technical challenges has delayed the project with an anticipated launch date now set for September 2021. August 30th will see the launch of the Sefton Council page on Nextdoor, a hyper local social media site. The team are also finalising the rollout of e-shot, the new email marketing system which will replace Merseynow. The team has worked on many high profile campaigns and projects, such as the launch of the new Southport Market, plans for Bootle Canalside and town centre, Sefton Coastal Partnership summer campaign, and Pride.

The Procurement team is playing a key role in many initiatives across the Council including the procurement Cloud based telephony, Network connectivity for schools, Sefton at Work CRM, and Libraries RFID kiosks. Work relating to providing an effective mechanism for improving the social impact/social value from our contracted providers, particularly its focus on "Achieving Community Benefit", which includes "obtaining social value has continued. The team will prioritise this work over the coming months as it will play a key part in recovery.

Business Intelligence team are continuing to support many work streams across the Council including Economic Regeneration, Education Excellence, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Public Health Services. Key areas of work include daily analysis of Covid-19 pandemic data, processing of National Shielding Service referrals and submission of vulnerable children & young people returns to the DfE. The team are progressing the implementation of a new data warehouse and analytics reporting platform for the Council. They are also working closely with Children's Social Care to review performance management for the service following the recent Ofsted focussed visit. Furthermore, the teams continue to deal with complaints, subject access requests, consultation & engagement activities and managing the project to digitise the Council's historic paper records.

The Commissioning team are working with Children's and Adults Services supporting with a range of projects as part of Demand Management and market management, ensuring that services are available to meet statutory needs, this includes Day Opportunities, Supported Living, Domiciliary Care and Care homes alongside children's placements. This is a critical function and activity as the Council responds to the protection of its most vulnerable.

The Strategic Support team continue to support the delivery of COVID testing in the borough, including surge testing and supporting the Outbreak Management Board. The team leads on the promotion and use of accessible information and has arranged further workshops for Members. As part of the support provided to the Demand Management programme of work, the team has been providing project support to Adult Social Care for Day Opportunities and Supported Living developments. The team is also involved in the development of a programme of activities to support our Foster Care families, including outdoor activities with Green Sefton and linking with other service areas to create opportunities.