

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 29th June, 2021

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Ballroom, Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor
Councillor John Sayers (Chair)
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Councillor D'Albuquerque
Councillor Cluskey
Councillor Hansen
Councillor Chris Maher
Councillor Myers
Councillor Page
Councillor Robinson
Councillor Sathiy

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor Killen
Councillor Howard
Councillor Morris
Councillor O'Brien
Councillor Grace
Councillor Anne Thompson
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Waterfield
Councillor Yvonne Sayers
Councillor Shaw

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 Ballroom at Bootle Town Hall at any one time. We would ask parties remain in the Ballroom solely for the duration of consideration of the Committee report(s) to which their interest relates.

We therefore request that if you wish to attend the Committee to please register in advance of the meeting via email – paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk by no later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday, 29 June 2021

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 Ballroom is limited.

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 by switching their camera and microphone off 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 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting held 9 March 2021

4. Work Programme 2021/22, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan (Pages 11 - 28)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

5. Cabinet Member Reports - June 2021 (Pages 29 - 82)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

REMOTE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9TH MARCH, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor John Sayers (in the Chair)
Councillor Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Brough, Dowd, Halsall, Killen, Lewis,
Myers, Robinson and Sathiy

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Hardy

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

34. DIGITAL STRATEGY - PRESENTATIONS

The Committee received presentations on:

Backhaul Network and the Liverpool City Region Digital Strategy from Andrea Watts, Executive Director – People; and

Sefton's Digital Strategy 2021 – 2023 from Helen Spreadbury, Senior Manager ICT & Digital. The Committee was advised that the Digital Strategy had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 4 February 2021 and a link to the Cabinet report and accompanying Strategy was included within the agenda.

Backhaul Network and the Liverpool City Region Digital Strategy

Andrea Watts, Executive Director – People advised that the Metro Mayor's manifesto made a commitment for LCR to be the most digitally connected area in the country and putting the infrastructure in place now to ensure that the region could be at the forefront of the digital revolution moving forward; and provided information on:

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- The importance of providing a platform for transformational growth and development in LCR
- The joint venture agreement worth £30m over 15 years between LCR, its. and NGE Concessions and the anticipated £105m economic benefit over the 15-year period and the creation of 500+ jobs
- The impact of a new “motorway” for digital traffic in LCR
- The benefits for Sefton which included 43 km of network and connection to the transatlantic cable in Southport
- The timeline for the proposal and that Sefton would see some of the earliest new build construction by October 2021
- LCR Digital Strategy
- The focus on Digital Inclusion – working with Local Authorities to create/maintain a comprehensive research and evidence base; to develop and deliver an effective, all-encompassing digital inclusion programme; and redress Digital Poverty

Ms. Watts indicated that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) held on 2 March 2021 the same presentation was made; and that the Committee had asked how many of the anticipated 500+ jobs, to be created as part of the joint venture agreement, would be Sefton based. This information was in the process of being obtained and would be circulated to both Committee’s Members when available.

Sefton’s Digital Strategy 2021 – 2023

Helen Spreadbury, Senior Manager ICT & Digital indicated that the Digital Strategy for Sefton 2021-2023 was developed in line with the Councils 2030 Vision and included significant engagement and consultation; recognised and took into account Regional and National Strategies; was a two-year strategy in line with key priorities for the Council; was an outward facing document which set out the authorities ambitions and priorities; and that internal governance was being established to robust programme development and delivery; and provided information on:

- The Strategy’s objectives of the connected Council, empowering residents and business growth
- The governance arrangements associated with the Strategy

RESOLVED:

That Andrea Watts and Helen Spreadbury be thanked for their informative presentations.

35. SEFTON ECONOMIC STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Economic Regeneration and Housing that updated on the progress of the Sefton

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Economic Strategy Action Plan (December 2019) (the Plan) and the associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

The report indicated that the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills had approved the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan on 28 November 2019; that the Plan was the culmination of two major pieces of evidence gathering and work focussing on Sefton’s economy, namely:

- The Sefton Economic Assessment, a factual statement of the borough’s strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Framework for Action, or the building blocks of the Strategy

and that the intention was to make the Plan a working document that would be periodically reviewed in terms of its progress and performance at key stages to enable the Council to share its findings and progress, with its partners, businesses and communities.

The report also advised that in January 2020 Officers had started the development of a performance framework to help measure the impact of each of the 7 thematic areas attached to the Plan; that the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in March 2020 required a complete change in direction and strategy as the Council became engaged in a series of emergency measures to help support Sefton’s residents, communities and businesses throughout various lockdowns and associated Government tiers of control; and that while the Plan remained fit for purpose and the foundation for building economic activity, it was inevitable that the pandemic would impact on planned projects. Therefore, a further Priority Action Area had been added - Recovery, which would focus on new Covid-19 emergency response measures including some of the key projects previously identified in the Plan.

Furthermore, in November 2020 the Council produced a Strategic Recovery Plan with a purpose to provide leadership and highlight opportunity and corral our many stakeholders into collective and collaborative action at a borough level; and that this plan was intended to help re-build our economy and that a number of key projects had been prioritised.

The report concluded by detailing the results and outcomes of a wide range of activities in response to supporting the Sefton economy, its residents, communities, businesses and key sectors over the 11 months of the pandemic.

The following appendices were attached to this report:

- (1) Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (December 2019)
- (2) Sefton Economic Recovery Plan
- (3) Sefton Economic Recovery Plan (Appendices)

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Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Reference was made to the closure of Carnegie Library in 2013 leaving Crosby with just one library, and information was sought on rumours that an additional library was about to be opened in Crosby. Stuart Barnes, Head of Economic Growth and Housing indicated that there were no plans to create an additional library in Crosby
- A number of Members thanked Stuart Barnes, Head of Economic Growth and Housing and his colleagues for their hard work, in challenging times, to implement many exciting projects across the Borough and provide help and support to businesses. Special mention was made of the recent, successful Southport Town Deal Fund bid to secure £37.5m of funding that would the town rebuild its reputation as one of the premier destinations in the UK

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report detailing the progress made in respect of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan approved by Cabinet Member in December 2019; and the associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan, be noted; and
- (2) the Chief Executive be advised of the Committee's appreciation of the efforts undertaken by the Head of Economic Growth and Housing and his colleagues for their hard work, in challenging times, to implement many exciting projects across the Borough and provide help and support to businesses and in particular in relation to the successful Southport Town Deal Fund bid.

36. GREEN SEFTON - INCOME AND GROWTH UPDATE - PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Mark Shaw, Green Sefton Service Manager and Andy Cutts, Green Sefton Development Officer that provided an update on new innovations for income and growth in development by Green Sefton; indicating that the service had an adopted aspiration to reduce reliance on Council revenue as part of both the Green Sefton Service Vision and Service Plan, and to contribute to the overall corporate 2030 Vision; that as such, Green Sefton proposed a number of outline proposals for development in Autumn 2018, and several of these had now been formally taken forwards, whilst others were either still in development, or in the pipeline for future attention; and that provided an overview on the existing and future planned projects.

Mark Shaw and Andy Cutts referred to the following points as part of their presentation:

- Green Sefton Enterprise
- Infrastructure

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- Concessions
- Funding Options
- Natural Alternatives
- Asset Management
- Golf – Bootle
- Golf – Southport
- Ainsdale Gateway
- Future Projects – 2021/22

Mr Shaw concluded that since 2018/19, £1.64M of new capital had been created with these innovative approaches and that the income balance of the service had increased from 25% to 30%; that lessons had been learned throughout as would be expected with any innovation programme; and that more projects were in the pipeline and future reports would update Members on progress in due course.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- The potential inclusion of a driving range at Southport Golf Club
- That the issues referred to in the presentation dovetailed well with the previous report providing details of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan and associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan; that this would help provide a strong offer for the borough of Sefton; and make Southport the prime tourist resort in the north-west

RESOLVED:

That Mark Shaw and Andy Cutts be thanked for their informative presentation.

37. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought a review of the Work Programme for 2020/21; 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; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and updated on the progress of items that had previously been considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) it be noted that the Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2020, agreed that no new Working Groups be established until the

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completion of one of the current Working Groups;

- (3) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (4) the update on progress with United Utilities in connection with surface water charges and associated issues be noted;
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy be noted;
- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Town Centre Commission be noted; and
- (7) the update on Leasehold House Sales be noted.

38. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2021

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Hardy be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	29 June 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:	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
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 draft Work Programme for 2021/22; to identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and to update Members on the progress of items that have previously been considered 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) the up to date position regarding the Committee's two Working Groups relating to Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity; and Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People be noted;
- (3) it be noted that the Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2020, agreed that no new Working Groups be established until the completion of one of the current Working Groups referred to in (2) above;
- (4) the Committee considers 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;
- (5) bearing in mind Sefton Council's operation of its self-supply licence, supported by an experienced managing agent, Waterscan, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, no further reports be submitted to the Committee relating to surface water

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charges and associated issues unless significant developments materialise on this matter; and

- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

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.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report.
Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2019/20; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; and Green Sefton 2019/20 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report but reports would be submitted to the Committee detailing how the Council is leading on beneficial changes to be made with reference to United Utilities charging policies and new houses being sold as leasehold.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of a report in the Work Programme relating to the Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2019/20; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; Green Sefton 2019/20 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21 together with the implementation of recommendations arising from the Shale Gas Working Group.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4615/21) and the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6414/21) have been consulted and have no comments to make. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

Head of Highways and Public Protection
 Head of Economic Growth and Housing

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/2022
- 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 proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2021/22 is 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 2.1 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 Committee has previously agreed to establish a Working Group to review the topic of the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity. Councillors John Sayers (Lead Member) Dowd, Robinson and Roche are members of the Working Group. This review is on-going and it is anticipated that the Working Group's Final Report will be completed in July/August 2021. The Working Group's original Scoping Document was wide-ranging and subsequently a decision was taken (on 28 January 2021) to narrow the focus of the Working Group to concentrate on cleansing aspects of littering and fly-tipping/rear entry problems. The Head of Highways and Public Protection has been requested to identify options for consideration of Members to address the scale and visibility of enforcement resources and the need to focus on environmental issues such as littering and fly-tipping; and investigate best practice in other local authorities as to how they operated their civil enforcement contracts including alternative approaches whereby the contractor was only paid based on performance and outcome.

- 2.3 The Committee, at its meeting held on 5 November 2019 agreed to establish a Working Group to review the topic of housing support services provided to vulnerable people. Councillors Blackburne, Doyle, Murphy, Robinson (Lead Member) and Anne Thompson are members of the Working Group. The last meeting of the Working Group was held on 23 April and interviewed witnesses from the Home Office and their contractor Serco, to undertake obligations under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract (AASC) to provide housing and support to Asylum Seekers in Sefton.
- 2.4 For the information of Members, a criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix 2**. This is used to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.
- 2.5 Members will recall that at its meeting held on 15 September 2020 the Committee agreed that no new Working Groups be established until the completion of one of the current Working Groups referred to in 2.2 and 2.3 above.

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 the 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 published on 28 May 2021 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.
- 3.6 The Committee is invited to consider 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. UNITED UTILITIES

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, reports have frequently been submitted to the Committee on progress with United Utilities in connection with surface water

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charges and associated issues. The last update was made to Committee at its meeting held on 9 March 2021. The following update has been provided by the Energy and Environmental Management Team.

- 4.2 Since Sefton Council began operating its self-supply licence (November 2020), supported by an experienced managing agent (Waterscan), the focus of reducing charges at our sites has shifted here and considered to offer far more potential.
- 4.3 On Sefton's behalf, Waterscan have engaged with United Utilities and;
 - Attended their Sustainable Drainage System Incentive Module session to find out how to deliver drainage savings
 - Begun to investigate several corporate and schools sites where drainage charges appear to be incorrectly too high
- 4.4 Being self-supply has also allowed Sefton to voice it's concerns within the marketplace about the need to support the public sector in delivering drainage savings and this has been raised at 'Self-Supply User Forum' meetings as well as directly with new industry bodies such as Market Operator Services Ltd (MOSL) as well as OFWAT to increase awareness of the regional disparity in drainage charges.
- 4.5 These new elements made possible under our licence are considered to have greater potential in reducing costs to schools/Sefton Council water bills as well as contributing to the wider environmental objectives on flooding/Climate change.
- 4.6 Taking the above into account it is now recommended that no future update reports on this matter be submitted to the Committee for the reasons that the new arrangements with Waterscan to assist on exploring drainage savings should deliver more financial and environmental benefit to Sefton Council sites.

However, if any significant developments materialise on this matter then they will be reported to Committee.

5. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 5.1 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).
- 5.2 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.

5.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.

5.4 **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;
- 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.

5.5 **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 Patrick Moloney is the representative of the Liberal Democrat Group on the Committee. The Conservative Group nomination is still awaited by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

5.6 **Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. The Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Committee on 14 July 2021.

5.7 **Quoracy Issues**

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.

The Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer will be looking to work with the Monitoring Officers from the other Combined Authorities to identify what problems they are experiencing with Scrutiny and how/if they had overcome them. Representations to Government would also be considered once all options locally to resolve the quorum issue had been exhausted. The CA Monitoring Officer would then be able to provide evidence to Government that the quorum level was obstructing the work of scrutiny within the CA.

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5.8 Meetings

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

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

Latest Meeting - 10 March 2021

The latest meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 10 March 2021.

Matters considered at the meeting related to:

- Metro Mayor S Rotheram's Update
- Race Equality Declaration Of Intent
- Adult Education Budget Programme Update
- Mersey Tidal Project Update

5.9 The next meeting of the LCRCAO&S will be held on 30 June 2021 and will take the form of a work planning session.

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

APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

Date of Meeting	29 JUNE 2021	21 SEPTEMBER 2021	9 NOVEMBER 2021	18 JANUARY 2022	8 MARCH 2022
Cabinet Member Update Report Paul Fraser	X	X	X	X	X
Work Programme Update Paul Fraser	X	X	X	X	X
Service Operational Reports:					
Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report Peter Moore/Michelle Williams			X		
Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan Peter Moore/Michelle Williams			X		
Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2019/20 Peter Moore/Michelle Williams				X	
United Utilities – Update on Increase in Charges Stephan Van Arendsen/Jonathan Williams	X	X	X	X	X
Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth Stuart Barnes				X	
Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy Stuart Barnes				X	
Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services Peter Moore/Michelle Williams				X	
Leasehold House Sales					X

APPENDIX 1

Stuart Barnes					
Green Sefton 2019/20 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21 Peter Moore/Michelle Williams			X		
Procurement of 120 litre Blue Wheeled Bins for Glass Recycling – Update on progress Peter Moore/Michelle Williams	X	X	X	X	X
Scrutiny Review Progress Reports:					
Housing Licensing Performance Framework Working Group Update on Recommendations Paul Fraser			X		
Digital Inclusion Working Group Update on Recommendations Paul Fraser			X		
Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity - Approval of Working Group Final Report Paul Fraser		X			
Post-16 SEND Provision Working Group Debbie Campbell			X		
Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Final Report Paul Fraser			X		

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.

Agenda Item 4

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 JULY 2021 - 30 OCTOBER 2021

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, Oriol 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:-

Agenda Item 4

APPENDIX 3

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

APPENDIX 3

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Bootle Area Action Plan - Issues and Options Consultation paper	Ian Loughlin ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3558

**SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

Details of Decision to be taken	Bootle Area Action Plan - Issues and Options Consultation paper Approval is sought for approval to publish the Bootle Area Action Plan - Issues and Options Paper for public consultation.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	29 Jul 2021			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Derby; Linacre; Litherland; Netherton and Orrell			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Officers through an officer steering group; Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and email			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Bootle Area Action - Issues and Options Consultation paper			
Contact Officer(s) details	Ian Loughlin ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3558			

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Agenda Item 5

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	29 June 2021
Subject:	Cabinet Member Reports – June 2021		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period February to June 2021.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports 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.

Agenda Item 5

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

(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
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from matters referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in 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. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Atkinson's, Fairclough's, Hardy's, Moncur's (relating to Green Sefton) and Veidman's portfolios during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to their 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.
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: 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:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing
 Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element)
 Cabinet Member - Locality Services
 Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control
 Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills

Agenda Item 5

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 Attached to this report, for information, are the most recent Cabinet Member reports for the Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills portfolios.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 29th June 2021		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	June 2021

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Area Co-ordination

Dates have been set for walk abouts with Councillors in their wards with the Neighbourhood Policing team at Marsh Lane through June and July.

The second South Sefton Police Meet & Greet took place on Friday 28th May.

Derby ward Councillors met with the Friends of South Park group to discuss the opening of the new South Park hut. Councillors would like to name the hut in memory of Councillor Mike O'Brien.

The Community Payback service is moving back to public sector control to from 26th June 2021. This coincides with the removing of covid-19 restrictions which have hampered the activities of the team for the last 12 months. The Neighbourhoods officer will be working with the team to draw up a program of activities.

Asylum Seekers in the Scarisbrick Hotel have now been relocated to homes within the region and the hotel is now empty. An e: mail of thanks from SERCO has been circulated to partners and importantly the volunteer group that were supporting the asylum seekers with coffee mornings, ESOL, toiletries and clothing.

The Area Coordinators have been working with MP Dowds office to arrange community litter picks. The first took place on Randell Drive estate in Ford ward on Friday 14th May. The Skips were funded by One Vision Housing and the Ford ward Councillors ward budget. The two skips collected 1.48 tonnes of waste. A programme is now being developed to host these events in other areas of the Bootle constituency during 2021.

Covid Community Engagement officers

The team have been supporting Public Health in Formby in response to the increase of cases in that area. They have also been conducting a survey on Vaccine take up and working to bust the myths surrounding it. The team have visited Southport, Formby, Crosby and Bootle New Strand stations and have spoken to 522 people.

Welfare Reform

Food bank

1st April 2021 – 30th April 2021	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	317	95
Adults Fed	392	118
Children Fed	220	69
Total Fed	612	187
Crisis Type	Low income – 231 vouchers presented 460 people fed	Low income – 54 vouchers presented 123 people fed
Family Type	Single 191 vouchers presented 60.25%	Single 63 vouchers presented 66.32 %
Age group	25-64: 352	25 – 64: 99

Hate Crime Agenda Item 5

The Hate Crime JAG (formerly MARAC) continues to meet via MS Teams and consider ongoing cases and new referrals.

The Hate crime and Equalities officer is attending a meeting of the Crown Prosecution Service Merseyside and Cheshire Hate Crime Local Scrutiny and Involvement Panel.

Equalities

The new chair of the Corporate Equalities group will be Christian Rogers.

A report is being submitted to the Consultation Standards Panel on the equality and diversity questions to be attached to consultations, ensuring that they correspond to the relevant parts of the Equality Act 2010 and that departments have a lawful purpose for collecting the information.

IYS

YOT Performance

This report is to provide a summary of the Youth Offending Team's performance in relation to nationally and locally set key performance indicators. National data is sourced via Police National Computer (PNC) and is the latest available. Local data is sourced via Child View, a live database. Data extracted from Child View is a snapshot of a point in time and therefore is an approximation rather than an absolute. Local statistics for 2020/21 may have been affected due to courts being closed as a result of COVID-19, these will continue to be monitored.

First Time Entrants (FTE) relates to those young people who receive a criminal record for the first time. During January to December 2018 the rate of FTE's in Sefton was 215 compared with 171 during January to December 2019 a reduction of 44 per 100,000. In actual numbers this translates in a decrease from 51 to 41 in the same period. Sefton's continues to be proactive through prevention strategies, particularly with out of court disposals and the use of community resolution plus. Local tracking for past three years evidences continued reduction in the number of FTE. During Q4 2020/21 there were zero first time entrants recorded.

Re-offending is defined as the percentage of those young people who have re-offended from an identified cohort of first offenders. Previously to June 2019, anti-social behaviour incidents were recorded as offences on Child View suggesting an increasing rate in re-offending. Since June 2019 recording of incidents and offences were recorded separately and tracked locally which has shown a decrease in the number of re-offenders for 2019. The report factors in a reduced number of offences and incidents recorded during 2020/21, a likely impact of Covid-19.

National re-offending data for Sefton for 2016/17 was at 47.7%, during 2017/18 there was an increase to 49.6%. Local tracking suggests historical data will show a further increase for 2018/19 before showing a decrease for 2019/20 reflecting locally tracked data. In Sefton during January 2017 to December 2017 the rate of re-offending was 49.6% compared with 49.6% during January 2018 to December 2018. The YOT family average was 39.5%.

Our reoffending rate is higher than previously, however the number of children in the cohort has reduced although they present a greater level of complexity, impacting on their offending behaviour. The reduction in numbers is a national trend and influenced by the slower processing of matters at court, however early indications reveal that court throughput will increase as restrictions lift and Sefton expects an increase in numbers by the summer.

Custody Rate is the number of young people receiving a custodial sentence. Local tracking shows for the past 3 years there have been three custodial sentences recorded, two during Q2 2018/19 and one during Q3 2019/20 with zero young people receiving a custodial sentence during January to December 2020. Sefton has the lowest rate of custody amongst the Merseyside YOTs and the YOT family. Performance continues to be extremely good

During 2019/20 there were 243 offences committed compared with 182 post lockdown, a reduction of 61. During 2019/20 the largest number of offences committed were for Violence Against the Person with 29%, compared with 2020/21 where the largest number of offences committed were for Drugs with 45%, highlighting a reduction in the number of offences recorded post lockdown and a reduction of serious offences.

Currently both national and local tracking show Sefton YOT to have strong performance regarding first time entrants and custody rates. Sefton YOT continues to be proactive through prevention strategies reducing the number of young people who receive a criminal record for the first time and continues to perform extremely well having the lowest rate of custody amongst Merseyside YOT's and the YOT family.

Contact with young people

It was still considered necessary to complete a Covid assessment for every child in response to the pandemic. This assessment includes factors pertinent to YOT regarding mental health, education and training, supporting services and risk levels. These will enable a clear and tailored plan for each child to identify the most appropriate method of engagement.

Managers regularly review the method and type of intervention for each case. This could include direct contact through home visits, door step visits or in a safe place including council building. Engagement contact continue via the use of telephone, virtually and face to face, adhering to social distancing.

Planning ahead Sefton YOT are currently working in partnership with Early Help and Digital Advantage (professionals working in the creative technological sector) to develop a programme aimed at ten young people who have creative and technological interests and are interested in short film making. The programme outcomes are to build confidence, increase both technical and communication skills and increase individual employability. The programme is scheduled for delivery in late June.

Help for Young People Group

In May YOT are delivering a new programme called Help for Young People is a healthy relationships programme designed for males who have been identified as experiencing relationship difficulties with parents or guardians and who would acknowledge that their own behaviours within the relationship have been problematic.

YOT have encouraged males age 13 – 16 years to engage, who have exhibited violence or aggression towards parents or guardian. The Programme outlines key elements of a positive male role model that can develop and sustain healthy relationships and explores the values attitudes and skills that reflect this.

Youth Service

Staff from both the youth service and commissioned providers have completed ICAN training, the training is focused on techniques to inspire and support young people to identify skills and develop potential.

As restrictions lift, youth service staff will start to deliver more face to face sessions and increase outreach provision towards the summer, they will link in with partners to identify areas that may be experiencing anti-social behaviour. The Youth Bus is back out in the community, four evening a week.

To support mental health the youth service have highlighted Kooth to support re-engage and heighten awareness of the online counselling service available. The Kooth Engagement worker will offer training to schools/providers on to both the benefits and how to access the service.

Sefton Youth Team are working in partnership with Active Sefton who are providing sporting activities for six weeks to young people in Bowersdale Park.

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

Libraries reopen from lockdown

Following the government announcement on the easing of some lockdown restrictions, the Library Service reopened its doors cautiously on the 12th April.

Following the government announcement on the easing of some lockdown restrictions, the Library Service reopened its doors cautiously on the 12th April. For the first 3 weeks demand from book users was high, whereas computer usage has been much slower in re-establishing itself. The libraries are currently open with a mixed offer of full opening (with Covid restrictions in place) and click and collect.

Libraries secure £49,000 funding

Following a bid to for external funding, Arts Council England have granted the Library service £49,000. Following extensive consultation with ACE, the bid was for funding to hire a Digital Producer who will help develop an innovative and effective digital offer for the Library Service. A Digital Producer will evaluate the existing offer and

Agenda Item 5

development, equipment, training in new digital initiatives, lead new digital activities for the public, purchase equipment and software which will help the service evolve its offer to match current trends in society.

Sefton's Library Service has a very good reputation within Arts Council England to deliver innovative projects successfully and this funding is testament to the trust ACE places in our library service

Laureate Library Tour

The Library Service welcomed the UK Poet Laureate Simon Armitage to Bootle Library on 29th April. It was the first time, the Library Service had 'live streamed' an event and while everyone was nervous of the technology working, the event went off without a hitch.

The Poet Laureate was joined by two Liverpool poets, Amina Atiq and Eira Murphy, who all read some of their poems. The event was part of a tour by the Poet Laureate over the next decade, visiting an A-Z of public libraries and it was a definite feather in the cap that Sefton's Bootle Library was chosen as one of the libraries he visits.

Bootle in the Blitz book published

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Bootle May blitz in 1941, the Library service have been planning the publication of a new book. This lockdown project, centres on the memoirs and notes of the Air Raid Precaution Officer for Bootle, Major George Salt. In the council archive there was a manuscript of his notes from 1946 where he reports on how Bootle developed their Civil Defence Scheme, which ultimately saved countless local lives. Even so, 460 Bootle residents were killed in the blitz and over 900 seriously injured. The original manuscript is written like a council report of the time, with the human stories and tragedies excluded. So the challenge has been to transform this report into an enjoyable and educational read, by adding modern commentary and including some of the incredible stories of heroism and endurance displayed by Bootle residents. The book is now available from each library.

THE ATKINSON

Exhibitions

The Atkinson's galleries re-opened with the **Rui Matsunaga** exhibition from 17 May to 5 June, featuring beautiful mythic paintings, with references to Chinese scrolls, Durer's etchings and manga, addressing a range of environmental concerns.

The **Sefton Open** exhibition had to be presented as an online exhibition this year due to Covid restrictions. It was hugely successful with 246 entries from Sefton residents.

We are also preparing four new exhibitions to open in June for our Museum & Galleries -

Natural High - British landscape art looking at the development of landscape painting in key locations including the Lake District, Scotland and Wales. The associated *Inspirations* poetry competition, sponsored by the Art Society, has attracted 40 entries across all ages.

Courage and Devotion - Remembering the lives of the Polish Airmen based at RAF Woodvale and the iconic Spitfire - including a scale replica of a Polish Spitfire aircraft made by paper sculptor Suhail Shaikh

Seaworks - A survey of photographic art by Paul Kenny who creates, photographs, light boxes and animation using detritus for the strandline and crystallised seawater.

Captain Pugwash – the illustrations of graphic artist John Ryan. Captain Pugwash first set sail in the eagle comic here in Southport!

Visitors to the Egyptology collection are now able to see our virtual Ba Bird flying around the gallery via their mobile phones. An online LEGO tour of The Atkinson by talented young animation artist Morgan Spence is also available.

Outreach activities

The Atkinson is supporting Linacre Mission in presenting 'Memoria' from 28th June to 2 July, an immersive physical theatre piece by Tmesis Theatre exploring the themes of memory and nostalgia. The Atkinson will also be touring the exhibition 'Sefton's Hidden Histories' to Linacre Mission in September. The project will involve recording oral histories of local residents with connections to the

Agenda Item 5

Race Equality Statement

As a member of the Cultural Organisations of Liverpool (COoL) The Atkinson is included in the Race Equality Statement developed in partnership with the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC). Together the groups represent 38 cultural organisations in the City Region. Both groups are committed to racial justice and to making meaningful change within their member organisations and in the work they do.

Here is the link to The Atkinson's race equality statement.

<https://www.theatkinson.co.uk/about-us/race-equality/>

Young Artist of the Year

The Atkinson, in partnership with The Arts Society Southport, invited Young Artists aged 11-18 living or going to school in the Sefton Borough to submit one photograph of an original artwork to this year's competition. Over 100 entries have been received and five local schools are involved.

All entries will be exhibited on The Atkinson's website until 2022. The winners were announced on Thursday 10 June 2021 and awarded prizes donated by The Arts Society Southport.

Half-term activities

A range of touch-free activities have been created by The Atkinson and were launched during half-term. These include downloadable gallery trails and an augmented reality app allowing visitors to explore the Egyptian collection. The activities were funded by the Cultural Recovery Fund.

HOUSING

Rough Sleepers & Homeless Services

In my March report to the Committee, I described the activities we had undertaken to assist homeless people following the upsurge in homeless cases from January.

Single homeless people continue to approach the Council's Housing Options team for assistance and those individuals rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping (sofa surfers) are continuing to be offered emergency accommodation.

A 3-month period of direct lets from 15th February to 14th May allowed the Council to directly allocate any 1-bedroom accommodation that Registered Providers have empty, which has allowed them to reduce the numbers of those within commissioned homeless accommodation who were ready to live independently, therefore freeing up spaces within those hostels for those people in Covid emergency accommodation with support needs.

To continue this good work, I have recently approved a further 3-month period of direct lets from 14th June until the middle of September. This will further allow our Housing Options service to work with housing associations who have available properties in order to directly allocate those properties to our homeless clients. This arrangement will be limited to general needs one-bedroom homes, as most of our homeless clients are single people.

In my March briefing, I also informed that we had also submitted a further funding bid for RSI4 (Rough Sleeper Initiative) funding for 2022/23 to MHCLG to try to maintain the uplift in homeless services and introduce some further initiatives. I can now confirm that we received the full amount of £582,300.75, which will be used to continue to provide homeless services that continue to accommodate and help those individuals with support needs and keeps the borough's rough sleeping numbers at zero.

I can also confirm that Sefton have received our first ask for RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme) funding in order to progress the Riverside rightsizing proposal in the Poets Park area, in order to make 5 x2-bed houses into 10 x1-bedroom units for Rough Sleepers.

This initiative will allow Riverside to make best use of its two-bedroom houses, which are increasingly hard-to-let, and create much needed one-bedroom properties, which will supply. Riverside will also be funded to provide support to individuals over the coming years also.

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I plan to introduce a Covid Licensing Plan to ensure that these properties are only used for the purpose of accommodating rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping.

As part of the priority Covid vaccination programme the Council have sought to include people who are homeless and residing in our various temporary accommodation settings (e.g. hostels) in the priority cohort for Sefton, because of their overall level of vulnerability. The Council's 'swab-squad' is now providing weekly Covid testing at several of our commissioned hostels with the aim to increase testing at all the commissioned homeless hostels including the hotels providing our emergency accommodation.

Private Rented Sector

Our **3 private landlord licensing schemes** went live on the 1st of March 2018- focusing on the licensing of all private landlords in Bootle but developing stronger 'Additional HMO' licensing schemes to cover more types of HMO properties for Southport and Waterloo.

Over the Covid period officers have not undertaken License compliance visits unless necessary to address serious concerns. Instead officers have focused on undertaking desktop street surveys to identify potential unlicensed properties in the selective licensing areas. In total 1395 unlicensed properties have potentially been identified and have been sent final warning letters (allowing 21 days to make an application, if applicable). This work is identifying significant number of unlicensed premises each week and has led to an increase in new license applications of 855. There has also been a focus on processing license applications. Since lockdown began 898 new licenses have been issued and the backlog of license applications at the start of the Covid lockdown has also reduced by 1285.

At 31/5/2021, the total license scheme figures stood at: -

	<u>Estimated Numbers of licensable properties at the scheme outset</u>	<u>ALL schemes</u> <u>3000</u>
<u>Percentage & Number of Apps received</u>		
	<u>Total No</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Total to date (valid forms received)</u>	<u>3462</u>	<u>115</u>

The actual numbers of license applications received exceeds the number of private rented sector properties we estimated at the start of the Licensing schemes by 15%.

The Housing Licensing team have begun working in collaboration with several Registered Providers and Environmental Health and Cleansing on a joint project to tackle fly-tipping in the POETs streets area of Bootle. As this area falls within the selective licensing area, the licensing team have been involved in engaging with Private Sector Landlords and Tenants to ensure they are not breaching licensing conditions in relation to refuse storage and disposal.

The licensing team has also: -

- Removed 1026 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety System from properties where licensing compliance visits had been undertaken, mainly before Covid restrictions. Of the 29 hazards that can be identified, Fire safety, Damp and Mould and Electrical hazards were the hazards most commonly removed.
- Out of 428 properties found to be non-compliant on the first visit, 266 were then compliant on the second visit following the licensing team's intervention
- Served 47 Final Civil Penalty Notices on landlords for "operating an unlicensed, licensable property" a number of these are awaiting appeal, which due to the Coronavirus restrictions has been delayed.
- Revoked 1 Selective licence due to the proposed licence holder being determined as not being fit and proper to hold a licence
- Continued to work with the ASB Team and Merseyside Police, several landlords have been contacted about the behaviour of their tenants and positive **Page 38** and co-operation with the landlords led to a decrease in complaints about those properties.

Other Enforcement activities carried out by the Housing Standards Team since 1/3/2020 has included:

- successfully won a housing enforcement case at the First Tier Tribunal, who have upheld the decision of our Housing Standards team to issue a Civil Penalty Notice on a landlord for “failure to supply an electrical safety certificate for an HMO”
- Two Rent Repayment Orders were granted, and the team successfully won an appeal to the Upper Tier Housing Tribunal against a Rent Repayment Order to which a Landlord must repay 12 months housing benefit received from operating an HMO without a licence.
- completed 1 successful prosecution under Section 16 (2)(a) of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- 5 properties have been prohibited from use due to serious defects,
- 1 property had its prohibition lifted, following resale and full refurbishment
- 11 landlords were served a Smoke & Co Alarm Regs Remedial Notice
- A further 105 Notices were served including to provide Notice of Entry, Hazard Awareness, Statutory Nuisance, Requests for information/documentation

Empty Properties

In January I received an annual monitoring report on levels of empty properties in the borough and activities we had undertaken to address problematic empty properties.

The current total proportion of vacant homes in Sefton (at April 2021) stands at 4.21%. The proportion of total vacant properties has, unsurprisingly, remained steady over the past 12 months during the Covid-19 pandemic. This equates to a total of 5,421 properties in the Borough. The total proportion of vacant homes in the borough has also remained relatively static over the past few years. The 6-year average figure is 4.28%.

The current total proportion of properties empty for 6 months or longer (Long Term Vacant or LTV) stands at 2.58% equating to 3329 properties. This figure has reduced by 70 properties over the previous 6 month monitoring period (Oct 2020 – Apr 2021). The current LTV averages are comparable to the 6-year average of 2.44%.

Bootle and Southport appear to suffer from areas of lower demand and higher turnover, and therefore suffer greater problems associated with empty properties.

The report provided four example properties, where we had intervened to carry out enforced sales and where new owners had refurbished those properties and brought them into use. The report also indicated a further 4 properties where enforced sales procedures had commenced. One of these has since been completed.

The number of service requests regarding issues related to Empty Homes, received by the Housing Standards Team, has significantly reduced by 75% since 2015. This has been due to pursuing interventions (such as enforced sales) with the most problematic empty property cases, which has contributed to a reduction in the number of service requests. These cases generated a lot of complaints from the public and would have been reactively dealt with previously. However, since February this year the numbers of complaints about vacant homes has increased. Over 80% of these new complaints relate to Vacant homes outside of the Selective licensing area.

Social Housing Allocations (Property Pool Plus)

Sefton participates in the Property Pool Plus scheme along with Liverpool, Wirral, Knowsley and Halton Councils, as well as the participating housing associations. The Local Authorities have collectively reviewed the current Policy and associated service arrangements. An external consultant (Neil Morland & Co) was appointed to undertake this exercise, and they have worked with the participating authorities to produce a new allocations policy and procedures. This review was subject to public consultation, with the results to be published on 21st June 2021. The Council will be reflecting on the results of the consultation, alongside the consultant’s recommendations, before finalising the new policy. This policy will be brought to Cabinet for consideration later in 2021. I will provide further updates to the O&S Committee (Regeneration & Skills) on this issue at the next meeting.

Liverpool City Region

I represent the Council on the Sub-Regional Housing & Spatial Planning Advisory Group, which feeds into the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority Strategic Agenda. I have been re-appointed as the Vice Chair of this Advisory Group, for 2020-21. I hope to use this position to have greater influence across the LCR.

Agenda Item 5

The role of the CA is having a growing significance, in particular when the Govt allocate resources to the CA for the whole of the LCR. The CA have been working with Homes England to secure resources to help bring forward development of brownfield sites across the sub-region. We are supporting this exercise.

The LCR CA's City Region Housing Statement recognises the need to increase housing supply to support economic growth. The Statement also committed partners to prepare a joint investment plan with Homes England to guide and shape investment in housing. Since the publication of the Housing Statement, work has been undertaken by the local authorities, in partnership with the Combined Authority and Homes England, on preparing a pipeline of housing development sites. This pipeline is allowing partners to take a truly City Region approach to identifying sub-regional housing markets, identify strategic sites, and to inform and support bids into funding and investment programmes.

A Brownfield Land Fund of £45m has been allocated directly to the Liverpool City region CA. The funding will start to be allocated this financial year and is expected to deliver 3,000 to 4,000 homes which start on site by 31st March 2025 at the latest. Sefton have put forward 2 stalled sites for consideration under this programme, and funding has been confirmed soon for the first of these; the Sandway Homes site at Buckley Hill Lane, Netherton.

A refreshed list of other potential brownfield sites has also now been sent to the CA should there be an opportunity for securing funding under this programme.

The Strategic Housing, Infrastructure & Land Fund (SHILF) programme is anticipated to be managed by Homes England. The LCR LAs have collaborated with the CA to produce an indicative list of schemes from the pipeline schedule, which will be used to develop funding bids once the SHILF Funds are made available. However, indications are that this fund won't be launched until later in 2021.

During the discussions with the CA on the projects and bids to be developed the issue of capacity and technical skills within the LAs has arisen, particularly with the impact of COVID-19. The CA are working with the LAs to ensure that appropriate support in both staff and consultancy expertise are available. The CA will soon employ 2 additional members of staff who will work with the LAs to help develop schemes.

Council Housing

I have been keen to look at the Council providing its own social/council housing in future. Sandway Homes (our development company) will provide new homes at their Buckley Hill site in Netherton. Sandway Homes have applied for planning permission for developing this site. A report was presented to Cabinet in January 2021, who have given approval to pursue the acquisition of a block of nine flats, which will be provided as council owned social rented housing. The report and Cabinet decisions are available to see at item 79 <http://smbc-modgov-03/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=10056&Ver=4> and work is underway to progress with the key actions identified within the report.

I have also now recruited a new post to the Housing team that will support this on a full-time basis.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
<i>COUNCILLOR</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>DATE</i>
Ian Moncur	Health and Well Being	June 2021

Green Sefton

Overall: Green Sefton

- Visitor Action Plan: actions being taken to address excess visitors already being seen on the coast in 2021, and taking forward the successful pilots from 2020. See here: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/4375/coast-visitor-action-plan-2021.pdf>
- Coast Plan sub strategies development, incl Position Statement production
- Coastal Gateways mapping sessions
- Climate Emergency Action Plan; overall involvement, and particular actions re: offsetting and other aspects specific to Green Sefton
- Our 'place based' strategy development
- Re-looking at time management; to make sure we focus on the right things at the right time
- Internal Working groups continue to develop – (incl income and growth, information and intelligence, systems of working, health and safety etc)

More detail on all of the above, and our prioritised work programme, can be found on Annual Review newsletter, which includes a link to a narrated version of the presentation, see here: [Green Sefton](#). Further, officers are more than happy to discuss any of the issues further as requested.

In summary, key ongoing issues headlines are as follows:

Green Sefton; Development:

- Storm Christoph flooding issues, Section 19 investigations and reports underway.
- Innovation (flood resilience) Bid on behalf of Merseyside was unsuccessful. However, the North West Coastal Group bid looking at coastal ecological buffers has progressed to the next stage and Formby dunes is one of the sites included.
- Crosby major scheme development – delivery of the main scheme has been delayed until 2027 due to funding constraints. Interim and enabling works will take place as required over the next 6years
- The Pool project – surface water flood resilience in Churchtown area associated with the Pool watercourse. Detailed design is underway to assess feasibility of the final scheme.

Agenda Item 5

- Gormley maintenance work – contractor on site replacing the remaining half of the piles.
- Coronation park social finance project - Consultation results to go to panel in July. Further work with Friends Group to embed opportunity.
- Bootle Driving Range – contractors on site with a planned opening of late summer.
- Ainsdale gateway short term improvements – slow progress with design work underway with car park improvements, initial scoping of toilet improvements and surveys for artwork to Toad Hall. Trial of new concessions at Ainsdale likely to take place in July.
- Hesketh Park conservatory; successful 20k funding bid, and works due to be completed in August 2021.
- Binastructure – funding secured to rationise and update bins across sites and adjacent highways. Surveys underway.

- Surface Water Management plan – modelling updated, site assessments made. Option analysis underway for Sites within Formby.

Green Sefton: Community and Resources

- Development of a new Tree Management strategy is still in progress
- Market testing of empty buildings and land opportunities, incl new concessions on the coast for summer 2021 has provided some new opportunities and is continuing despite slow progress during the pandemic
- Golf driving ranges development - Bootle works in progress due to open in the Autumn.
- Allotment strategy working group, leading to new forum to be set up 2021, consultation during July and August – waiting lists increased substantially during the pandemic
- Volunteers and group development strategy in progress
- Natural Alternatives expansion - halted during the pandemic
 - o Numbers or participants starting to get back towards pre-pandemic levels
 - o New hub opened at Botanic Gardens
 - o Consideration of hubs in the south of the borough
- 'User-survey' for parks and greenspaces and coast to be launched.
- Forest School Activity
- Northwest in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood Judging 2021
- Friends Forum June 2021
- Ranger Team Activities / monitoring at a number of sites:
 - o Bowersdale Park
 - o Derby Park
 - o Orrell Mount
 - o Monthly site-visits
- Educational Strategy Development
 - o School materials including; heritage, beachcombing and trees
 - o Forest and Beach Schools
- Corporate Team Activities supported by Community Rangers
 - o SMBC Insurance

- SMBC Corporate Learning Centre
- National Campaign activities:
 - KBT Dog-fouling
 - KBT Spring Cleans
 - World Ocean's Day
 - World Environment Day
- Partnership Work
 - Merseyside Police
 - MFRS Outreach Team
 - Adult Social Care
- Funding Support
 - Community groups e.g. FoCrosby Beach
 - Natural Alternatives – Sustrans
 - MFRS Community Impact Fund (Southport)
 - Area funding has continued to support infrastructure improvements in parks, esp our public play facilities.

Leases

- Following a successful launch Most Haunted are holding full booked events at Botanic Gardens Museum. They have won a Tourism and Hospitality Award for their work and are now increasing visitor numbers to Southport.
- A number of lease renewals are being completed.

Sport & Recreation

- We are about to allocate sports pitches for the coming 2021/22 season.
- The extension of the playing season owing to the lockdown closure of sport has been well received by teams and has served its purpose, allowing teams to complete lost fixtures.
- Allotment events are being held with involve clean up campaigns.
- Progress is being made with the Allotment Questionnaire, for all tenants and those on the waiting list.

Green Sefton: Land Management

- Capacity challenges day to day have resulted in some issues, especially during recent good weather which has increased visitor numbers (and the litter/ other issues that brings), and increasing grass and weed growth. Also, due to covid, the football playing season has been extended, meaning full time core staff are working on maintaining playing pitches which would not normally be in use at this time of year (taking them away from other programmed works)
- Green Sefton: Enterprise (our steps into the commercial world – bringing additional staffing and resource)
- Changes to beach car park management and visitor engagement – longer hours of operation, and improvements to infrastructure
- Last year of the 10 year HLS project on Ainsdale and Birkdale sandhills, and bid for new funding (incl Countryside Stewardship; Higher Tier)
- Replacement of vehicles, fleet and machinery
- England Coast Path (potential in house project delivery, only Local Authority in the UK!)

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	June 2021

Strategic Transport

Port Access

- Work on the doubling of the rail line into the Port has been delayed several times but the first phase of this has now been completed. The second phase is being carried out over three separate weekends in April, June and September. Improvements to signals at Earlestown West are being incorporated into the works associated with transferring the control of signals from Warrington to Manchester, which is not due to happen until 2029.
- The Port of Liverpool Access scheme being proposed by Highways England has been significantly delayed. It is now expected that the formal consultation will not take place until the middle of 2022, which will affect the potential date for Highways England to submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate.

LTP and Growth Plan

- Sefton is continuing to work with the LCR Combined Authority/Merseytravel and the other local authorities on the delivery of the transport capital programme. In response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work is continuing on the development of a Low Carbon and Active Travel Strategy for the Borough.
- The completion of the North Liverpool Key Corridor scheme on the A565 Derby Road has been affected by a high profile dispute between Liverpool City Council and one of its main contractors. This eventually led to the termination of the contract and Liverpool CC are in the process of identifying a new contractor to complete the remaining works.
- Work is continuing on the sustainable transport intervention proposals for Years 3-6 as part of the City Region programme. Sefton has three schemes in the programme, amounting to almost £3m of allocated funding. This consists of three phases of improvements on the A565, in Seaforth, Waterloo and Thornton, as well as a cycle route between Maghull and Kirkby and East-West cycle improvements in Southport. The Maghull to Kirkby cycle route is nearing completion. The Southport E/W Link scheme is largely complete, except for some remaining work on the Coastal Road that has been postponed until the autumn to avoid disruption during the summer months. Work is also nearing completion on the first phase of the scheme to deliver a cycle route on Great Georges Road. Further discussions will be held with the residents about the arrangements for the western (Marine Terrace) end of the route.

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- The CA is providing funding for the development of Full Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor projects. Public consultation on the Maritime Corridor proposals has been carried out earlier this year and elements of the scheme have been included in the CA transport bid to the Levelling Up Fund. The initial proposals and traffic modelling for the Southport Eastern Access scheme are being reviewed and a consultation will take place later this year.
- Improvements to the junction of the A59 Northway with Damfield Lane, the next stage in a series of improvements along the A59 Northway, have been completed. Design work has started on the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane, the next two junctions to be improved.
- In Southport, additional funding from the Government has been used to deliver the required re-construction of parts of Marine Drive. Improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been delayed until after the summer to avoid impacting on the businesses.
- Funding provided by Central Government through the Combined Authority from Tranche 1 of the Active Travel Fund was used to deliver new cycle routes in Bootle and Southport town centres. These routes have been reviewed and further work on the routes is being planned. The funding for Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund schemes has been confirmed and public consultation on the proposals for further routes in Southport is being carried out.
- Proposals for a 'Liveable Neighbourhood' area in Southport are being developed in conjunction with the active travel charity Sustrans. The proposals are now in the co-design stage and two public open days were recently held to enable the local community to engage in the design process.
- Some modelling and feasibility work is under way in Southport in support of the aspirations within the Towns Fund bid.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2021/22 is being finalised and is expected to be agreed with Cabinet Member in June 2021.

Sustainable Transport

- The European Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) funding for two major cycling schemes was approved in December 2018. The design of a new, inland pedestrian and cycle route at Crosby Coastal Park, which will avoid the issue of wind-blown sand on the promenade, has been completed and public consultation is currently being carried out. Planning approval will be required with works programmed to start later in 2021. Work on the Coastal Road cycle route is being delivered in conjunction with the Southport East West Cycle Links scheme and this will be completed later this year.

Highway Development and Design

Planning Applications

- In January to May 2021, the team processed 356 planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the impact of the pandemic. This includes applications for sites identified in the Council's adopted Local Plan. This continues to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department.

Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites.
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 37 taking in to account new and adopted sites.
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 and developers continue to be followed up on these
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 2
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval - 7
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 2

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application remains high, generally due to the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 66 live s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.
- In terms of Minor Works agreements, 4 were completed between December 2020 and May 2021, there are 6 current Minor Works schemes on going, with a further 5 awaiting payment from the developer before they can be delivered.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access – Natural England published the reports identifying the route and the margin and have completed the public consultation period. The reports for all three sections have been submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration. Formal approval for report 5, which is the middle section within Sefton was granted in April, decisions on the other two sections are still outstanding. The work to deliver the route establishment, including contract procurement has commenced for the section covered by report 5 with a delivery scheduled completion date of December 2022.
- Three Definitive Map Modification Orders have been made and published relating to applications for paths within the Ravenmeols area of Formby. The Orders include 12 paths with the majority having the status of Byway. The consultation period for the Orders will run until mid-June 2021.

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- A dedication agreement with has been made between Sefton and the National Trust for 7 paths being 2 Restricted Byways, 1 Bridleway and 4 Footpaths on and in the vicinity of Alexandra Road and Albert Road in Formby.

Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning

- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department to provide a strategic approach to development to ensure that the necessary new transport infrastructure is in place to support new developments coming forward in future years.
- The team is continuing to request construction traffic management plans for new developments so that we can manage the highway network efficiently and effectively with minimum disruption to users of the highway and with the important benefit of highway safety. Once plans have been agreed, the team is working closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

Highway Design

- The team has continued to provide the design and delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, including major highway schemes, STEP programme schemes and provide assistance in the planning and development of future strategic schemes led by the STPI team.
- In addition, the team continues to support the Development Control function undertaking Transport Assessments and Technical Approvals for the Highways Act S38 and S278 submissions and the design and delivery of some Highways Act S278 and minor works schemes.
- The team also has responsibility for the revenue and capital bridge maintenance programme and has managed the maintenance scheme on Hightown station footbridge as well as a number of minor bridge maintenance schemes.
- The main current schemes currently being undertaken by the team include:
 - A59 Northway/Damfield Road junction improvements – design, procurement and supervision of the scheme to improve capacity and improve accessibility along the A59 through Maghull, at the Damfield Road junction with the installation of a new signal junction.
 - Great Georges Road walking and cycling improvements - design, procurement and supervision of the scheme, which also includes the waterproofing of Waterloo Bridge.
 - The Kirkby to Maghull cycle route scheme - design, procurement and supervision of the STEP programme scheme.
 - The Crosby Coastal Park scheme cycle route scheme - design, procurement and supervision of the STEP programme scheme.
 - A59 Northway/Kenyon's Lane and Hall Lane junction improvements – design, procurement and supervision of these two schemes to improve capacity and improve accessibility along the A59 through Maghull.

Highways Maintenance

We have been informed that there will be funding via Liverpool City Region to upgrade our traffic signals to LED, this will make the systems more resilient and all reduce our carbon emissions by 1% (based on the 2019/20 baseline).

We will commence upgrading of street lighting to LED this month. This will be a four year project that will result in a reduction of carbon emissions of 16% (based on the 2019/20) baseline. We have yet to put the project team in place for the delivery of this project.

We are working in partnership with our contractor to address some shortcomings in the maintenance of our highway drainage. This should see a reduction in highway flooding that we currently experience during heavy rainfall events, especially short sharp storms that with climate change we will expect to experience more of. It should also result in a reduction in the number of complaints in relation to this service area.

Our planned maintenance is progressing with the completion of schemes such as the Coast Road and significant progress made on the preparation and delivery of this years programme. However, there is a backlog of works of £30m and this is increasing year on year. We will be undertaking some surveys this year to update our understanding of the backlog and our priorities and in particular updating our information regarding footways for which there has been an increasing need for reactive maintenance.

We will be moving to an updated approach to our highway safety inspections in June and July which will focus on being risk based, this allows us to focus resources on those areas of highest risk and priority and reduce the frequency of inspections from four to three a year on lower risk areas such as residential roads. The volume of works being generated from these safety inspections has been increasing year on year and as the backlog on planned maintenance increases we can expect this trend to continue.

Our Highway Maintenance contractor (Viam, formerly Kings) has appointed an administrator. The contract with them was for the provision of reactive maintenance and they have ceased to provide this service. The reserve contractor has stepped in to make safe any urgent issues and officers are in the process of dealing with administrative and legal issues to appoint them to undertake reactive highway maintenance for the Council.

CLEANSING SERVICES

Weeds

Street Cleansing are continuing to make good progress in the borough with the weed removal programme. We have completed Linacre and Derby wards and are currently finishing off in Litherland and making progress into Orrell.

Kickstart staff currently stand at 7, hopefully progress will continue to ensure we have optimum levels. Until such time Agency staff will continue to be utilised.

New Refuse Fleet

Cleansing have taken receipt of 6 x Roto press vehicles and 4 x of the Dennis Eagle vehicles. Work is currently in progress to have these vehicles fitted with the necessary

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telematics and we hope to have them on road within 2 weeks. The remaining renewals will be delivered over the next 3 months. We hope to have the new fleet fully operational by September of this year.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

T&VM are in the process of implementing the new Fleet Management System. This will contribute significant improvements to both management of and compliance within the full Council fleet. The system is better tailored to all our service requirements.

School Crossing Service

The service is currently recruiting for staff. The recent Covid pandemic has had a detrimental effect on this service and staff numbers have reduced. The service is currently working with schools and our internal Comms department to fill current vacancies within the service.

BURIAL AND CREMATION UPDATE

The Service Manager left the Council earlier in the year and the post is currently filled by a part-time interim manager. Recruitment of a permanent replacement is underway.

Increased deaths during the Covid pandemic created a marked increase in cremation demand. This started in the first “wave” of the pandemic in early 2020 and continued through into the first quarter of 2021. During this time the burial and cremations service has been largely focussed on continuing to meet that demand and enabling services to happen safely and with dignity. This placed the service under a lot of strain at times and required additional staff during the busiest periods.

Other services, such as ash burial and scattering and memorialisation have needed to be suspended for significant periods during 2020 and 2021 and this has resulted in many people unfortunately still waiting for this important part of the bereavement process to be completed. The service has prioritised ash burial and scatters in its recovery plan and progress has been made, but limited staff capacity is meaning that this is slower than planned and desired. The service has attempted to recruit additional staff to support this aspect of service delivery but at the time of writing has so far been unable to do so.

REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 29 th June 2021		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning	29 th June 2021

Introduction

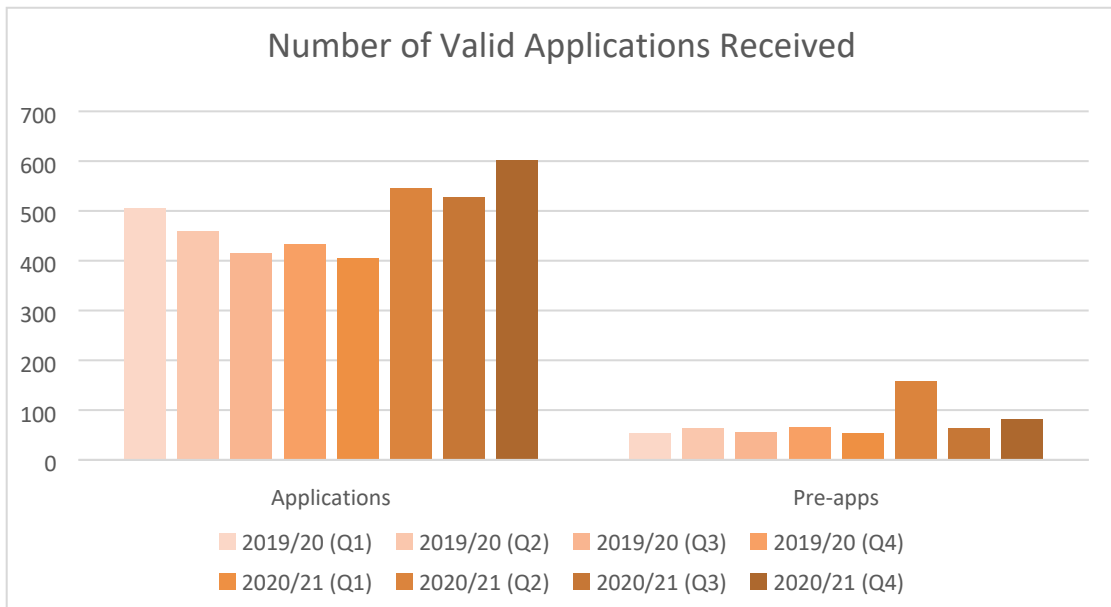
- 1.1 The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council’s regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land.
- 1.2 It comprises the following functions:
 - Development Management
 - Building Control
 - Local Plans
 - Heritage and Conservation

These are supported by the Technical Support team.
- 1.3 Since lockdown in March 2020, staff have adapted to running the Service from home. The Service responded to lockdown with a series of initiatives to stimulate economic activity. These included free meetings with developers and investors, and free pre-applications. Despite the severity of the challenges, the Service has continued to be provided with minimal disruption and has played its part in assisting economic recovery.
- 1.5 Our message has been very clear: “Sefton is open for business”. In May and September 2020, newsletters were sent to agents who submit applications for planning permission and building regulations approval to keep them up to date with the changes. In October we offered a seminar to agents explaining changes to planning legislation.
- 1.6 The Chief Planning Officer was invited to lead national webinars that looked at Planning service delivery during COVID-19 and showcased the work at Sefton Council as excellent practice. This resulted in very positive publicity for the Council in the national planning press.
- 1.7 The graphs in section 2 below show that though there was a dip in applications for the period of lockdown itself (Quarter 1 April – June), activity has picked up since then and significantly exceeded levels from the equivalent periods last year.

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- 1.8 Planning Services has also contributed to the Council response to Covid-19 by seconding two part-time members of the Technical Support team to the Invest Sefton for business grants scheme.
- 1.9 Planning Services also contributed a number of staff to the surge testing initiative in Southport and have begun to publish all comments received on planning applications online from 1st February 2021. These factors have had some effect on maintaining high levels of performance.

2. Development Management



- 2.1 The above chart confirms that while there was a dip in application numbers during lockdown (Quarter 1: April - June) when compared to last year, this was followed by a significant increase in Quarter 2 (July – September) when compared to the same time last year. The numbers for Quarter 3 (October – December) still exceed those for the similar period last year and there has been a rise of 50% in Quarter 4 (January - March 2021) when compared to the same quarter last year.

The major rise in pre-applications during Quarter 2 is a direct result of the fact this service was offered free for much of this quarter to stimulate new economic activity and charges for most pre-applications were reinstated in October and numbers have dropped back again, though showing a rise in the last quarter.

- 2.2 The chart below shows the performance of the Service over the last 3 quarters, compared to the equivalent quarters for 2019-20. The rate of determining applications has slowed down to some extent in Quarter 2 this year, but has begun to pick up again in Quarter 3. The drop in Quarter 2 is likely to be the result of a combination of factors:

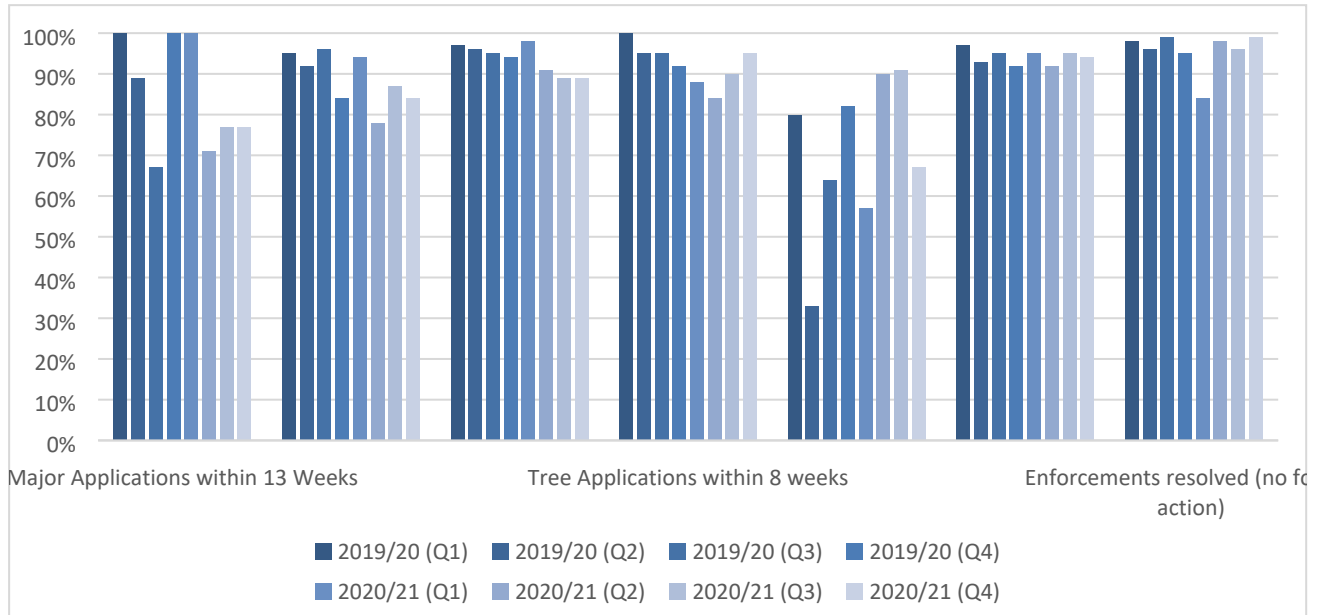
- a real slow down of applications initially following lockdown, followed by a 'bounce back' towards the end of Quarter 1 generating a high workload in a short space of time
- a member of staff was on Page 52 term sick leave

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- we are carrying a number of vacant posts.

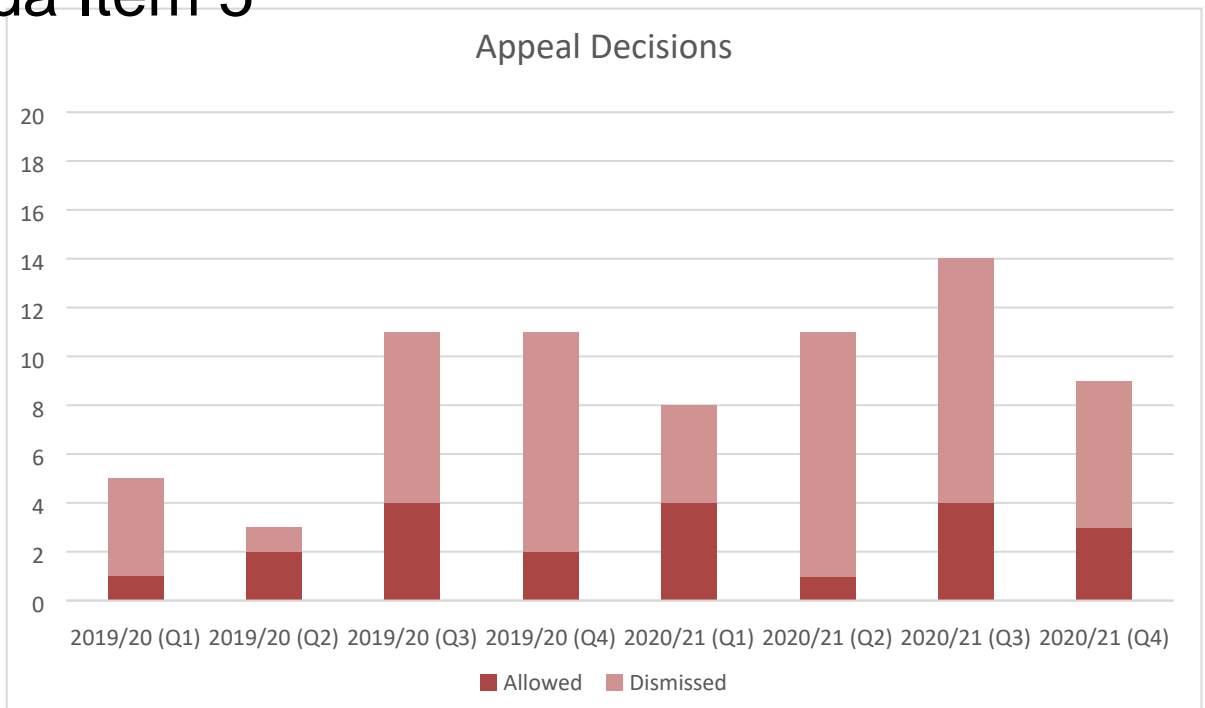
There has been a further drop in Quarter 4 due to a mix of factors including some key staff retiring, a higher level of sickness absence and a higher workload.

Key performance against national targets for speed and quality of decision making: comparison between 2019-20 and 2020-21.



	Target	2019/2020				2020/2021				Difference			
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Major Applications within 13 Weeks	63%	100%	89%	67%	100%	100%	71%	77%	77%	0%	-18%	+10%	-23%
Minor Applications within 8 Weeks	68%	95%	92%	96%	84%	94%	78%	87%	84%	-1%	-14%	-9%	0%
Other Applications within 8 weeks	83%	97%	96%	95%	94%	98%	91%	89%	89%	+1%	-5%	-6%	-5%
Tree Applications within 8 weeks	83%	100%	95%	95%	92%	88%	84%	90%	95%	-12%	-11%	-5%	-3%
Appeals Dismissed	72%	80%	33%	64%	82%	57%	90%	91%	67%	-23%	+57%	+27%	-16%
Pre-Apps responded to in time	80%	97%	93%	95%	92%	95%	92%	95%	94%	-2%	-1%	0%	+2%
Enforcements resolved (no formal action)	75%	98%	96%	99%	95%	84%	98%	96%	99%	-12%	+2%	-3%	+4%

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2.3 The pressure on this part of the Service continues with planning applications having been received for 27 of the 47 housing sites allocated in the Local Plan (approximately 5,000 homes).

2.4 Between April to June (quarter 1) we approved 180 units of residential accommodation, in July to September (quarter 2) we approved 45 units, and in October - December we approved 330 (taking account of the numbers in full or 'reserved matters' applications only, and not 'outline').

2.5 The capacity of the Service is stretched by the increased pressure relating to dealing with many complex and contentious applications. Whilst working from home has not presented any major issues it does however have some implications for performance. It is a significant team effort across the Service to assess and determine applications expediently and in line with Government targets.

2.6 Reference was made above to the loss of a member of staff due to sickness. This gap has been filled by recruiting to a fixed term post.

Planning Committee

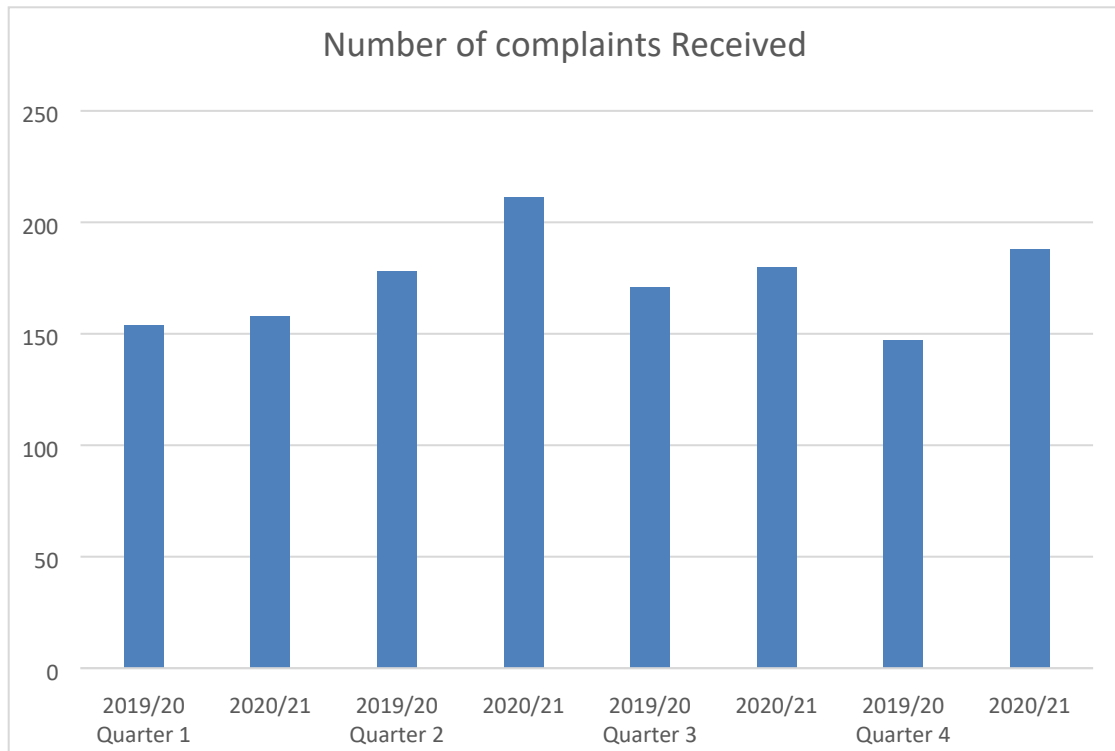
2.7 Planning Committee deal with major applications and those which are subject to a petition or have been 'called in'. The March 2020 Planning Committee meeting was cancelled and since then all Planning Committees except the most recent one have been virtual, using 'Teams Live Events' software.

The Planning Committee have met more regularly as needed in order to keep pace with demand.

Enforcement

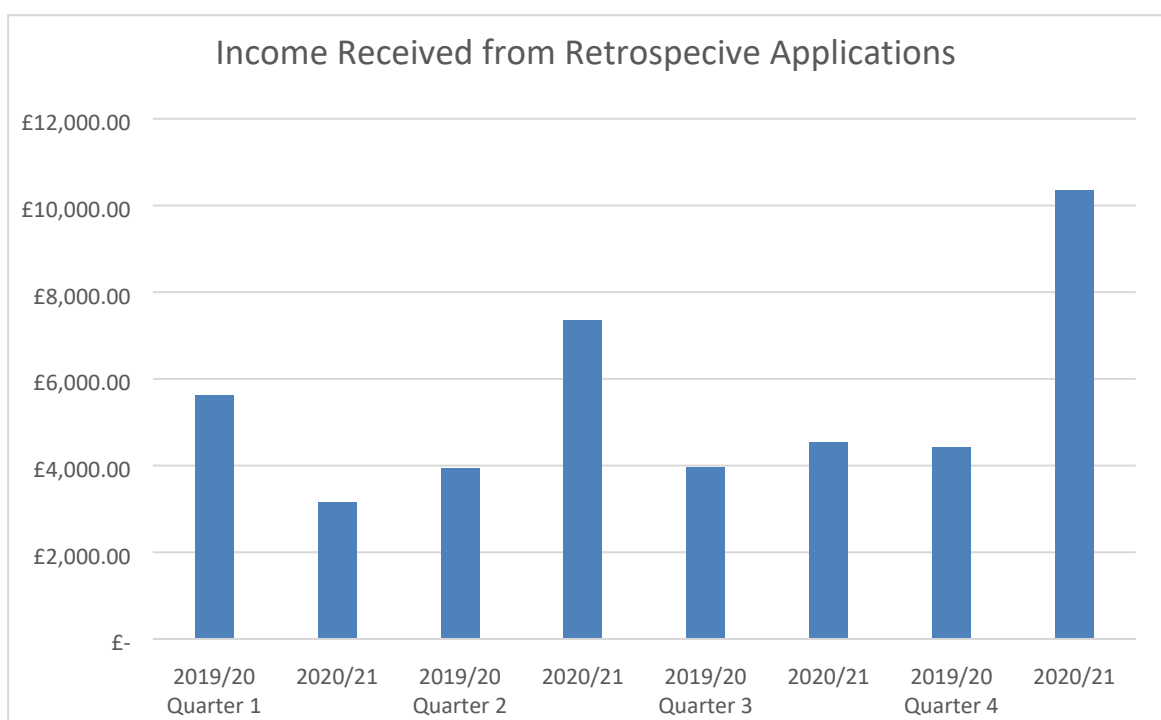
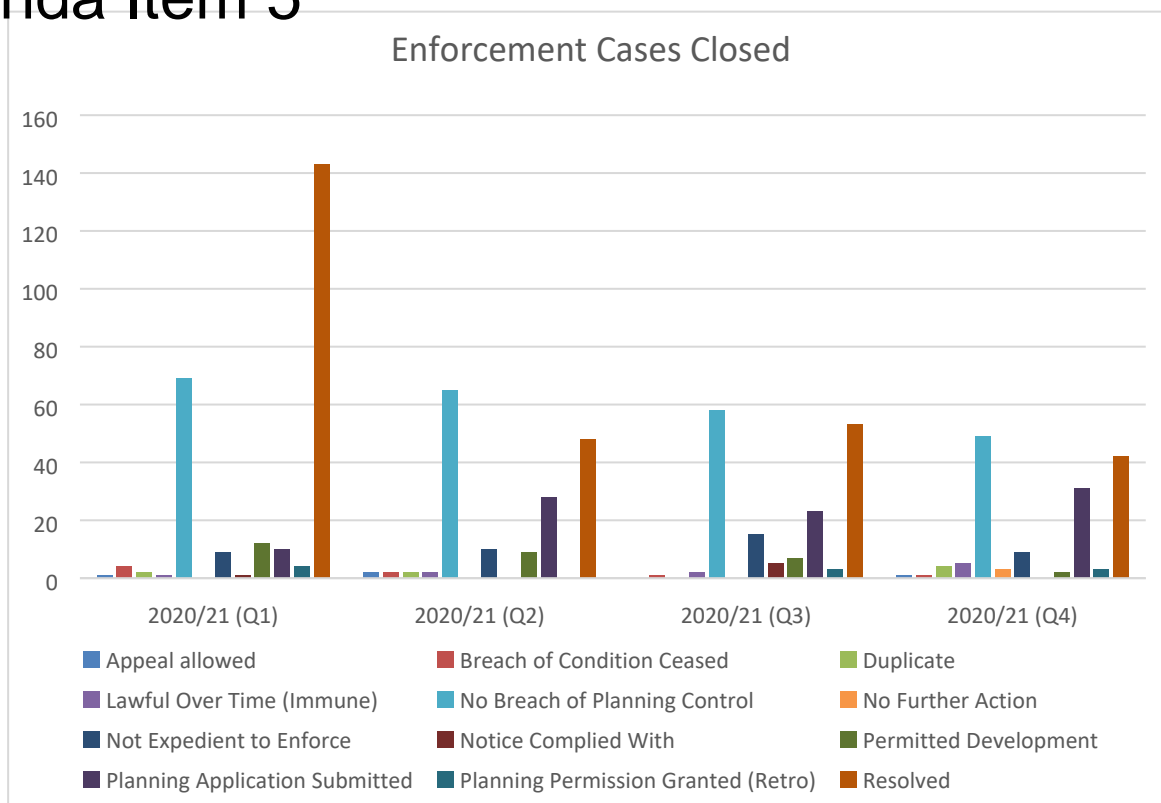
2.9 At the start of lockdown there was a significant dip in the number of enforcement complaints. However within **Page 54** weeks this began to rise again and the

number of complaints significantly exceeded those in Quarter 2 last year. This could be explained by more people working from home and deciding to carry out development to their home, and more people noticing what is happening as they are also based at home. Complaints for Quarter 3 have levelled off again with only a small rise over the same period last year, but with a further steep rise in Quarter 4.



The charts below show how most of the complaints were able to be resolved without the need to take formal enforcement action and the amount of income generated through requesting retrospective applications. The enforcement team has been much busier over the past year. This also shows up in an increase in income, particularly in Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar 2021) when income was more than double the equivalent period of the previous year.

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Other areas of activity

2.11 We continue to look for opportunities to organise our staff and procedures to make sure that the maximum effort is directed towards those schemes which are the most sensitive, complex and contentious, and that we provide the best possible service within the current unforeseeable constraints.

This will mean new ways of working and we will continue to adopt these where we feel they lead to an improved service.

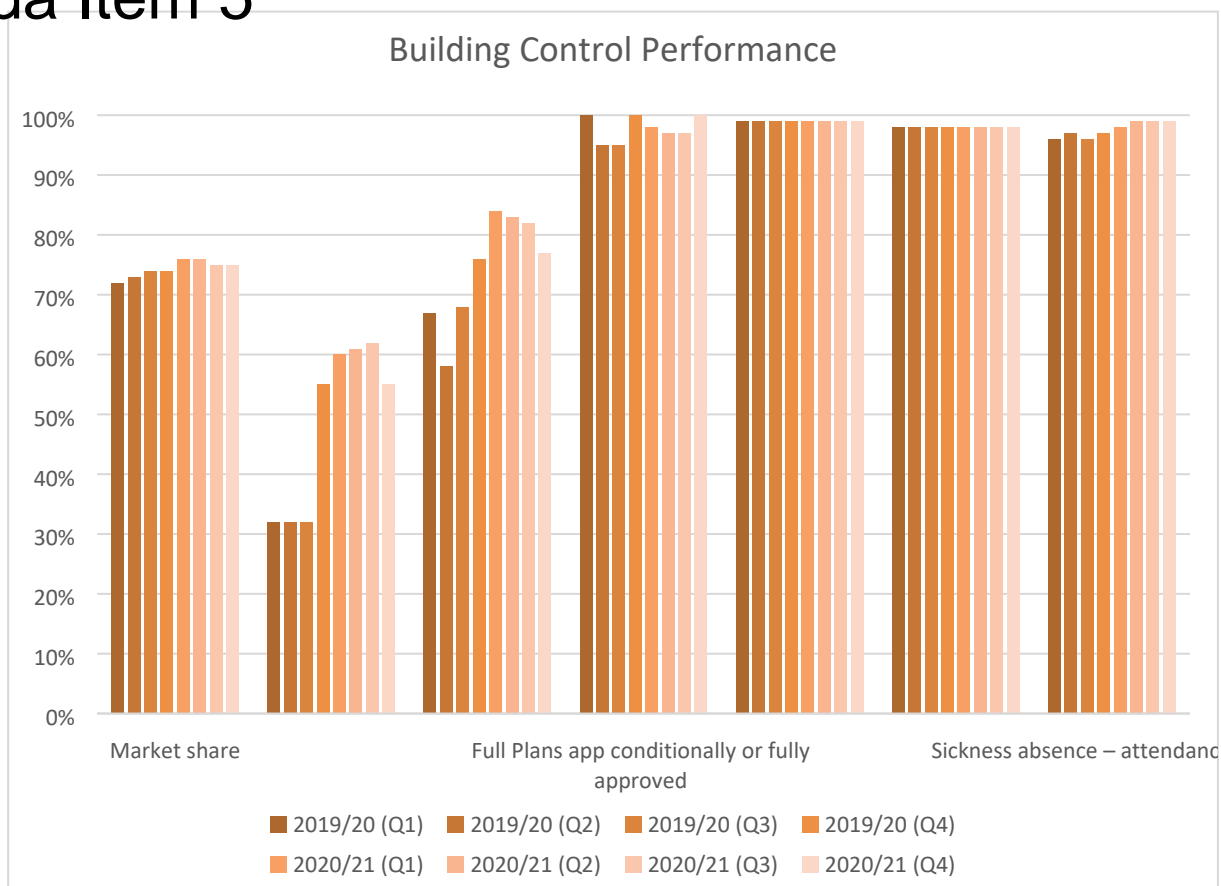
3. Building Control

Performance targets

The Building Control Team's performance over the last four quarters is shown in the tables below:

	Target	2019/2020				2020/2021				Difference			
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Market share	75%	72%	73%	74%	74%	76%	76%	75%	75%	+ 4%	+ 3%	+ 1%	+1%
Full Plans app decision / schedule within 3 weeks	62%	32%	32%	32%	55%	60%	61%	62%	55%	+ 28%	+ 29%	+ 30%	0%
Full Plans app decision / schedule within 5 weeks	72%	67%	58%	68%	76%	84%	83%	82%	77%	+ 17%	+ 25%	+ 14%	+ 1%
Full Plans app conditionally or fully approved	95%	100%	95%	95%	100%	98%	97%	97%	100%	-2%	+ 2%	+ 2%	0%
Site insp's carried out on day they were arranged for	95%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Customer satisfaction rating (from March 2019)	80%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sickness absence – attendance levels	96%	96%	97%	96%	97%	98%	99%	99%	99%	+ 2%	+ 2%	+ 3%	+2 %

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3.1 The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking and the carrying out of site inspections. It is also meeting the majority of the locally set performance targets. Results for 2020/21 show that the Team’s market share was 75% - which is equal to or better than that of neighbouring authorities and is significantly above the average for English Councils, which stands at 67%. The Team’s performance in respect of timely decision making on deposited applications shows that all statutory targets are being met. However, due to an increased number of Building Regulation applications being received, the performance against some of the locally set targets has shown a slight reduction in quarter 4.

Income and financial performance

3.2 Building Regulation income for 2020/21 delivered an operating surplus - which will be used to off-set the cost of providing the statutory elements of the service, such as dealing with dangerous structures and safety at sports grounds.

Safety at sports grounds

3.3 As part of conditions of the Safety Certificates held by Southport FC, Marine FC and Aintree Racecourse, the Building Control Team undertakes annual inspections in order to check the grandstands are properly maintained. The inspection of the five grandstands at Aintree Racecourse were undertaken in January 2021 and inspections at Southport FC and Marine FC were undertaken towards the end of last year. Building Control Officers undertook inspections of the temporary grandstands / hospitality structures being erected in the lead-up to the April 2020 Grand National meeting at Aintree Racecourse although, of course, that event was cancelled. As the 2021 Grand National Meeting was staged without spectators, the event did not require any of the usual temporary Grandstands / hospitality structures checks.

Staffing

3.4 Since the appointment of a Building Control Officer in 2020, the Team has a full complement of staff. Three staff members are currently engaged in formal training / educational courses.

Appointment of consultants / contractors

3.5 In late 2020, a locally based company was appointed to act as the Council's emergency contractor for the purposes of securing of vacant buildings and making safe dangerous structures. The appointment has ensured that the Council can effectively continue to deal with reports of dangerous structures and take the necessary action to ensure continued protection of the public. The contract appointment is for a period of three years.

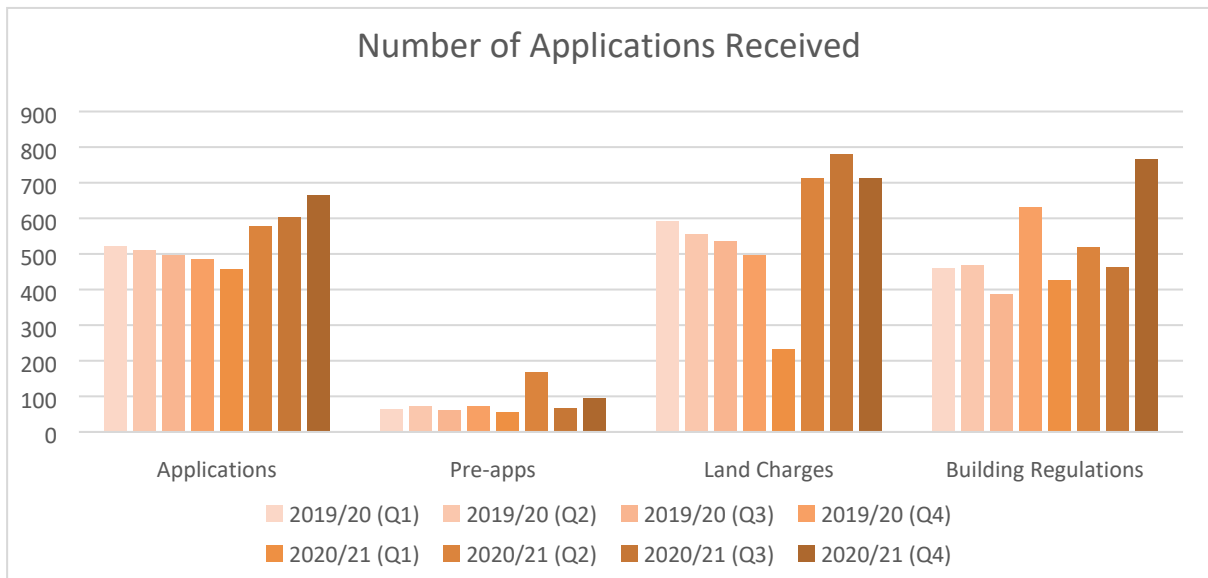
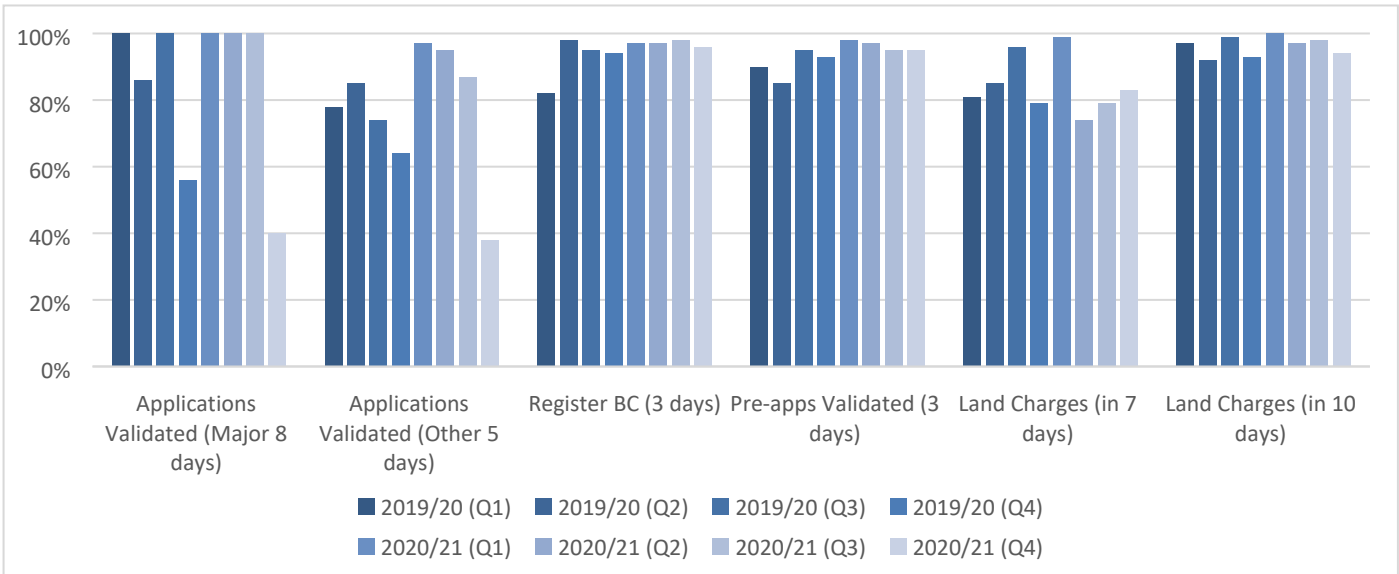
4. Technical Support

4.1 Performance against targets for 2020/21 and comparison with 2019/20

	Target	2019/2020				2020/2021				Difference			
		Apr- Jun	Jul- Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr- Jun	Jul- Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr- Jun	Jul- Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan - Mar
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Applications Validated (Major 8 days)	80%	100%	86%	100%	56%	100%	100%	100%	40%	0%	+14%	0%	-16%
Applications Validated (Other 5 days)	80%	78%	85%	74%	64%	97%	95%	87%	38%	+19%	+10%	+13%	-26%
Register BC (3 days)	96%	82%	98%	95%	94%	97%	97%	98%	96%	+15%	-1%	+3%	+2%
Pre-apps Validated (3 days)	93%	90%	85%	95%	93%	98%	97%	95%	95%	+8%	+12%	0%	+2%
Land Charges (in 7 days)	80%	81%	85%	96%	79%	99%	74%	79%	83%	+18%	-11%	-17%	+4%

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Land Charges (in 10 days)	100%	97%	92%	99%	93%	100%	97%	98%	94%	+3%	+5%	-1%	+1%
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- 4.2 As can be seen from the graphs above the number of applications and service requests across the Service has increased dramatically over the last year. Quarter 4 has seen a reduction in performance within the Technical Support Team. The team have struggled in Q4 due to the redeployment of staff for the COVID surge testing, 3 long term sickness absences of key staff in the validation team and 3 vacancies within the team.
- 4.3 The number of planning applications received in Q4 has increased substantially and this has contributed to the fall in performance levels. Despite poor performance in Q4 the overall annual performance levels are above target in all areas except land charges.
- 4.4 The land charges function is an essential part in the conveyancing process and recovery of the economy.

Our Land Charges Service is performing a little below target due to the increase in demand number of requests for local land charge searches. It is likely that the numbers have increased dramatically in Q2 – Q4 due to the temporary relaxation of Stamp Duty.

- 4.5 Unprecedented increases in workload and a reduction in available resources have significantly impacted on the performance of the team and consequently that of the Building Control and Development Management Teams.

4.6 **Service Development**

Publishing Comments made on planning applications

- 4.7 From 1 February 2021 the service took the decision to publish neighbour and consultee comments on Sefton’s website. This involves the publication and appropriate redaction of all comments received in relation to planning applications. This has proved useful for our service users but has been a challenge to implement due to high volumes of responses and dwindling resources in the Technical Support team. There is currently a backlog in this area due to the vast number of representations being received; steps are being taken to address the resource requirements.
- 4.8 Our teams have adapted incredibly well to working from home. Teams keep in touch virtually and a weekly ‘Team Talk’ keeps everyone up to date with the latest news in the Service.

5. **Local Planning**

The Sefton Local Plan

- 5.1 Planning applications continue to be submitted on allocated sites. Of the 47 housing sites allocated in the Local Plan (policy MN2) planning applications have been received for 28, equating to approximately 5,000 homes (as at 31 March 2021). This equates to 69% of the homes allocated in the Local Plan. Planning Committee recently resolved to approve two housing schemes on the largest housing allocation in the Sefton Local Plan. There have also been several pre-applications enquiries on a number of other housing and employment allocations, and we expect applications on a number of these to be submitted over the next 6-12 months.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other policy documents

- 5.2 The Planning Policy Team are currently working on a number of Supplementary Planning Documents to support the Local Plan. These include:
- Affordable Housing
 - Conversions to Flats and HMOs
 - New Housing
 - House Extensions
 - Design
 - Sustainable Travel
 - Shopfronts, Security and Signage
 - Boundary Treatments

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- 5.3 Whilst these have been delayed a little due to staff being temporary used for other projects, it is anticipated these will be made available for public consultation in 2021 .

Housing Delivery

- 5.4 The government published the Housing Delivery Test figures for 2019 on 19 January 2021. The results for Sefton are:

Year	Homes required	Homes Delivered
2017-18	563	522
2018-19	645	577
2019-20	578	741
Total	1,786	1,840

- 5.5 This means that Sefton have achieved over 100% (103%) of the homes required over the reported period (i.e. past three years). As a result, the Council are not required to produce a Housing Delivery Action Plan and only need to add a 5% buffer to its future supply of housing land (as opposed to 20%). This is due in part to a number of housing completions occurring on some of the large Local Plan allocations and a large reduction in the number of demolitions.
- 5.6 Nevertheless, Planning Services realises it cannot be complacent about housing delivery and, particularly with the current economic outlook, acknowledges that housing delivery may struggle in coming years. It has therefore set up a multi-disciplinary Housing Delivery Group, led by officers of the Local Planning team, that is looking at ways we can unlock development potential in Sefton. This includes exploring options for funding, coordinating infrastructure requirements, identifying and looking for solutions for barriers that may restrict development of some sites and addressing issues of land assembly.
- 5.7 It is expected that the next set of Housing Delivery figures will be published in early 2022.

Liverpool City Region work

- 5.8 The Combined Authority undertook early engagement with the public on the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the Liverpool City Region concluding on 14 January 2020 to which the Council submitted comments. The next stage of consultation on the SDS was published in October 2020 and the Local Plans Team are co-ordinated comments which were submitted in February 2021.
- 5.9 The Statement of Common Ground on strategic, cross-boundary planning matters which was jointly prepared by the Combined Authority and the City Region authorities (including West Lancashire) has been approved and guides

co-operation between Local Planning Authorities. This has recently been reviewed by the Planning Policy teams of each city region authority.

Bootle Area Action Plan

- 5.10 To help support the regeneration and transformation of the wider Bootle area it has been decided to produce a Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP). This will set out a vision, objectives, projects, policies and priorities for the area. This will be led by the Planning Policy Team. In order to assist with this work, the Council has been successful in securing funding from a range of sources for various aspects of the Bootle AAP. These are:
- £138,000 from the Combined Authority to help with the AAP document preparation, background evidence and community engagement
 - £50,000 from the MHCLG for the Council to test the Draft Model Design Toolkit in Bootle as a pilot scheme. Sefton was one of 14 LPAs that were successful (out of over 70 applicants)
 - £14,000 from the Local Government Association to procure guidance on a range of project delivery methods.

Other work

- 5.11 The Planning Policy team continues to provide policy advice on all relevant planning applications and pre-application inquiries, including large housing developments on the Local Plan allocations.
- 5.12 Following recent applications and appeal hearings for traveller accommodation sites, it has been decided that the Council's evidence base for gypsy and traveller accommodation needs to be updated. This process will hopefully conclude in the Autumn 2021.
- 5.13 The Council is also undertaking a replacement Playing Pitch Strategy so that we have the evidence to deal with applications on existing playing pitches or can help secure contributions for improvements to existing pitches from large development proposals. The new strategy will also help support the Council's applications for funding for improvements to its playing pitches. This will be a complicated and multidisciplinary piece of work and will be managed and led by the Local Planning team.

6. Heritage and Conservation

Heritage at Risk

- 6.1 We are continuing to work towards the removal of the 6 Conservation Areas from the National Heritage at Risk Register. This includes a number of different work areas including raising their profile through Twitter and Facebook, regeneration funding bids, working with the local community, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, taking enforcement and other legal action in relation to a number of derelict sites and listed buildings in these areas, including the major Lord Street **Page 63** project.

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- 6.2 Recent success includes the restoration and renovation of the Listed former Sunnymede School in Birkdale and the continued restoration of verandahs on Lord Street, Southport, along with the improvements undertaken at previous derelict and vacant sites.
- 6.3 Progress has been made on a number of Heritage at Risk sites including working with colleagues and partners on a number of Council owned Listed Buildings to secure their improvement such as urgent works at Victoria Baths and Hesketh Park Conservatory which recently obtained external funding for urgent works from Historic England.

Regeneration

- 6.4 The externally funded Southport Townscape Heritage project has continued to work with interested property owners to look at progressing capital building grants including a number of site meetings with potential grantees. Whilst the current circumstances are difficult and there has been a drop off in interest and financial commitment by some previously interested parties, we have made ourselves accessible and open for business and continue to progress a number of projects that are not far off a full application submission.
- 6.5 It has proved difficult to progress and host a number of complementary training and education initiatives, but new ways of working and discussions continue with the National Lottery Heritage Fund on both this part of the project and the capital building grants. The Heritage Skills Learning Co-ordinator has begun investigation and progression in a number of key areas.
- 6.6 Discussions have taken place on a number of Heritage at Risk sites which are considered to be key strategic sites to find new uses or upgrade them to modern facilities so that they continue to be or find their optimum viable use and save them from further deterioration.
- 6.7 Design work has begun on the public realm improvements of Scarisbrick Avenue with an initial scheme budget of £920k being identified from the Highways Challenge Fund. This public realm project is integral to the Southport Townscape Heritage project and is within the main cluster of target properties in order to compliment the buildings themselves. The public realm will focus on high quality paving, new street lighting and wayfinding.

Advice to Development Management team

- 6.8 The pressure on this part of the Service has increased significantly with again another increase in consultation requests since the last quarter. For the Quarter 4 period January to March 21, **202** consultation responses were sent on planning applications and pre-applications relating to a number of Listed Buildings and developments within a number of our Conservation Areas and non-designated heritage assets. This is a significant rise on the figures for the previous two quarters, mainly in response to the rise in pre-applications as a

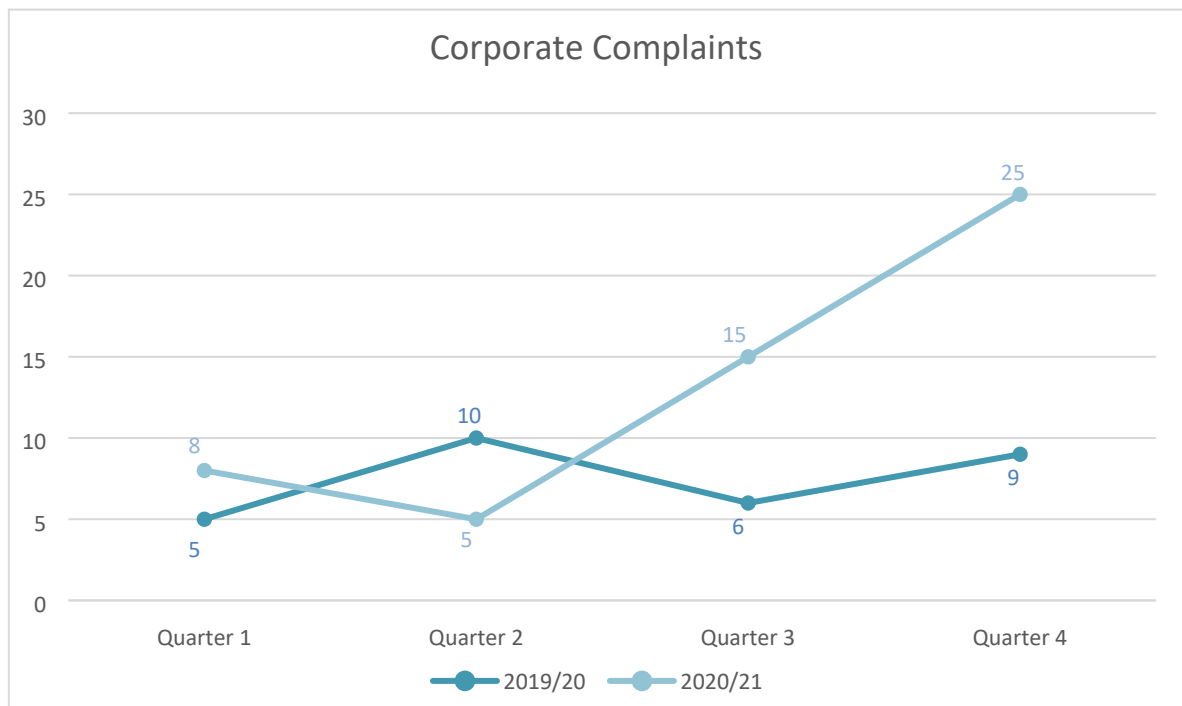
result of the fee being waived. In addition to this we also continue to assist in various appeals, on site monitoring and enforcement cases.

7. Corporate complaints

7.1 A recent feature has been a steady rise in the number of corporate complaints we have received. These are generally in response to the grant of planning permission to neighbouring properties.

7.2 The Council operate a two stage complaints' procedure. If residents are not satisfied by the response they receive at stage 2 response they can appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman who carries out an independent assessment.

7.3 The number of complaints over the past two quarters (1st October 2020 – 31st March 2021) is 40. This is only marginally fewer than the total number of complaints over the previous 6 quarters (43) – i.e. 1st April 2019 – 30th September 2020.



7.4 This steep rise in corporate complaints may relate to more people working from home and being more aware of development being permitted which they consider affects their living (and working) conditions. This has resource implications for the Service as we are currently responding to two complaints a week and it is time consuming to reply appropriately. However, the Local Government Ombudsman has not found fault with the Council in respect of any complaint referred to her over the past year.

8. Conclusion

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- 8.1 The past year has been unprecedented for the Council. However, the Service has responded well to the challenge which overall has seen high levels of performance maintained despite increases in workload.
- 8.2 This is largely due to technology which had already been put in place prior to COVID-19, and the support structures the Service has in place to ensure that everybody feels able to perform their role to the best of their ability, which is borne out by two staff surveys over this period.
- 8.3 The service has risen to the challenge posed by Covid with an innovative package of measures to promote and encourage economic activity by incentivising development, and the Council has been recognised nationally for this exceptional approach. We are seeing the results of this now with numbers of applications for planning permission and building approval restored to, and exceeding, pre-Covid levels.
- 8.4 The Service has faced particular pressures in Quarter 4 for a number of reasons including the redeployment of staff for COVID surge testing, long term sickness absences and vacancies. This has been accompanied by the introduction of publicising all comments received online and a substantial increase in the number of planning applications. The combination of these factors has led to a drop in performance in some areas in this last quarter. This is being addressed by a package of measures which should begin to bear fruit early in 2021-22.
- 8.5 Major legislative change is heralded in the Planning White Paper but the Service continues to respond to the very unsettled context in which we are currently operating and is prepared to adapt to further changes on the horizon.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - March 2021		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	June 2021

INVESTSEFTON UPDATE

Business engagement

Website

InvestSefton website has a dedicated COVID 19 landing page which is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council and other sources of help. All relevant and critical links have been synchronised with www.investsefton.com now available with minimal clicks from Sefton Covid-19. Since the site has gone live (Monday 30th March 2020) until Thursday 3rd June 2021, the site has had **39,980** unique sessions.

From Friday, 28th May to Thursday 3rd June, the website has had 333 sessions (down from 458 last week)

Average time spent on the website in the past week was 1 min 1 sec (up from 58 secs last week).

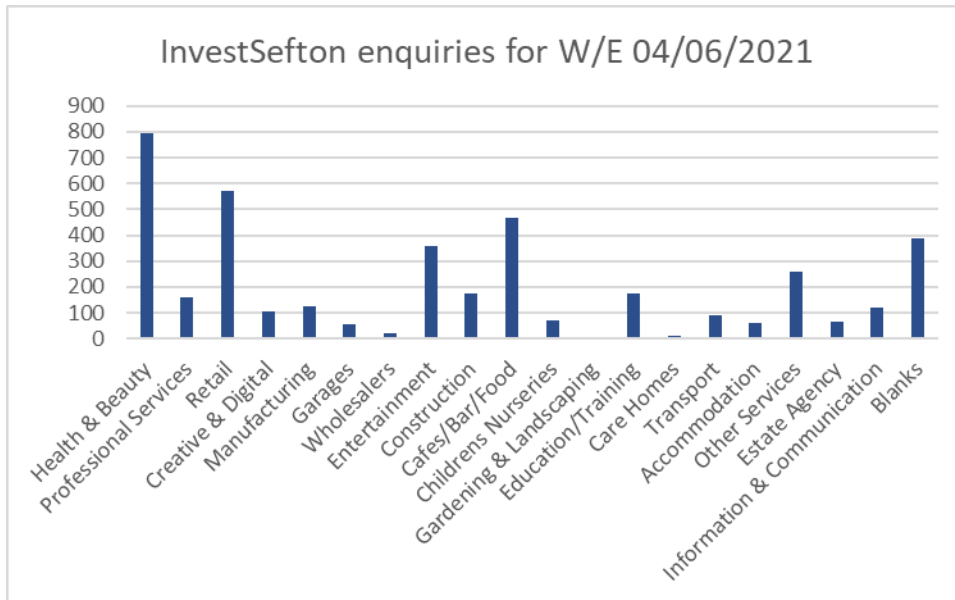
As usual the 2 most used pages were the homepage and <https://www.investsefton.com/covid-19-financial-support/>

From Friday 28th May to Thursday 3rd June, 45.9% of users accessed the site using a desktop/laptop, 49.8% used a mobile device, and 4.3% via a tablet device.

Business enquiries

InvestSefton supported Business Rates during the first month of the delivery of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants, handling over 1,740 recorded calls with a further 400 unrecorded due to the volumes of demand. The team is receiving record numbers of enquiries. InvestSefton has handled **4,083 enquiries** from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as at **4 June 2021**.

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Of these, 1,767 were in connection with Rates and business grant payments/Furloughing staff/self-employed scheme or Discretionary Business Grants. The remaining 2,162 are of a general business support nature including business start-up and property searches. As can be seen in the above graph most enquiries have come from businesses services such as high street retailers, including cafe's, hair/beauty salons but other sectors are also emerging as owners seek what support will be available in the event of ongoing restrictions.

Business Grants

Since October 2020 InvestSefton and Tourism have been leading a dedicated Business Grants team comprising staff from a range of Council services including Corporate Resources and Sefton@work. During each of the three rounds external support, funded by the CA, has also been provided by The Womens Organisation and Chambers of Commerce.

ARG has been used to fund three rounds of grant support aimed primarily at businesses in Sefton's Hospitality and Leisure Sectors. Schemes were expanded in rounds 2 and 3 for Retail and home based businesses.

These schemes have also resulted in three top up payments being offered to all businesses in receipt of grant under the first three rounds.

Licensed Taxi Driver Grants

Sefton's Licensing team have overseen two rounds of grant funding to taxi drivers totalling £910,100.

Liverpool City Region Care Provider Grants

The Combined Authority and local authorities launched a new Care Grant using Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). The social care sector has overall been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and seen a significant fall in demand alongside an increase in cost to manage within a Covid safe environment. The scheme opened on 4th May for a two week window closing on 18th May.

To qualify the business must still be trading and solvent and not have received funding from the existing three rounds of grants currently being delivered. InvestSefton and the Business Executive are supporting Children's and Care Staff teams delivering the scheme.

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All open and closed business grants can be seen at:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/business/business-rates/covid-19-business-support-for-202021-202122>

The table below provides a summary showing the performance of all ARG funded schemes in Sefton as at 4th June 2021.

	(i) Discretionary Business Grant	(ii) Hospitality & Leisure Grant Round 1	(iii) Hospitality Leisure & Retail Grant Expanded Round 2	(iv) Local Business Support Grant	(v) Top up Grant Rounds 1 and 2	(vi) Top up Grant Round 3	(vii) Taxi Grant	(viii) Taxi Grant Top ups	(ix) Care Provider Grant
<i>Period</i>	11 Jun- 23 Sep 2020	16-30 Oct 2020	30 Nov-11 Dec 2020	10-26 Feb 2021	28 Jan-5 Feb 2021	14-28 May 2021	30 Nov-15 Dec 2020	29 Mar- 25 Apr 2021	4-18 May 2021
No of grant applications received	591	296	244	662	397	748	2,620	3,242	171
No of grants approved	344	231	157	459	378	0	2,620	3,242	128
Total Grant paid £	2,237,500	1,592,400	310,338	2,238,750	2,008,884	0	262,000	648,400	415,000
No of applications rejected/duplications	247*	65	87	190	5	0	0	0	12
No of applications under review	0	0	0	13	15	562	0	0	31

*includes ineligible businesses already in receipt of rates grant and insufficient funding to meet demand

Notes

- (i) The Government provided a limited amount of additional funding available to support businesses with fixed property costs that were affected by COVID-19 but are outside the scope of the existing Business Rates Small Grant Scheme and Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Scheme. Scheme supported businesses with fixed premises costs of less than £51k pa including voluntary sector; Bed and Breakfast operations and Visitor Economy sector businesses
- (ii) The grants are for businesses in the Leisure & Hospitality industry whose activities have been significantly affected by Covid-19 restrictions. The grant supports businesses that have been able to continue trading through these difficult times, or that have been forced to close as part of the Government's Tier 3 Lockdown.
- (iii) The scheme was expanded to Retail businesses operating from commercial premises forced to close during restrictions; businesses that directly supply the Hospitality sectors and home based businesses, for example self-employed person, sole trader, or a limited company that predominantly works in or supplies the Hospitality and Leisure sectors, and can no longer generate income through usual channels, for example face to face to face, and has ongoing business-related costs. Licensed Market traders are eligible to apply under this category.
- (iv) Businesses that have been ordered to close (as from 5 January 2021), are not in the business rates system, are based in commercial premises, and not eligible for Local Restrictions Grant (for businesses instructed to close). Supply chain businesses that predominantly supply the hospitality and leisure sectors and are based in commercial premises; Self-employed / sole trader / home based business (that predominantly works in or supplies the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors) / licensed market trader Businesses in any sector that can demonstrate a loss of at least 40% in sales/revenue due to Covid-19 (including self-employed / sole trader / home-based businesses). The grant funding in this

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category aims to help small and micro businesses in any sector that are not eligible for other grant schemes and that are struggling with a loss of sales/revenue in the current financial year due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

- (v-vi) Top-up Grants awarded to businesses in receipt of grant from Rounds 1, 2 and 3*
- (vii-viii) Grants to licenced taxi drivers including top up payments*
- (ix) Care Provider grants to Ofsted /CQC registered Childminders, Out of School clubs; Day care Nursery/Pre-school provision and Adult Care homes*

The team continue to engage with businesses via one to one Teams calls and webinars. Recent case study below:

Sports company vehicle for an individual who sells sporting equipment online and provides self-employed support to local soccer activities. The business which is based in Maghull is looking to grow but needs support to do so. InvestSefton assisted the business by fully reviewing their current operations and devising a strategy document to enable them to maximise future opportunities for growth.

EU Webinar 25th May 2021

The EU transition period has now passed, and businesses who trade with the EU must ensure that their operations are compliant with new trading regulations, or risk penalties and delays.

On Tuesday 25th May InvestSefton hosted a live webinar and Q&A on common issues faced by businesses in the city region, with the LCR Local Growth Hub, and Department for International Trade and Liverpool and Sefton Chamber. Topics included new regulations for importers and exporters, employee visas and Northern Ireland Protocol. Ten businesses from a range of sectors including manufacturing, business consultancy, audio supplies and construction aggregates attended, and learned about free one-to-one business support, and New Markets grants for exporters. A second webinar is scheduled for 15th June.

Good Business Festival-9th July 2021

The finale of the Good Business Festival 2021 will take place from 2pm on 9th July in Pleasureland, Southport. The event will be hosted by Paul Sinha from ITV's the Chase and the theme is 'Family Fortunes' looking at the trials and tribulations of running a family owned business. Local Southport businesses will join a panel including Norman Wallis MD of Pleasureland.

Inward Investment

As the economy moves in to recovery and the restrictions on activity relating to the Pandemic are withdrawn it is expected that there will be an uptick in activity. We are already seeing a rise in activity from local businesses seeking expansion space or space more suitable for revised operational models. The work with the Growth Platform to revitalise city region city region inward investment activity is nearing conclusion of strategic work and will soon be commencing operational delivery to coincide with the re-opening of the economy.

Site visit for Mast (or a Bootle based business) to view 3 potential properties to enable the businesses expansion and investment remain in Sefton. All properties viewed remain of interest and we are now working with them on further information gathering to support shortlisting and financial appraisal.

Ongoing activities include:

- Supporting Planning design guide pilot
- Levelling Up letters of support

- ERDF Place Marketing extension and future strategy
- Freeport
- Enterprise Arcade for Southport
- Developing an Investment proposition with Growth Platform for MMC projects

GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATES

Work is continuing across a range of economic recovery projects and initiatives within the Growth and Investment Programme with a number of projects complete, nearing completion or in delivery. Details below outline work underway in Bootle, Crosby and Southport and also Sefton's key coastal gateways at Crosby Lakeside and Ainsdale.

Following the town centre funding announcements for the post March 2021 budget, Sefton Council are exploring a range of external funding sources to support its economic recovery work. These include the Levelling Up Fund, Welcome Back Fund (Reopening High Street ERDF Fund) and emerging One Public Estate as well as working with other key partners to assist and draw in additional investment funding to aid recovery work.

1. Levelling Up Fund (LUF)

Sefton Cabinet have agreed to submit two bids for LUF for Bootle and Crosby town centres in this first round with a submission date of 18th June 2021. This is a competitive bidding process which required MPP support and will help support both the Bootle town centre transformation and regeneration programme and Crosby's regeneration and recovery work.

Bids of up to £20M of funding potentially available for each Local Authority to bid for with investment proposals to focus on supporting high priority projects that will make a visible impact in local areas and also align to and support net zero goals. Government are looking to prioritise bids that can demonstrate investment or begin delivery on the ground in 2021/2022.

The first round of the fund focuses on three themes:

- smaller transport projects,
- town centre and high street regeneration
- support for maintaining and expanding cultural and heritage assets.

Future rounds of LUF funding are to emerge next year.

Sefton is currently Category 3 (lowest priority). Members and the Chief Executive have challenged Sefton's Category 3 status. Both bids are being developed at pace to meet the deadline and are still being finalised at the time of writing this report. If approved, bids will be published.

Applications for funding should clearly demonstrate how proposed investments will support relevant local strategies and their objectives for improving infrastructure, promoting growth, enhancing the natural environment and making their areas more attractive places to live and work. Local areas will also need to show why the proposed investment represents the highest value local priorities.

The assessment process will focus on the following key criteria:

- Characteristics of the place
- Deliverability
- Strategic fit with local and Fund priorities
- Value for money

MP priority support for both LUF bids is being sought and key stakeholder letters of support for bid submission in June.

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Press Release: [Sefton Council asked to approve funding bids for Crosby and Bootle regeneration - My Sefton News Channel](#)

2. Welcome Back Fund (MHCLG)

This is an extension to the current Re-opening High Street Safely (RHSS) funding allocated to Sefton last year for safe re-opening following the first Covid lockdown in March 2020. This brings a further allocation of £344K to Sefton Council to spend on its town centre re-opening. This ERDF fund is very constrained in terms of eligible activity and can only be used on specific types of activity. Officers are exploring eligible activity under the constraints of the fund.

Welcome Back Fund will continue to support for the 4 main types of existing RHSS activities including:

1. Support to develop an action plan for safe reopening of local economies;
2. Communications and public information relating to public safety messaging;
3. Business-facing awareness raising activities; and
4. Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

In addition, the Welcome Back Fund will also:

5. Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy; and;
6. Allow local areas to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of CV-19 including trialing new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.

Eligible activity under these two new strands could include:

- Publicity campaigns and marketing activity for street markets to support local businesses;
- Improving green space and seating areas to encourage people back to town centres; and
- "Beautification" of areas to support the visitor economy.

Sefton Council have appointed *Maybe Tech* a social media platform and training pilot to support and encourage more business use of social media given low levels of use to date for engaging with their customer base. More details can be found here

<https://www.maybetech.com>

Project Specific Updates

1. SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

Following the Southport Town Deal allocation of £37.5m work has progressed on agreeing Heads of Terms including high level route to business case approval and monitoring and evaluation plan for the Town Deal programme.

Project list includes:

- Marine Lake events centre
- Light Fantastic
- Enterprise Arcade
- Public Realm enhancement
- Building Better Experience

May 2021:

- Heads of Terms project confirmation returned to MHCLG
- Press release issued: [Next steps towards £37.5m Southport Town Deal completed - My Sefton News Channel](#)

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- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Town Deal programme developed and agreed.
- Business case development now underway for approved schemes.

Southport Market

Comprehensive refurbishment and refit of traditional market hall into a new food and drink offer with a flexible events space capable of holding events and temporary markets.

Southport Town centre investment strategy identified the need to broaden out the traditional local visitor economy and encourage diversification and enterprise development. It identified a number of key opportunity areas including areas of public sector ownership which could be utilised to help address the connectivity and visitor movement as well as business enterprise and development. The existing market was struggling and in need of refurbishment to both attract investment and meet customer demand. Building on the success of the Southport Food and Drink Festival and its town centre location, the market hall was identified as a key opportunity for both changing the town centre offer to attract new visitors, generate footfall and help draw people into new areas of the town centre as part of a market quarter.

Refurbishment and repurposing of this key facility was seen as a way to optimise the building's unique architectural form and presence in the town centre whilst at the same time signal change, creating a sense of place and encouraging diversity. The £1.4m refurbishment and repurposing of this key town centre facility is in the final stages of fitting out and is due to reopen late June/early July depending on government guidelines on reopening. Recent Press release: [Behind the scenes images reveal amazing transformation of Southport Market - My Sefton News Channel](#)

2. CROSBY VILLAGE

A Levelling Up bid is in the process of being prepared for Crosby Village to secure resources to bring new uses into the village, broadening the community services on offer, attracting investment and increasing footfall within the town centre. Plans include a community hub centred around a new library, community healthcare services, a public café and new residential accommodation in the heart of the village centre.

This new state of the art facility will be perfectly placed to help create a vibrant new community hub which will serve local residents for many years to come in a modern energy efficient, attractive, landmark multi-purpose building. This will encourage significant numbers of local residents and visitors in to the town centre supporting the wider objectives of covid recovery and long- term economic stability.

The development will involve significant improvements to town centre access arrangements and also bring with it improvements to public realm creating safer and more attractive gateways into Crosby centre particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. LUF is a competitive process and initial decisions are anticipated in autumn this year.

Elsewhere in Crosby Village work is continuing with private sector interest in Telegraph House following its purchase in 2020 by Crossfield Developments. Proposals for a mixed-use retail and assisted living scheme are currently being developed for this key site in the town centre. Secondly, following the outcome of the planning appeal *Plus Dane* recently prouced proposals for a mixed residential and commercial development on the former Central Buildings site. These will be submitted in the summer.

3. CROSBY LAKESIDE

Contractor Crossfield Developments have been appointed following a competitive bidding process for the refurbishment work ongoing at Crosby Lakeside. Work is progressing well

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within the facility to provide an improved hospitality offer and updated venue. The contract has also been carefully managed to allow the watersports activity and leisure operation to reopened. Work is intended to complete in winter 2021 to provide a brand-new offer for visitors and the local community. Following Cabinet consideration in February 2021, agreement to a wholly Sefton Council owned company operating the hospitality side of Crosby Lakeside has been agreed with a dedicated management director.

Press Release: <https://mysefton.co.uk/2021/02/04/exciting-plans-for-the-future-of-crosby-lakeside-adventure-centre-are-now-underway/>

4. BOOTLE TOWN CENTRE

Bootle Strand – The Strand Shopping Centre feeds directly into the key priority of ensuring retail remains a core function of Bootle Town Centre, despite the current challenging retail market and Covid 19 restrictions affecting trading. The Council is driving forward plans for a repurposed Strand Shopping Centre and following completion of key acquisition and site assembly work on land adjacent to the Leeds Liverpool canal.

Work is progressing at pace to deliver Bootle Canalside proposals and a concept design is complete and moving forward into detailed design. This includes development of a programme of meanwhile uses, events and activities on the land next to the canal, which will help open the canal frontage and capitalise on its waterside location and canal linkages into Liverpool and Bramley Moor Dock. A planning application was submitted in May and is awaiting consideration.

Discussions are also progressing with the Canals and Rivers Trust on how to animate the canal corridor and capitalise on the green and blue corridor. Detailed design work (RIBA stage 4&5) to develop detail and delivery is currently being tendered with a view to starting work in summer subject to planning.

Press Release for Planning Application:

[Transformation of Bootle Canalside moves to next phase - My Sefton News Channel](#)

Bootle LUF Bid – work progressing on preparing this bid for Bootle Canalside. This will build on work already undertaken on canalside use, enhancement and animation and look to bring forward new activities and open space into the town centre.

5. AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway

Green Sefton progressing consultation and engagement for Ainsdale beach gateway improvements. This will help inform consultation on the wider Sefton coastal action plan. This will deliver a number of improvements to visitor facilities for this summer including new toilet facilities and artwork led by Green Sefton.

Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way

Following consideration by Council in February 2020, when members agreed to acquire leasehold interests in this centre to bring it into full Council ownership, negotiations have commenced, and a number of properties secured. The Council wish to explore options for this centre and how it can support the wider neighbourhood more positively. Consultation on -site development options took place in March 2021 with Cabinet and local Ward Councilors which has helped to inform the option appraisal for this site due back later this year.

6. CAMBRIDGE ROAD SEFTON COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

Following approval in 2020 for Skills Capital Funding from LCRCA, work has now started on site for the refurbishment of this key adult learning facility. Work started in November 2020 and will complete in July 2021 for this important community learning facility in South Sefton. A £1.3million investment by both Sefton Council and the Liverpool City Region

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Combined Authority will provide a refurbished community learning hub providing enhanced access to skills for out of work residents or those wishing to retrain.

The investment will improve the learning environment for users of the Cambridge Road facility, make better use of the space and reduce the operating costs for Sefton Council. Investment in this Grade II Listed building will include a complete refurbishment of the ground floor facilities, a new reception area and café and a reconfiguring of the school hall as a new flexible area for teaching. The Community Learning Hub will also benefit from new IT infrastructure and will be fully WIFI enabled as a result of the investment, while the first floor of the building will also benefit from improvement works. Work will also include repairing and enhancing the building's original features, with external improvements to the roof, windows, brick and stonework.

The investment works will ensure the external envelope of the building is wind and water tight. This will improve the energy efficiency of the building and reduce running costs. The work is being undertaken by a locally based contractor **Cunard Construction** who have experience in the refurbishment of listed buildings whilst also providing social value to the users of the centre and the immediate community.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority: Town Centres Commission Report

At its meeting held on 9th March, Overview and Scrutiny Committee was updated on the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Final Report of the Liverpool City Region Town Centres Commission "Anchor, Belong, Connect - The Future of Town Centres". This was published by the Combined Authority in March and a copy, along with the associated press release was shared with O&S Committee. A formal response from the CA to the IPPR report recommendation is still awaited and anticipated in July 2021. This will be shared further with O&S when available.

TOURISM UPDATE

Business Tourism

- The uncertainty of Covid-19 has continued to affect the cancellation and reschedule of conferences as per the figures below.
- With the flagship venue Southport Theatre and Convention Centre (STCC) remaining closed Southport Conference Bureau remains in constant contact with current and prospective clients to retain as much as business as possible within the town moving forward.
- Activity Update:
 1. Liaising with clients to re-schedule and retain business
 2. Researching new venues to add to our portfolio in order to increase choice for our clients and increase our chances of retaining business in the absence of the STCC
 3. Supporting our partners with regular Teams calls offering advice and support and connecting with industry expert guest presenters
 4. Delivering social media training
 5. Supporting our partners to improve their offer to provide accessibility and sustainability information
 6. Working with our colleagues in the wider city region to increase our opportunities for business.
 7. Researching Ambassadors for regional sector strengths
 8. Working with our Marketing Southport colleagues to extend the Southport offer in order to widen the experience on offer to potential business clients.

Destination Marketing

- The 2021 Visitor Guide has now been fully distributed

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- Southport Restaurateurs Association (SRA) - SRA membership currently stands at 23. Tag sponsorship on Sandgrunder Radio and an advert in the Champion currently taking place
- PR – New Press releases written and issued include National Walking Month (March), Town Deal Success (March) and Alfresco Dining (April). Editorial information provided for The Telegraph and Lancashire Life (due to be published early July). Other PR generated coverage includes Evening Standard, Bemused Backpacker and Manchester Evening News. 7 press trips moved from 2020 into 2021 (dates to be confirmed) including Coast Magazine, Birmingham Mail and Viva Magazine. Dates booked for 2 publications, The Cheshire Magazine (June) and Love Exploring (July) plus 1 new booking for Raring2Go! (July).
- Gingerhead (marketing agency) were appointed for the 2nd year running to develop a comprehensive destination campaign. The campaign is structured in stages working to the government roadmap. The theme is 'Love Southport' and is designed to be flexible to change if there are any changes in the roadmap. Currently we have some Google and social advertising and are working on a bigger campaign including out of home advertising and radio for the Summer season.
- Visit Southport website – this has been updated regularly. Traffic is now tracking at an estimate of 8% behind on 2019 which indicates a fantastic recovery. In May traffic has been up over 40%.

Events

- There is still uncertainty if major events will be able to take place this year, however planning is continuing for those events not yet cancelled
- Tickets sales are steady, and figures are similar numbers to what we sold at this point in 2019, however it should be noted no marketing push has taken place.

Food & Drink

- Initial discussions about a potential late summer/ autumn show in early September, working alongside the Southport Flower Show
- Traders keen to take part in any events planned for 2021

British Musical Firework Championships

- The BMFC competitors briefing will likely take place in June/July

Bootle Canalside

- Initial plans for autumn events programme at new site
- Events to include – Illuminos, Ice Rink, Markets, Comedy, Music
- Full programme to be finalised once opening date agreed

Southport Market

- The construction works are nearing completion with building handover expected in June, a late June or early July opening is planned subject to Government restrictions.
- Eight of the ten units have now been filled and leases have been signed. We have a large list of prospective tenants to fill the last two units and a collective decision will be made on who these are allocated to.
- Induction days will take place for all traders the week prior to opening for training on systems , traders will be moving in and setting up units from June 21st

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- The first Makers market has now run for the first month with a fantastic response from the public, the market attracted over 60 traders, the plan is to grow this to 100 over the next year. The markets will take place monthly and will complement other markets throughout the year.

Tourism Operations

- Southport Seafront has reopened in compliance with Government Covid restrictions, all tenants are adhering to regulations associated with Covid.
- Maintenance work will commence shortly within the Kings Gardens, the following work will be carried out:
 - Victorian Shelters rubbed down and repainted
 - All seating within the gardens will be sanded and oiled
 - The Venetian Bridge will be sanded and painted
 - Light columns will be repainted
 - Any trip hazards on the pathways will be repaired
- The STCC remains closed due to National restrictions, both short term and long-term options (linked to The Southport Town Deal) continue to be investigated.
- It is not envisaged the conference market will begin again until September 2021
- West Lanc's Yacht Club have reluctantly taken the decision to cancel the 24-hour event for 2021. A lack of confidence in the pandemic being fully under control and a belief that they would struggle to host the event whilst complying with social distancing etc

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING UPDATE

Sefton@work

General service delivery

General footfall into the Sefton@Work office on Stanley Road continues to increase, with staff reporting that clients are feeling more comfortable leaving the house generally and getting back to some normality with a focus on job search becoming a higher priority again.

A blended service is still being offered with the telephone appointments and live website chat functions remaining as the prominent preferences at present.

Further re-opening measures have led to the staff group working in two, rather than three "fixed teams" with one group working in the office while the other group operates remote access from home or community outreach facilities.

Preparations are underway for the re-opening of the first floor of the premises to enable more staff to provide face to face service in response to demand. These moves have been made in accordance with corporate risk management strategies and shared with trades unions.

Sefton@Work staff have resumed outreach work at Bootle, Crosby and Southport JCP offices to continue joint working and to improve referrals into the Ways to Work programme and Kickstart opportunities. All offices have been risk assessed and extensive Covid-Safe measures are in place to safeguard staff and clients.

Social Value

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Work with Barnfield Construction and meeting their employment and training social value responsibilities is starting to take shape and progress very positively. The Contracts Manager is extremely keen to work with Sefton@Work to ensure that local workless residents have access to the jobs on their sites. There are currently 2x active sites in Southport where we have successfully placed 2 x Labourers and 1x Telehandler. There are several clients prepared and ready on stand-by for when further Labouring positions are released meaning immediate starts can be delivered for the employer of local residents. There is a further site due to open in Bootle although no timescales for additional workforce requirements have been finalised as yet. The sub-contractor list is currently being finalised by Barnfield but once this is complete it will be shared with Sefton@Work as warm leads to contact. The Contract Manager at Barnfield is pleased with the work that has taken place so far and has agreed to consider site visits, placements and other interventions that may benefit our residents or younger people and help move them closer to employment.

DWP Kickstart scheme

Sefton@Work have been working closely with SMBC Cleansing staff to recruit suitable young people to their Cleansing Operative posts. Following interviews and pre-employment checks we have now secured starts for 17 young people will be commencing work on 14th June.

Succession and Funding

Members will be aware that the Ways to Work project has been working with DWP for many months about accessing further external resource to enable the project across the 6 LA areas to continue until December 2023 when the European funding ceases.

At the time of writing there have been Project Change Control Requests and applications for additional ESF grant lodged with DWP for decisions. We have recently been informed that new applications made under the 1.1 stream will now be considered as a PCR. And a similar scenario is expected to be confirmed for a 1.3 application made some months ago. A further PCR, incorporating both 1.1 and 1.3 has also been made which will maximise all the grant available to the LCR.

DWP have indicated that they are aiming to make decisions on extension applications more rapidly than they have in the past. We await the outcome of this highly complex situation.

If we are approved in full all the ESF grant available to us and we also have approval to commence the Restart (to be submitted to Cabinet in June for a decision) , we may be able to create headroom within the ESF scheme for Sefton through moving some staff costs from ESF to operate a new ILM Programme for vulnerable groups which we have not been able to do for some time.

Sefton Community Learning Service

A full-Service delivery plan has been submitted to Liverpool City Region Combined Authority outlining our profiled programme for the next academic year 2021/22.

The Service continues to monitor financial expenditure and performance on qualifications with a view to the recently introduced reconciliation threshold. The LCRCA have been required to enforce this in line with national expectations and it means that financial penalties may be incurred for recipients of Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding next year if they fail to achieve the threshold of 68% of the forecasted achievement. In Sefton we are very focused on this, despite the difficulties we have experienced this year providing community learning across a range of different settings and with groups who have been negatively affected by COVID-19. Additional courses and support have been made available to all learners to maximise achievement rates and optimise contract value and there is a good level of confidence that our target can be achieved within the academic year.

The following examinations have taken place so far:

ESOL Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3 and Level 1 Reading, and Writing

Level 1 Speaking & Listening

Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2 English and Maths

Re-sits are scheduled for 21st June 2021 with catch-up examinations scheduled on 17 June and 7 July. Tutors have been engaged to provide additional sessions where needed and the Service is encouraging all learners to take part in these prior to re-sits to improve their prospects of success.

The SCLS Summer timetable has now started with 18 courses scheduled over the coming weeks with approx. 90 learners already booked to start. Marketing and promotion will continue throughout this period to increase numbers and manage attendance of learners.

The Service recently took part in a Family Fun-day at Ford Lane Community Centre, which was very well attended. 22 learners took part in Family Learning activities. The Service is also attending the 2021 Music Festival at the beginning of July, providing a great opportunity to promote the service and recruit new learners for the forthcoming academic year.

In common with many community learning providers, the service has struggled during the past year with the availability of good quality tutors capable of providing a wide-ranging curriculum to attract and retain new learners. However, there has been good news on this front recently and the Service has appointed an additional 6 new tutors, 2 of whom have already fully completed the recruitment process and are either teaching or ready to start teaching. There are a further 3 applicants waiting for interview with dates to be arranged. The introduction of the new staff with a wider portfolio of subjects will allow the Service to deliver a broader range of new courses such as Introduction to Coding, Introduction to Electronics, Basic Life Support, Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Alternative Beliefs and Practices and Level 2 Teaching Assistant among others.

Employment

Cunard Construction are currently advertising 6 Kickstart positions via Sefton@Work and recruitment is expected June-July.

This month also sees additional paid employment opportunities within the Sefton area, these include apprentice electricians, joiners and roofers, labourers & trades-mates along with opportunities for skilled trades with local companies.

Successes @ Cambridge Road

- 4 x Individuals completed on-site paid placements in March
- 2 x Placements have progressed into new full time General Operative roles with Cunard Construction
- 2 x Apprenticeships have been sustained, they are currently gaining experience on site and across local projects
- 1 x Joiner recruited by the Window Refurbishment Contractor
- 2 x Joiners have been recruited to work for Cunard Construction on the Cambridge Road development

Green Garden Space - Activities are currently expected to commence late June/ July, meetings have taken place to discuss requirements in more detail and further involvement for other support services. It is expected this will complement other Environmental projects across Sefton to maximise benefits for the community.

The Service is also looking into an application for funding to improve the Community Bistro.

Specialist Mental Health & Employment Contract

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A contract has now been given to Imagine Independence Ltd for a further 12 months delivery. The contract value is £40,350 and is managed via Employment & Learning. Discussions will take place with commissioners in adult social care during this year to assess whether a more joined-up approach could be workable with a single contract to support mental health employment and for employment support for people with learning disabilities and neurological conditions such as Asperger's.

Restart Employment Programme

Sefton Council has received a sub-contracting offer to deliver the national Restart employment programme, which will be put to Cabinet and Council in June and July 2021 for authorisation to proceed. Restart is the major employment programme announced by the Chancellor as part of the government's Plan for Jobs in July 2020. Department for Work and Pensions have procured delivery for Restart across the country in contract package areas through their network of Prime contractors. The successful contractor appointed for the North West is G4S Ltd who have made the offer to Sefton Council. The offer is to deliver assistance to unemployed residents who have been unemployed for 12 months or more and help them get into sustained employment. The contract period is for 5 years, with a contract payment framework which is composed of 30% for delivery fees paid monthly to the council and the remaining 70% payable on the achievement of outcomes for people getting into work. The total potential earnings for the contract is £14.7 million.

Given the dramatic rise in unemployment we have seen in Sefton, this offers the opportunity to do more for our residents while also securing the Sefton@work service for a period of five years while the transition away from dependence on European funding occurs.

Economies for Healthier Lives – LCR project application to the Health Foundation

Employment & Learning staff have been nominated to represent Sefton in an application for £490k funding from the Health Foundation to the LCRCA to carry out a cross-boundary research project. This project is focused on the redesign of employment services and evolution of an enhanced approach to labour market programme delivery with public health more intentionally at its core, building upon the Wealth and Wellbeing Programme's report. If successful this project will include a review of existing programmes (e.g. Households into Work, Ways to Work) to ensure that they are informed by the best available evidence of the interrelationship between poor health, inequalities and employment; measure success in ways that are meaningful and relevant; put appropriate interventions in place to effectively deliver benefits at both individual and population levels; enable health and employment services to work effectively; build links between public health and economic strategists; and capture learning that is accessible and impactful. There will also be a link with health commissioners and providers to ensure that economic development is built into their service specifications and provisions, to enable a more fully integrated and reciprocal approach to be in place. Partners will adopt a collaborative, test-and-learn approach to integrating support with public health principles, to rigorously evaluate impact in our shared aim of reducing inequalities across the whole of the LCR.

NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service

Current NEET and Not Knowns Update

- At 3.64%, Sefton's combined NEET and NK indicator for 16-17 has improved by 0.65% in May 2021 in comparison with May 2020 and this has reduced by -0.25% for 16-18. This is an extremely positive outcome given the circumstances facing young people this year.
- Our Latest published figures show that Sefton has the best % rate for Not Knowns and the Combined measure (ie. NEET and Not Knowns) across all the Local Authority areas within the LCR. We are performing better than the North West

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NEET/NK combined measure and better than the England NEET/NK combined measure. The combined NEET and Not Known measure is the most important data indicator used by the Department for Education to judge the performance of LAs in their statutory duty for the participation of young people.

- NEET Case Conferencing Group – has met and the group have received 12 referrals. Actions have been agreed to support the referred young people and updates will be received at forthcoming regular meetings. This is a group of practitioners from a range of agencies that are solution focused who can come together to remove barriers and solve problems for the young people being helped into suitable education and training. The methodology is similar to case conferencing style of working adopted through early help team “huddles”.
- The official School leaving date this year for Y11 pupils was 28th May. Career Connect has been actively promoting the NEET Reduction and Early intervention offer to these young people as they are deemed most at risk of drop-out in September.
- This month, our churn of NEET young people has considerably improved. Although we have had 21 new NEET clients, 45 have left NEET for positive destinations.

Vulnerable Groups and EET destinations. This is the participation in education, learning or employment of young people with specific vulnerabilities.

This will be a priority for Career Connect over the next couple of months as the following patterns have emerged:

- At 84.3% the participation (EET) levels of young people with specific educational needs or disabilities (SEND) has decreased between May 20 and May 21. Participation is down by -1.33%.

Installing a bright career through Kickstart -Case study

Luke, 21, was unemployed and struggling to secure sustainable, reliable employment when he was referred to Sefton@Work by his Work Coach at Job Centre Plus.

During his initial interview, Sefton@Work registered Luke onto the ESF Ways to Work project. The aim of the project is to support local people into work through job search, coaching and skills development. It is part-funded by the European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative.

Luke disclosed that he had some paid work experience, however these roles had predominantly been short term contracts as a Multi-Drop Driver through recruitment agencies and had not allowed him any progression or stability. He was keen to find a more sustainable role that could help him feel he was starting a genuine opportunity that would allow him to learn new skills and gain valuable experience to progress, develop and build on for a long-term career.

As a Kickstart Gateway provider, Sefton@Work have worked closely with local businesses to develop quality job placements that offer our young people the opportunity to train and learn in a real working environment while they earn. With Luke being eager to get back into work quickly he was immediately taken through the wide range of varied Kickstart opportunities we were managing the recruitment for and was matched to those best suited to his circumstances, his personality and his skillset.

One of the positions that Luke matched with was an opportunity with Fox Networking Ltd for a Trainee Network Installer. Although Luke had no prior experience in this type of role, he did feel he would be able to meet the expectations to learn the trade and fulfil the duties of the role with some support and guidance. In anticipation of his application for the role and to ensure he was fully prepared to do his best at interview, Luke attended the Kickstart

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academy training at Sefton Community Learning with the aim of polishing his interview skills.

Although nervous, Luke was pleased to be interviewed by Fox Networking Ltd for a 6-month Kickstart role as Trainee Network Installer. The feedback from the interview was very positive and Luke was thrilled when he was informed that he was successful. The company is based on Hawthorn Road, Bootle and install and maintain all aspects of CCTV and data network installation.

Tim from Fox Networking Ltd is delighted with the appointment and said **“Luke has really applied himself well, only starting a month ago he has already getting a great grasp of the job role and has built his skills to the point that he will soon be provided with a company van to enable him to complete installation work on his own, and will continue to learn new and transferable skills for the future”**.



Luke’s Kickstart job has been very much a mobile and flexible role so far, and he has covered hundreds of miles visiting new and existing customers from London to Newcastle and is growing in confidence. Luke was visited in Bootle recently by his Sefton@work Placement Officer who reported how great it was to hear from both Luke and Tim that the placement was working very well for both parties.