

Overview  
& Scrutiny



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

DATE: Tuesday 28th February, 2023

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Birkdale Room, Town Hall, Southport

**Member**

Councillor  
Councillor Bradshaw (Chair)  
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Bennett  
Councillor Carlin  
Councillor D'Albuquerque  
Councillor Grace  
Councillor Killen  
Councillor McGinnity  
Councillor Robinson  
Councillor Shaw

**Substitute**

Councillor  
Councillor McKee  
Councillor Murphy  
Councillor Irving  
Councillor Page  
Councillor Jones  
Councillor Roche  
Councillor Chris Maher  
Councillor Myers  
Councillor Thomas  
Councillor Evans

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone: 0151 934 2068  
E-mail: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

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

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# AGENDA

## 1. Apologies for Absence

## 2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

## 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 12)

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023

## 4. Annual ICT Update Report (Pages 13 - 20)

Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services

## 5. Air Quality Update 2022 (Pages 21 - 42)

Report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)

## 6. Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations (Pages 43 - 56)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

## 7. Corporate Communications and Covid-19 (Pages 57 - 66)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

- 8. Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 67 - 94)  
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
- 9. Cabinet Member Report - January 2023 - February 2023** (Pages 95 - 114)  
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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

Overview  
& Scrutiny



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

**MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL BOOTLE  
ON TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)  
Councillors Carlin, D'Albuquerque, Grace, Killen,  
McGinnity, Murphy and Shaw

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Lappin and Ian Maher

### **36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byrom and Robinson (and his Substitute Member Councillor Thomas).

### **37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **39. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY 2023/24**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the Asset Management Strategy (the Strategy) and Asset Disposal Policy (the Policy) 2023/24.

The report indicated that the Strategy and Policy set out the vision and aspirations for the effective management of the Council's corporate asset portfolio and the role it played in supporting and shaping the Council's agenda for the 2030 vision; that aside from its staff, the Council's next biggest resource was its land and property and therefore it was vital that this resource was managed and used effectively and efficiently to ensure that the Council derived maximum benefit from its assets in support of its strategic aims and priorities; that the Strategy and Policy would provide a framework for the planning, prioritisation, management and funding of the Council's asset base; and that this was a statutory document that the Council was required to have in place and would be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy 2023/24 were attached as appendices to the report.

# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively.

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

- Asset Disposal Policy - Approval Limits and particularly the approved delegated limits for the Cabinet Member- Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services and Cabinet
- Factors involved to determine whether an asset would be disposed of or leased

RESOLVED:

That Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy 2023/24 be noted.

## **40. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on Prudential Indicators 2023/24.

The report indicated that the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities was introduced following the Local Government Act 2003; that it detailed a number of measures / limits / parameters (Prudential Indicators) that were required to be set each financial year; and that the approval of these limits would provide a benchmark to measure actual performance against, to help ensure that the Council complied with relevant legislation, was acting prudently and that its capital expenditure proposals were affordable.

A summary of Prudential Indicators was attached as an appendix to the report.

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively.

The Committee was requested to consider the Prudential Indicators as the basis for compliance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities; and provide any comments to Council to be considered as part of the formal approval of the Prudential Indicators for 2023/24.

A Member of the Committee asked a question/commented on the following issue:

- debt maturity profile and its impact on effective treasury management

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,  
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH  
FEBRUARY, 2023

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Prudential Indicators as the basis for compliance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities be noted;
- (2) it be noted that the relevant Prudential Indicators will be revised as required and that any changes will be brought to Cabinet and then to Council for approval; and
- (3) It be noted that the estimates of capital expenditure may change as grant allocations are received.

#### **41. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2023/24**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2023/24.

The report indicated that the Council had adopted CIPFA's 2021 Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services (the Code) which recommended the production of annual Treasury Management Policy and Strategy documents; and that in addition, the Council had adopted and incorporated into both documents:

- (a) the requirements of the 2021 Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities; and
- (b) an Investment Strategy produced in line with the then Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments 2018, which set out the manner in which the Council would manage its investments, giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

The report also advised that the Code required the Council to produce:

- (a) a Treasury Management Policy Document (attached as Appendix A to the report) which outlined the broad policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities;
- (b) a Treasury Management Strategy Document (attached as Appendix B to the report) which set out specific treasury activities that would be undertaken in compliance with the Policy in 2023/24;
- (c) suitable Treasury Management Practices, setting out the manner in which the organisation would seek to achieve these policies and objectives and prescribing how it would manage and control those activities; and
- (d) Investment Management Practices for investments that were not

# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023

part of Treasury management activity.

Also attached to the report as Appendix C was the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2023/24.

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively.

The Committee was requested to consider the proposed policies and strategy documents which included the objectives and operation of the Council's Treasury Management functions, the manner in which the Council would manage its investments and the methodology used to set aside revenue provision for the repayment of debt; and provide any comments to Council that would be considered as part of the formal approval of the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provisions Policy Statement.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2023/24 be noted.

## **42. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The report indicated that the Capital Strategy set out the long-term context in which capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions were made and consider the impact of these decisions on the priorities within the Council's Core Purpose and the promises made in the 2030 Vision for Sefton; that at the heart of the Capital Strategy was the Council's core objective to continue to deliver financial sustainability; and that as such, a flexible capital investment programme was more important than ever as a method to stimulate and enable economic growth and strategic investment, ensuring best use of existing assets and of generating future income streams to pay for and deliver day to day services.

The Capital Strategy was a key policy document for Sefton Council and followed guidance issued in the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021 Edition); and local authorities were required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out their duties in England and Wales under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Capital Strategy 2023/24 as attached to the report.

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively.



# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,  
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH  
FEBRUARY, 2023

The Committee was requested to consider the proposed Capital Strategy document as set out in Appendix A; and provide any comments to Council that would be considered as part of the formal approval of the Capital Strategy.

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

- Strategic capital investments
- Public Works Loans Board Rates (PWLB) and the past use of PWLB as the most efficient manner of borrowing for councils
- the tightening up by Government of the use of PWLB to fund the acquisition of commercial assets

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 be noted.

## **43. ROBUSTNESS OF THE 2023/24 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND THE ADEQUACY OF RESERVES – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003 - SECTION 25**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the robustness of the 2023/24 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – Local Government Act 2003 - Section 25

The report indicated that to comply with statute, the Chief Financial Officer was required to report to Council prior to the approval of the budget and the setting of the Council Tax, to give assurance that the budget was robust and that there were adequate reserves and balances.

The report concluded that as a result of considering the issues contained within the report, it was the view that the budget proposed was a robust budget package whilst also ensuring that there were adequate General Balances to draw on if the service estimates turned out to be insufficient; and that this opinion was provided in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively.

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

- the cost implications of aligning the Medium-Term Financial Plan to the improvement plan proposed by the DfE commissioner
- the role of the Schools' Forum and its decisions on the Dedicated Schools Grant and High Needs Funding

# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Local Government Act 2003, (section 25 as amended) requires the Chief Financial Officer to report formally on the following issues:

- (a) an opinion as to the robustness of the estimates made and the tax setting calculations; and
- (b) the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves;

and that the Council is requested to have regard to the matters raised in this report during the final stages of determining the budget for 2023/24.

## **44. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PLAN 2023/24 – 2025/26 AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2023/24 – 2025/26 and Council Tax 2023/24.

The report provided:

- an assessment of the Council's current financial position and approach to the 2023/24 Budget Plan and preparation for the additional two-year budget period 2024/25 to 2025/26
- an update on the Government's announcement of resources that were available to the Council for 2023/24 and 2024/25
- the Council's current financial position and the assumptions built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan
- the proposed Budget for 2023/24; and
- the proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24

The report also set out the financial strategy of the Council and the national and local financial context within which it was operating; and that the Council had a statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and to balance its budget every year.

Attached as appendices to the report were the individual school budgets 2023/24; budget saving proposals; draft Council budget summary 2023/24; and the Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2025/26

This report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings to be held on 9 February and 2 March 2023 respectively. The Council would be recommended:

- (A) In respect of the Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2024/25 to 2025/26 to:
  - (1) note the update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the period

# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,  
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH  
FEBRUARY, 2023

2023/24 to 2025/26;

- (2) approve the Revenue Budget for 2023/24 and authorise officers to undertake all of the necessary actions to implement the budget changes and proposals as detailed within the report;
- (3) approve the commencement of all appropriate activity required to implement the budget savings proposals as detailed in the report, including for example, consultation with employees and engagement with partners and contractual changes as the programme develops;
- (4) note that officers would comply with agreed HR policies and procedures including relevant consultation with Trade Unions and reports to the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services as required.
- (5) note the Schools' Forum decisions on the Dedicated Schools Grant and Individual School Budgets (Section 12);
- (6) approve the allocation of specific grants as detailed in the report (Section 13); and
- (7) Approve, subject to the recommendations above, the overall Council Tax resolution for 2023/24 including Police, Fire, Mayoral and Parish Precepts;
- (B) In respect of the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26 to approve for inclusion within the Capital Programme the full list of projects in Appendix D; and
- (C) In respect of Business Rates (Removing Schools Discretionary Top Up Relief) to approve the removal of the discretionary business rates relief awards currently given to voluntary aided / church schools with effect from 1 April 2024 (Section 18).

The Committee was requested to consider the proposals within the report and to provide any comments to Cabinet which could be considered as part of the formal approval of the Budget Plan for 2023/24 – 2025/26 and the Council Tax for 2023/24.

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

- the need for the Social Worker Academy to be successful to reduce the reliance on agency workers; and retention initiatives to ensure staff stayed with Sefton
- concern that neither the Autumn Statement or Settlement mentioned the Public Health Grant and therefore no information was available on the national totals or individual allocations

# Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,  
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 7TH  
FEBRUARY, 2023

- was rental income from the Strand Shopping Centre more adversely affected than other similar sectors during the pandemic; and
- the effects of businesses struggling during the pandemic and its impact on Business Rates collection performance; and the consequent increase in Business Rates appeals provision

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26 be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services and his staff be thanked for the production of the detailed reports for consideration at this meeting and their overall efforts in formulating the Council's budget for consideration by Council.

# Agenda Item 4

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Tuesday 28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Annual ICT Update Report		
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt Confidential Report:</b>	/ No		

## Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the performance of the Managed Services ICT Contract over the last 12 months, currently outsourced to Agilisys. The report will cover the following areas: Agilisys Contract Performance against key performance indicators, Project delivery and Security and the wider work of the ICT Client team in relation to ICT and Digital.

## Recommendation(s):

(1) That members note the content of the report and the performance of ICT over the last 12 months.

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Annual performance report for review by the committee

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

Not Applicable

## What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Not applicable

# Agenda Item 4

## Implications of the Proposals:

### Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Service delivery costs are met within current revenue budgets

### Legal Implications:

None – Service provision is within agreed contract

### Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

### Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

The content of the report does not propose any changes that impact on the Climate Emergency

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:

No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.

Commission, broker and provide core services:

No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.

Place – leadership and influencer:

No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.

<p>Drivers of change and reform:</p> <p>No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</p> <p>No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment:</p> <p>No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener</p> <p>No direct implications but the provision of a well performing service for ICT will ensure the continued delivery of key council services.</p>

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7137/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5337/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Not applicable

### Implementation Date for the Decision

Not applicable, no decision required

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Helen Spreadbury
Telephone Number:	07583 057822
Email Address:	helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk

### Appendices:

# Agenda Item 4

Appendix A – ICT KPI Performance

## **Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## **1. Background**

1.1 The Agilisys Contract delivers the following services to Sefton Council

### The Core Operational Services

1. Helpdesk Services
2. Infrastructure and Hardware
3. Network Services including Cyber Security
4. Council User Services
5. Telephony
6. Application Support including Cloud Services
7. Data Collection & ICT Services Report
8. Installation Services
9. Active Directory Services

### Ad Hoc Services

10. Project Management Services
11. Major Upgrade Support
12. Commissioning and Decommissioning support
13. Ad Hoc Reporting
14. Data Security Services

### Schools ICT Services (Schools opt in for these bought back services)

15. Support for Management Information Systems (MIS)
16. ICT Support (Connectivity)
17. Fully Managed Services

## **2. Contract Performance**

2.1 During the contract period to date Agilisys have met key performance measures (KPI's) except when exception circumstances have prevailed. Performance over the last 12 months can be found in Appendix A. It must be highlighted that during the contract period to date Key Performance Measures were adjusted to account for the disruption caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the additional pressures placed on the team due to the rapid change in the operating model of the authority. Most recently the authority provided relief from KPI's for field support teams, so that priority could be given to supporting essential departmental moves to support the building rationalisation programme and key corporate priorities such as the Children's Improvement Programme.



The Agilisys team did experience minor challenges in meeting two KPI's between December 2021 to March 2022. This was attributed to the introduction of a new Service Portal across Sefton which has delivered a new self-service portal for Sefton staff along with enhanced Chat and user guidance material. Performance quickly returned to expected levels.

- 2.3 Customer satisfaction is a new key measure implemented during the contract and performance is high, with trends well over the 70% benchmark of customer feedback forms being positive in terms of satisfaction levels. Low satisfaction scores are proactively followed up and reported to Operational Board to ensure that any trends or potential improvement actions identified.

### 3. Project Delivery

As well as the provision of core business as usual ICT services as set out in section 1.2 Agilisys provide a significant volume of ad hoc projects to Sefton, in line with the provisions of the Contract. These range from system upgrades to major infrastructure programmes. Over the last year Agilisys has worked in partnership with the ICT Client team to deliver key programmes of work including (but not limited to)

- Data Centre Cloud Migration
- The implementation of Cloud Telephony
- ICT Security improvements
- Infrastructure upgrades
- Office moves

- 3.1 The key projects for 2022 were Cloud Telephony implementation and the Data Centre Cloud migration project. These pieces of work supported the Councils Framework for Change Programme and the Sefton 2030 vision, as well as delivering a key priority within the Council's Digital Strategy approved at Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. Both these projects delivered in partnership with Agilisys are now completed in accordance with the project plan, agreed timescales and budget, with minimal disruption to operational service delivery whilst uplifting and securing an improved infrastructure platform for Sefton. This project has also significantly improved the arrangements in place for Business Continuity in terms of ICT provision.

### 4. Cyber Security

- 4.1 Cyber security risk has grown exponentially over the last two years, the risk of an Information Security Breach due to a cyber-attack features on the Corporate Risk Register and although Sefton has made significant investment in its security tools, polices, and licenses the threat to our network is still significant. The number of Cyber-attacks per week on corporate networks across the world increased by 50% in 2021 compared to 2020, this peaked in December 2021 with a major vulnerability identified Log4j. 1 in 61 worldwide organisations are impacted by Ransomware each week, with attacks on Education and Research organisations up 75% and Government and Military organisation attacks up 47%. The most common type of attack is an email Phishing attack (83% of attacks on businesses are Phishing attacks) this is followed by impersonation attacks at 23%.

# Agenda Item 4

- 4.2 The Sefton ICT Client team have worked in partnership with Agilisys colleagues throughout the year to strengthen the Councils security profile. One of the key benefits of the current ICT contract with Agilisys is the access to a team of security experts.
- 4.3 During 2022 Sefton has significantly increased the level of external verification on our network controls, not only completing the annual IT Health Check, which includes an external penetration test in line with the requirements of the Public Services Network (PSN), but also completing a Microsoft Cyber Security Assessment and participating in an LGA Cyber 360. Feedback on both exercises was largely positive, with any proposed improvements developed into an improvement plan, which is monitored monthly via the formal Security Steering Group which in turn feeds into the Contractual Operational Management Group, chaired by the authority.

## 5. **ICT Client functions**

Further to the work completed in partnership with Agilisys as outlined within this paper the ICT client team have also delivered services and support for ICT across the Council, including specialist ICT Procurement and Contract Management for approximately 250 ICT Contracts. The team provide a dedicated System development support for both Children's and Adults Social Care, as well as Education functions such as SEND, supporting both the Children's Improvement Programme and SEND improvement programme. This year the Transformation team within the team have also led and supported the redesign of the Corporate Website and the deployment of the new Customer Experience Platform (CXP). Finally, the team support the wider Digital Strategy of the Council and have developed and delivered clear governance around this workstream, along with launching the Digital Inclusion Strategy and establishing a multi-agency approach to tackle Digital Exclusion across the Borough.

## 6. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The current contract with Agilisys performs well and has delivered significant savings for the authority compared to the previous contractual arrangement.
- 5.2 The relationship between the partners is good, with robust challenge where needed but a shared vision and approach to service improvement and risk, which has provided significant benefits to the authority, particularly around security challenges.

# Agilisys KPI Dashboard: December 2022

		Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Target Performance Level	Pass/Fail	Current Month Failure Type	Points
KPI 1(a)	KPI1 (a) System Availability [excluding cloud]	100%	100%	99.98%	100%	100%	100%	99.48%	99.78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95.80%	Pass		
KPI 1(b)	KPI1 (b) System Availability cloud services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.53%	100%	100%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 4 (a)	KPI 4 (a) - Answering telephone calls made to the Service Desk within an average of 60 seconds of the telephone call first being made	19s	21s	24s	22s	28s	17s	21s	25s	26s	37s	51s	46s	47s	<60s	Pass		
KPI 4 (b)	KPI 4(b) FTF resolve 80% resolved within 15 minutes of being made to the Service Desk	87.00%	93.60%	87.60%	87.10%	89.94%	86.02%	92.70%	86.90%	84.06%	91.35%	88.06%	90.32%	80.00%	80%	Pass		
KPI 5 (a)	Resolving Priority 1 incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<1	Pass		
KPI 5(b)	Resolving Priority 2 incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<1	Pass		
KPI 5 (c)	Resolving Priority 3 incidents	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Pass		
KPI 5(d)	Resolving Priority 4 incidents	97.07%	98.29%	99.76%	99.57%	99.19%	99.09%	99.38%	99.04%	99.16%	98.25%	99.15%	99.48%	99.21%	99%	Pass		
KPI6 (b)	Closing Priority 2 Requests	98.61%	99.38%	99.32%	99.76%	99.44%	99.17%	99.75%	99.16%	99.33%	99.08%	99.60%	99.63%	99.17%	99%	Pass		
KPI 10(a)	Availability of critical applications	99.99%	99.97%	99.99%	100%	99.98%	100%	99.97%	99.98%	99.98%	99.966%	99.96%	99.99%	99.97%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 10(b)	Availability of non-critical applications	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.97%	99.98%	99.98%	99.99%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 15	Maintain a Customer Satisfaction Score above 70%	88%	90%	90%	87%	95%	91%	92%	92%	94%	90%	90%	92%	91%	70%	Pass		

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# Agenda Item 5

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Tuesday 28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Air Quality Update		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

**Summary:** To provide an update on local air quality management activities and air quality improvement actions in Sefton during 2022

## **Recommendation(s):**

That the report be noted

## **Reasons for the Recommendation(s):**

To provide an update to members on the ongoing Local Air Quality Management activities (Monitoring and improvement actions) underway in Sefton during 2022.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** N/A

## **What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

### **(A) Revenue Costs**

There are no direct revenue costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **(B) Capital Costs**

There are no direct capital costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

# Agenda Item 5

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
None – update report only	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
None - update report only	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>	
There are no equality implications.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Y
Have a neutral impact	N
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable:          Poor air quality can have a major impact on health particularly those already vulnerable e.g. young children, the elderly and those with existing respiratory problems. Measures being implemented to improve air quality therefore contribute to this core purpose</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities:          Interventions to improve air quality, taken by the Local Authority, partners, and the community, demonstrate that mitigation against poor air quality is possible and the interventions actively support making better choices and behavioural change. Improving air quality contributes to improved health, wellbeing, economic activity/productivity and increased personal and community resilience.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services:          Local Air Quality Management is a statutory responsibility for the Council</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer:          The management and improvement of air quality is a key aspect of place leadership and creating cleaner, greener and healthier places</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform:          N/A</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:          There is an established link between poor air quality, poor health, the ability to work/remain economically active and productive. Improving air quality can therefore contribute to improved productivity and economic prosperity.</p>

Greater income for social investment:  
N/A

Cleaner Greener:  
Poor air quality is an indication of environmental damage and any mitigation measures reduce the impact of this damage.

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7145) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5345) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

'not applicable'

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Greg Martin
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## Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## Background

1. Ongoing evidence shows that air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas
2. The Environment Act 1995 places a **statutory duty** on all Local Authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, produce a yearly Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) which provides a detailed account of air quality in its area and implement actions to improve air quality.

# Agenda Item 5

3. The Air Quality Regulations made under the Act specify the pollutants that must be considered and set standards and objectives for each of the pollutants, which are referred to as National Air Quality Standard (NAQS) Objectives. These are detailed below with the 2 pollutants still of concern in Sefton shown in red text. The pollutants that have to be considered are shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1 National Air Quality Standard Objectives**

Pollutant	Description	National Air Quality Standard Objective (NAQS)
Benzene	An organic chemical compound emitted by some industrial processes and a constituent of petrol	<b>5 µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (Annual Mean)
1,3 Butadiene	A Hydrocarbon based gas released from car exhausts	2.25µg/m <sup>3</sup> (Annual Mean)
Carbon Monoxide	An odourless colourless gas produced by incomplete combustion	<b>10mg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (8 hour mean)
Lead	A heavy metal emitted by certain industrial processes	<b>0.25µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (Annual Mean)
Nitrogen Dioxide	A gas produced by internal combustion engines	<b>200µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (1hr mean) not to exceeded more than 18 times per annum  <b>40µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (Annual mean)
Particulate Matter PM <sub>10</sub>	Particulates less than 10µm in diameter produced by industry and road traffic.	<b>50µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (24hr mean) not to be exceeded more than 35 times per annum  <b>40µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (Annual mean)
Sulphur dioxide	A gas which can be produced when burning fossil fuel and or heavy fuel oil	<b>266µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (15 min mean) Not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year <b>350µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (1hr mean) Not to be exceeded more than 24 times per year <b>125µg/m<sup>3</sup></b> (24hr mean) Not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year

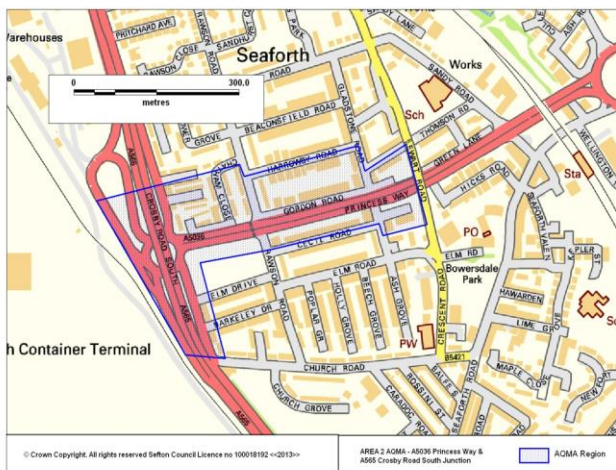
4. Through ongoing review and assessment it has been determined that for the following pollutants, Benzene, 1,3 Butadiene, Carbon Monoxide, Lead and Sulphur Dioxide, the NAQS objectives will **not** be exceeded in Sefton and as such, no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have been declared for these pollutants.
5. As a result of ongoing monitoring and assessment Air Quality in the majority of Sefton has been shown to be of a good standard and levels are well within the National Air Quality Standard Objectives given above. There are however areas in the South of the Borough, where due to high levels of traffic, and other localised sources, levels of NO<sub>2</sub> are above or close to the national standard.



## Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

6. As reported previously where it is likely that levels of air pollution may exceed the NAQS, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared by the Local Authority. Through air pollution monitoring and modelling Four (4) localised areas in South Sefton have been identified where levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) have exceeded or are close to the annual average standard of **40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>**. AQMA's have been declared in these locations and are discussed in more detail below.

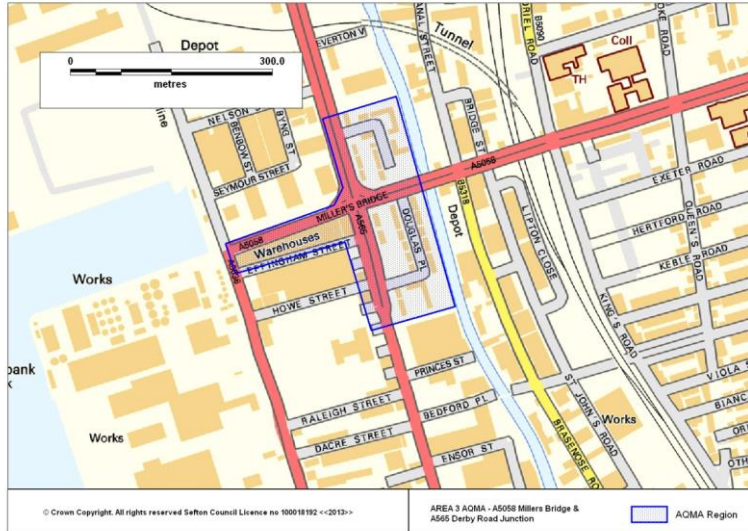
### AQMA 2-Princess Way, Seaforth.



7. AQMA 2 - Princess Way was identified for NO<sub>2</sub> exceedances. The main source of NO<sub>2</sub> in this AQMA is related to HGV traffic. The deep-water berth at the Port of Liverpool is now complete and HGV traffic is predicted to increase as a result. A major highways scheme is currently being considered by National Highways to accommodate the increase in road traffic because of the port expansion.
8. Several air quality actions have been implemented by Sefton to reduce levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in this area. These include assisting in the development of port booking systems, development of Sefton's ECOstars fleet recognition scheme, the redesigned 'hamburger' roundabout improvements and recent joint emissions enforcement work with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
9. It is recognised, however, that dealing with road traffic related emissions in this area with the potential increase in HGV port traffic is extremely challenging and alternative/innovative measures need to be considered.

# Agenda Item 5

## AQMA 3 Millers Bridge



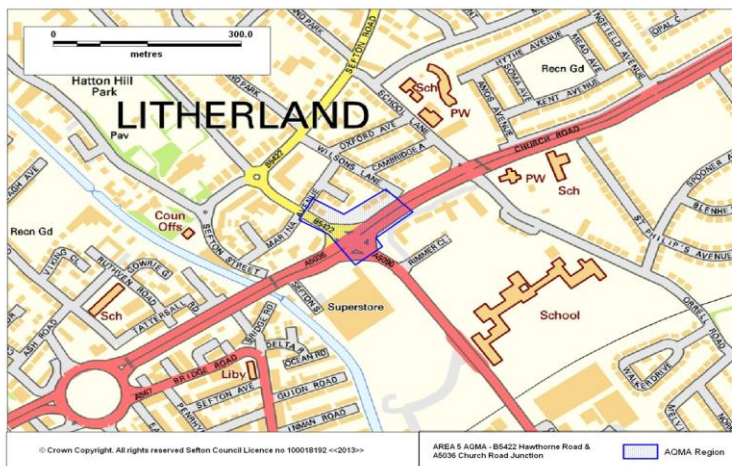
10. AQMA 3 - Millers Bridge - was identified for exceedances of the PM<sub>10</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> NAQS objectives. The main contributors to the emissions in this area are HGVs and industrial processes in and around the dock estate.
11. Several successful measures have been implemented in this area as part of the action plan to reduce emissions. Officers continue to work jointly with the Environment Agency to ensure industrial emissions are monitored and controlled effectively in this area, a HGV hurry call system has also been introduced which gives priority to HGV's heading up Millers Bridge, reducing the need for stopping at the traffic lights thus reducing emissions. This major junction has also recently been redesigned as part of the North Liverpool Key Corridor Improvement Scheme to improve traffic flow and reduce waiting times at the traffic lights.
12. As a result of these measures the NAQS objective for PM<sub>10</sub> has consistently been met for a number of years. However, this will be kept under review as the port expands in the future.
13. With regard to NO<sub>2</sub> in this AQMA the results of monitoring continue to show some exceedances of the annual NAQS objective. Dealing with NO<sub>2</sub> exceedances in this location is again challenging due to the level of traffic that passes through the junction, physical characteristics of the area and proximity to the port. Any future increase in traffic resulting from the port expansion could also lead to additional exceedances in this area.

## **AQMA 4 Crosby Road North, South Road Waterloo**



14. AQMA 4 was identified for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> NAQS objective. As part the Action Plan to address this exceedance, improvements to the South Road and Haigh Road junction were agreed to improve traffic flow. The junction improvement works have now been completed and the ongoing effectiveness of these in terms of reducing levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in the AQMA is being monitored using diffusion tubes. The latest results show that levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in the AQMA have now reduced to below the national limit. Further monitoring will be undertaken to ensure consistent compliance with the NAQS before the decision to revoke this AQMA is made.

## **AQMA 5 Hawthorne Road, Church Road Junction Litherland**



15. AQMA 5 was identified for NO<sub>2</sub> NAQS objective exceedances. The main source of the emissions at this location is road traffic. For the last 5 years this AQMA showed compliance with the annual NAQS objective for NO<sub>2</sub>. However as with AQMA 2, this site may be affected by the increased emissions due to HGV traffic because of the port expansion and will remain in place.

# Agenda Item 5

## Air Quality Monitoring

16. To provide accurate data on pollution levels in Sefton and as part of our ongoing duties, officers continue to undertake extensive air pollution monitoring using both DEFRA approved real time automatic monitoring systems and diffusion tubes which provide average annual levels.
17. Sefton is also currently trialling the use of lower cost air pollution sensors which although not approved by DEFRA do provide hourly air pollution data so we can better understand air pollution patterns/issues in a given area. Details of these trials are provided later in the report.
18. As Sefton has to comply with DEFRA's monitoring requirements the latest ratified monitoring results are for the year 2021. Monitoring for 2022 has only just been completed (last diffusion tube collected in January 2023) and as such this data is currently being checked and ratified.

## Automatic Monitoring

19. Sefton monitors air pollution at 6 key locations using DEFRA approved automatic equipment. The location, justification for its siting and pollutants monitored are provided in the table below:

**Table 2 Location of automatic monitoring stations**

<b>Monitor Location</b>	<b>Justification for Location</b>	<b>Pollutants Monitored</b>
Waterloo Primary School, Crosby Road North, Waterloo.	Within previous AQMA1 Crosby Road North. Proximity to Road/Sensitive Receptor	PM <sub>10</sub> NO <sub>2</sub>
Hawthorne Road opposite KFC, Litherland	Within AQMA 5 Church Road Junction- Proximity to Road Junction/Sensitive Receptor	NO <sub>2</sub> , PM <sub>10</sub>
Lathom Close, Seaforth	Within AQMA 2. Proximity to Road/Docks/Sensitive Receptor	PM <sub>10</sub> PM <sub>2.5</sub> NO <sub>2</sub>
Millers Bridge, Bootle	Within AQMA 3. Proximity to Road Junction/ Docks and Sensitive Receptor.	PM <sub>10</sub> PM <sub>2.5</sub> NO <sub>2</sub>
A565, Crosby Road South previously located at St Joan of Arc School	Proximity to Road /Docks and Sensitive receptor.	NO <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>2</sub>
Regent Road Crosby (installed summer 2020)	Background Particulate Levels in suburban area	PM <sub>10</sub> PM <sub>2.5</sub>

## Diffusion tube monitoring

20. In addition to the real-time monitors, Sefton measures monthly NO<sub>2</sub> levels at 80 sites across the Borough using diffusion tubes. The diffusion tubes are located in

areas that have already been identified as AQMA's or are located in areas in close proximity to sensitive premises where additional data and monitoring is required to assess current/future NO<sub>2</sub> levels as part of the ongoing Review and Assessment process. The monthly results from these tubes are combined to enable comparison with the annual mean NAQS objective for NO<sub>2</sub>.

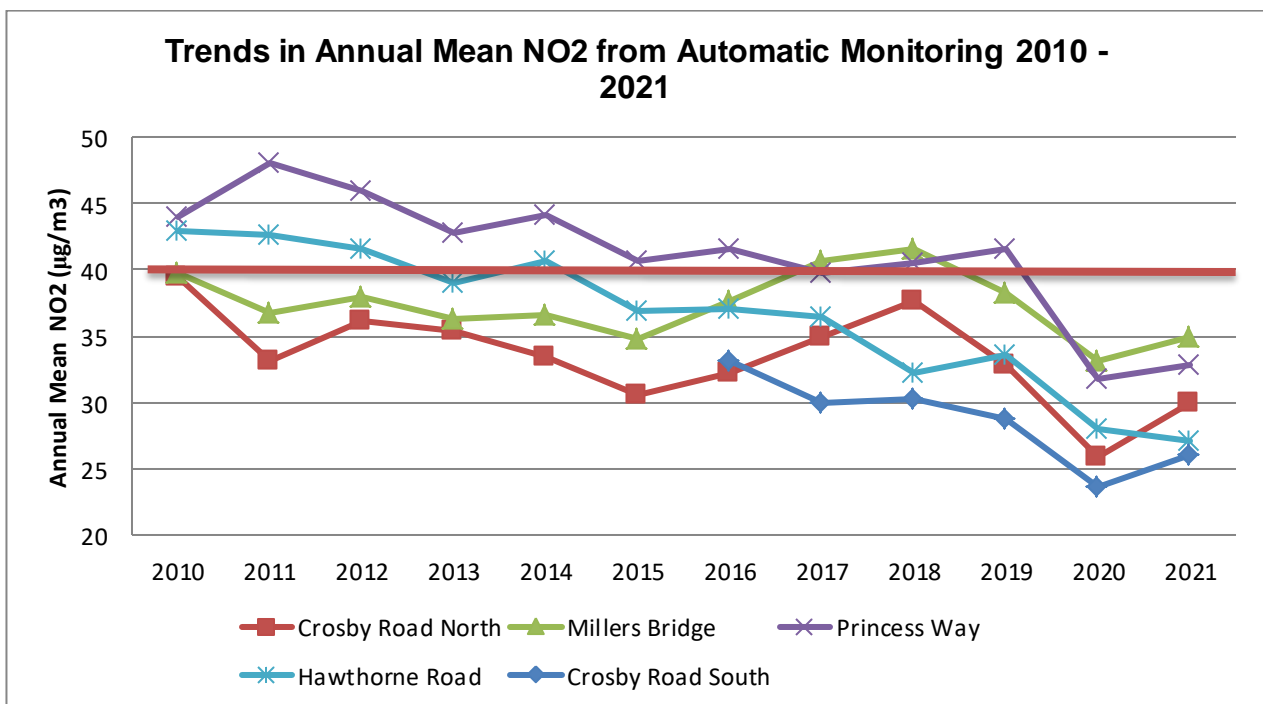
21. Several sites have also been added recently to assess the impact the port expansion will have on NO<sub>2</sub> levels. The location of these is reviewed annually to ensure all areas of concern are monitored.

## NO<sub>2</sub> Automatic Monitoring Results

**Table 3 - NO<sub>2</sub> Annual Mean results (limit 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>)**

Site	NO <sub>2</sub> Annual Mean µg/m <sup>3</sup>									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crosby Road North	36.1	35.4	33.4	30.6	32.2	34.9	37.6	35.0	25.9	30.0
Millers Bridge	37.9	36.3	36.6	34.8	37.7	40.6	41.5	38.2	33.2	35.0
Princess Way	45.9	42.8	44.2	40.6	41.6	39.7	40.5	41.6	31.7	32.9
Hawthorne Road	41.5	39.0	40.7	36.9	37.1	36.5	32.2	33.6	28.0	27.1
Crosby Road South				34.6	33.2	29.6	30.2	28.8	23.6	26.0

**The graph below shows the trends in Annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> levels between 2010 and 2021 at each of the continuous monitoring sites.**



22. Following the substantial traffic reductions due to the various lockdowns and social restrictions associated with the Covid pandemic in 2020, levels of NO<sub>2</sub> at Sefton's automatic stations in 2021 have shown an increasing trend compared to 2020 as can be seen in the trend graph on the previous page. Notably they have not however, returned to pre-covid levels experienced in 2019. The ongoing impact of the pandemic has continued to have an effect on traffic levels and flows

# Agenda Item 5

certainly in the first part of 2021 as a number of restrictions and lockdowns remained.

23. levels of NO<sub>2</sub> at all of the 5 automatic monitoring sites again showed compliance with the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective in 2021 (at the monitoring location) with the highest monitored level of 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the Millers Bridge site.
24. As can be observed in 2021 4 out of the 5 sites showed an increase in levels following the 2020 pandemic. The site at Hawthorne did however show a further reduction in annual levels. All sites were well below the NAQS objective. During 2021 there were still ongoing impacts from the covid pandemic in terms of traffic levels and commuting habits. Monitoring will continue to enable future trends to be observed.
25. There were no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> 1-hour mean objective at any of the automatic monitoring sites.

## Diffusion tube NO<sub>2</sub> results

26. In line with the automatic monitoring results, the non-automatic diffusion tube monitoring sites showed an increase in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean levels compared to 2020. Levels across these sites have not, however, returned to those observed pre-covid (2019)
27. In 2021 4 diffusion tube sites showed an exceedance of the NAQS objective at the monitoring location and are discussed below:
28. Diffusion tube Site ID: BR Derby Road, Bootle showed an exceedance of the NAQS objective in 2021 with an NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean of 46.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. As this site recorded a 2021 NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration in exceedance of the air quality objective at a monitoring site which is not representative of public exposure, the concentration at the nearest receptor for this location was estimated using the distance correction via the Defra diffusion tube processing tool. This showed the estimated concentration of 42.7µg/m<sup>3</sup> indicating an exceedance with the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective at a relevant public exposure location in this area. **This is within AQMA 3 - Millers Bridge.**
29. Diffusion tube Site ID: GH A565 Derby Road, Seaforth, showed an exceedance of the NAQS objective in 2021 with an NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean of 40.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. As this site recorded a 2021 NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration in exceedance of the air quality objective at a monitoring site which is not representative of public exposure, the concentration at the nearest receptor for this location was estimated using the distance correction via the Defra diffusion tube processing tool. This showed the estimated concentration of 32.1µg/m<sup>3</sup> indicating compliance with the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective at a relevant public exposure location in this area. Monitoring will continue in this area.
30. Diffusion tube Site ID: HB Breeze Hill, Bootle, showed an exceedance of the NAQS objective in 2021 with an NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean of 41.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. As this site recorded a 2021 NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration in exceedance of the air quality objective at a monitoring site which is not representative of public exposure, the

concentration at the nearest receptor for this location was estimated using the distance correction via the Defra diffusion tube processing tool. This showed the estimated concentration of  $33.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  indicating compliance with the  $\text{NO}_2$  annual mean objective at a relevant public exposure location in this area. Monitoring will continue in this area.

31. Diffusion tube Site ID: HC Breeze Hill Bootle, showed an exceedance of the NAQS objective in 2021 with an  $\text{NO}_2$  annual mean of  $40.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . This site is located in excess of 50 meters away from public exposure and as such as per TG/16 can't be corrected for fall off with distance. Given the distance between the tube and the nearest receptor we can assume the level at the receptor is well within the NAQS.

## **Particulate Matter Results**

**Table 4 PM<sub>10</sub> Annual Mean 2012-2021 (Limit 40  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )**

Site	PM <sub>10</sub> Annual Mean $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crosby Road North	25.4	28.3	23.6	23.7	17.0	21.1	19.9	26.2	N/A	N/A
Millers Bridge	26.1	28.1	28.8	28.7	25.4	23.9	20.1	17.6	16.1	19.5
Princess Way	24.9	26.5	26.5	26.7	23.8	23.1	22.6	16.9	20.0	17.5
Hawthorne Road						23.9	21.2	23.7	20.3	18.7
Regent Road									13.2	9.5

32. The table above shows the measured levels of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  at each of the continuous monitoring sites since 2012. The national limit is  $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and whilst the monitors are not located exactly at the receptor locations, they provide an accurate indicator of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  levels in the locality.

33. All areas are now consistently compliant with the  $\text{PM}_{10}$  NAQS objective with annual levels well within the standard. The number of daily exceedances is also consistently below the standard of 35 exceedances per year. Monitoring of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  will however continue to assess the impact the port expansion may have on particulate emissions.

## **PM<sub>2.5</sub> Monitoring**

34. Although Sefton Council monitors  $\text{PM}_{10}$  at several locations in the Borough, there is now clear evidence that even smaller particles with an aerodynamic diameter of  $2.5\mu\text{m}$  or less, known as  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ , have a greater impact on human health.
35. Unlike Nitrogen Dioxide particulate matter emissions are caused by a number of different sources, including the burning of domestic solid fuel, degradation of vehicle tyres and brakes and to a lesser degree combustion engines. As such tackling  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  emissions is likely to be challenging.

# Agenda Item 5

36. To gather information on current PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in Sefton three dual PM<sub>10</sub> / PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitors have now been installed in the Borough, the latest being at Princess way and was commissioned in Autumn 2022.

37. The current national standard for PM<sub>2.5</sub> is **25 µg/m<sup>3</sup>**. The results below show that monitored levels in Sefton are well within the standard, however it is likely that this standard will reduce as a result of future planned changes to air quality legislation.

**Table 5 PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring results**

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Millers Bridge PM <sub>2.5</sub> Annual Mean µg/m <sup>3</sup>	7.1	8.9	10.0	7.8	9.6
Regentroad Crosby PM <sub>2.5</sub> Annual Mean µg/m <sup>3</sup>				7.3	5.9

38. The full details of these changes regarding PM<sub>2.5</sub> are still being considered by Central Government, but it is likely that Local Authorities will be expected to implement measures to ensure compliance with any tighter standards. Further detail on these changes will be provided to members in due course.

## **Summary of monitoring results 2021**

39. As reported in last year's update the NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring results for 2020 were significantly lower than previous years which was undoubtedly due to the impact of the Covid pandemic and associated lockdowns/social restrictions with much reduced traffic levels during the various lockdowns. Notably only one monitoring site in 2020 showed an exceedance of the NO<sub>2</sub> National Air Quality Standard (NAQS) objective the lowest number of exceedances recorded since monitoring began.

40. NO<sub>2</sub> levels in 2021 have increased overall compared to 2020 but have not returned to pre-covid levels as seen in 2019. The majority of monitoring locations in Sefton during 2021 have shown compliance with the NO<sub>2</sub> NAQS objective with only 4 monitoring sites exceeding the national limit.

41. Levels of Particulate Matter have increased slightly compared to 2020 but as in previous years all AQMA's show compliance with the PM<sub>10</sub> national air quality standard objective by some margin.

42. As we know 2020 was an exceptional year for air quality due to the Covid Pandemic. It does appear that its legacy has continued to have a positive effect on Sefton's air quality in 2021 as overall levels have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

## **Actions to Improve Air Quality**



43. Notwithstanding the temporary improvements in air quality observed as a result of the covid pandemic the main on-going priority in Sefton for the coming years is to fully understand the effects that the predicted increase in HGVs due to port expansion will have on air quality and how this can be mitigated.
44. This is undoubtedly the most significant challenge for the Council in terms of air quality impact in the Borough at the present time, due to the scale of the expansion and the potential for this to impact on air quality in existing AQMAs and also impact on public exposure receptor residential locations on port access routes.
45. A number of possible air quality intervention options to deal with the predicted increase in emissions, including an HGV only Clean Air Zone (CAZ) are currently being considered by Sefton Council, as set out below.

## **Sefton Clean Air Plan (CAP)**

### **CAP Outline Business Case (OBC) – Introduction**

46. Following on from the Preliminary Clean Air Zone (CAZ) feasibility study, Cabinet gave approval for Officers to progress the development of a detailed Outline Business Case (OBC) for the creation of a Sefton Based CAZ, in line with the approach recommended by DEFRA. AECOM were commissioned in 2020 to undertake the additional air quality and transport modelling work needed and prepare a draft OBC in conjunction with Council officers.
47. The development of the CAP OBC forms part of the Council's wider AQ programme overseen by the AQ Cabinet Member Reference Group.
48. Sefton Council has prepared the Clean Air Plan (CAP) Outline Business Case (OBC) because there are locations within Sefton with persistent poor air quality, and this poor air quality has detrimental effects on public health and the wider environment. Some of the worst air quality in Sefton is concentrated within areas with existing high levels of health and income deprivation, meaning that the worst air quality is experienced by those most vulnerable to its effects.
49. HGV traffic associated with the Port of Liverpool makes a substantial contribution to road-source emissions and overall pollution levels in nearby areas. In addition, the emissions from the Port operation itself contribute to overall local background pollution, through industrial and shipping operations etc. Although the overall HGV fleet is improving as older vehicles are replaced, port expansion in the coming years will pose additional challenges, primarily through an increase in levels of HGV traffic and consequent congestion and increased emissions.
50. Without further action, increased emissions from HGVs due to the Port expansion and wider traffic growth could result in these areas not achieving compliance with national objectives under current conditions. In addition, new areas may become non-compliant.

# Agenda Item 5

51. The government (via the Joint Air Quality Unit – JAQU) has now instructed many local authorities across the UK to take quick action to reduce harmful NO<sub>2</sub>. Although Sefton Council has not been mandated by JAQU to undertake a feasibility study (like many other local authorities), this does not indicate that there are no air quality issues which need to be addressed. In response to its local air quality management responsibilities, Sefton Council has undertaken further air quality modelling and has chosen to take additional steps to support local aspirations to improve air quality beyond just compliance with national standards, with a key objective being to protect the health of local residents. The additional work being carried out by the Council will also contribute to its commitments to tackle carbon emissions as part of the Climate Emergency declaration.
52. The Clean Air Plan OBC proposal, in the main, comprises a HGV Clean Air Zone scheme that aims to address persistent air quality issues identified within Sefton in the shortest time possible. The CAZ scheme preferred option (referred to as 'Option 2A') features a charging CAZ applied to non-compliant HGVs (Euro 5 and older) that cross into a designated section of the Sefton highway network. The preferred option HGV CAZ is focused on the A565 and A5036 corridors, incorporating all four of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Incorporating the A5036 within the CAZ requires entry and exit signs and enforcement cameras to be installed on the National Highways network and would require a co-operative approach between Sefton Council and National Highways on this issue.
53. The Outline Business Case for the potential implementation of a HGV CAZ sets out the rationale for the whole project and provides more detail about the proposals, including clear strategic objectives for the proposals.

## **Outline Business Case – Project Objectives and Outcomes**

54. The objective of the Clean Air Plan is to address persistent air quality issues within Sefton which occur in some of the most income/health deprived areas in the borough.
55. The key case for change is that the Government, and Local Authorities, in accordance with their local air quality management responsibilities, are required to meet air quality limit values in the shortest possible time. Within Sefton, this is also supported by a local desire to go further ('beyond compliance') to improve air quality and public health and well-being.
56. The strategic objectives of the Clean Air Plan are:
- To improve air quality in the shortest time possible in known hotspot areas in Sefton's four AQMAs and achieve compliance with national standards in the shortest time possible.
  - To promote improved air quality in the wider area (outside the four declared AQMAs) through more rapid switchover to vehicles with minimal exhaust emissions.
  - To reduce human exposure to air pollution, and thus improve public health, particularly for areas of Sefton with high levels of deprivation.
  - To reduce emissions relating to the A5036 for HGV vehicle traffic, particularly around high-density residential areas.

57. The Outline Business Case developed for the Clean Air Plan adopts the standard Treasury Green Book 5-Case Model as follows:

- Strategic Case
- Economic Case
- Financial Case
- Commercial Case
- Management Case

58. The proposed output is the potential implementation of the HGV CAZ scheme intervention, intended to achieve the following outcomes which support the strategic objectives listed above, providing a positive impact on the local environment, socio-economic factors and the health and well-being of residents and visitors:

- Significant air quality benefits (i.e. reduced Nitrogen Dioxide concentrations) within the CAZ boundary area (i.e. along key Port routes / within AQMAs) in addition to wider benefits across south Sefton; and
- An improvement in current disproportionate air quality impacts in some of Sefton's most health/economically deprived areas.

## **Outline Business Case – Delivery Approach**

59. A project team of Council officers, supported by commissioned technical experts has carried out further appraisal and developed the OBC. The OBC sets out the basis for proceeding with the Clean Air Plan and identifies the preferred option for a charging HGV CAZ. Subject to the decision on the OBC, the next stage of the project would be to prepare a Full Business Case (FBC) setting out all the details of how the CAP will be implemented. The Council will continue to lead this process, with technical support commissioned as required.

60. A significant funding commitment will be required for implementation of the CAP and funding sources are yet to be identified for all elements of the CAZ scheme. A potential funding source for progression to a Full Business Case and implementation of a CAZ scheme is via central government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU). Any funding exploration via JAQU will need to be supplemented with a request for agreement on the inclusion of the A5036 in the CAZ boundary, with support and liaison also needed with National Highways in this respect.

61. The FBC will also require a full understanding of the legal requirements with regards to powers and consents required for the implementation of a CAZ, and the legal requirement for formal statutory public consultation on the introduction of a CAZ.

## **Outline Business Case – Conclusions of CAP OBC**

62. The OBC evidence-base indicates that significant air quality benefits within the CAZ Boundary area (Port Routes/AQMAs) and wider AQ improvements can potentially be achieved if the Council proceeds to the implementation of a HGV Corridor Charging CAZ, subject to the development of a Full Business Case (FBC). Furthermore, the air quality benefits of the Preferred HGV CAZ Option are

# Agenda Item 5

concentrated in areas with some of highest levels of income/health deprivation – locally and nationally i.e. parts of Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth.

63. The case for change is strong because the OBC evidence base indicates the persistence of poor air quality at discrete locations and future risks due to increased traffic, particularly associated with HGVs on key Port routes (A5036/A565). In addition, HGVs are disproportionately high emitters of both NO<sub>x</sub> and PM and the Preferred HGV Charging CAZ which targets key Port routes (A565/A5036) provides the best value option when balanced against the option assessment criteria.
64. The estimated scheme costs (Capital and Operating) for the Preferred CAZ Option are provided within the OBC, but further work is required at FBC stage to develop the cost estimates, particularly through detailed design work and engagement with potential suppliers and contractors. In addition, funding for potential mitigation costs for financial support for businesses and scheme development and consultation costs require consideration.
65. Funding sources are yet to be identified for the progression of the OBC to FBC and/or any CAZ implementation. Key risks and measures to mitigate and manage those risks have been identified within the Management Case. Key stakeholders are identified, and consultation has been undertaken throughout the OBC development process, initially to share the high-level objectives, proposals and rationale for the CAZ scheme and more recently to share the outcomes of the OBC.

## **Outline Business Case – Aligned Communication & Engagement Strategy**

66. An appropriate Communication and Engagement Strategy has been developed to support the CAZ OBC process.
67. Internal communication and engagement has focused on regular routine engagement with key internal stakeholders including Cabinet, Executive Leadership Team, Growth Board, Air Quality Member Reference Group and OSC (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services).
68. External communication and engagement has focussed to date on key external stakeholders, as follows:
  - National Highways - given the implications of the proposals for the A5036 Strategic Road Network.
  - Liverpool City Council - given they are an adjoining local authority who were legally mandated by Government in 2018 to produce a Clean Air Plan to identify how Nitrogen Dioxide levels could be reduced in the shortest time possible.
  - Peel Ports - given the anticipated growth in port-related HGV traffic and the implications of the proposals for key port routes.
  - Joint Air Quality Unit (*oversight board for managing DEFRA's/DfT's NO<sub>2</sub> reduction programme*) – given the potential to explore any appropriate funding source for the Clean Air Plan implementation.

69. Public engagement is via a dedicated Information Page for Sefton's Clean Air Plan on Sefton's 'Your Sefton Your Say' online platform, available since June 2021. This is updated as and when required and features a wide range of relevant local Air Quality information and also introduces the wider Clean Air Plan Strategy and the development of the Clean Air Plan OBC for a potential Clean Air Zone.

## **Outline Business Case – Recommendations of CAP OBC**

70. Through a structured Options Appraisal process, the CAP OBC has assessed four short-listed HGV Charging CAZ Boundary Options. The preferred CAZ boundary option (Option 2A) consists of a Charging HGV CAZ including both the A565 and A5036 corridors, thus including all of the existing AQMAs and focusing on areas of greatest concern. It was also recommended that a reserve option (Option 2B - A565 corridor only) is retained, subject to discussions with JAQU/National Highways regarding the proposal (under Option 2A) to include the A5036 (route managed by National Highways) within the CAZ.

71. The progression of the CAP scheme to the next stage, i.e. Full Business Case, will depend on a number of factors, which include key risks and constraints identified in the OBC work. The decision about whether to proceed to the FBC needs to take account of all these key issues. Additionally the delivery of the CAP has several key dependencies / interdependencies, including:

- The need to identify a funding source for the implementation of the scheme, including provision for mitigation – noting that any funding sourced via JAQU may result in a mandate and requirements may be specified which differ from the Council's priorities and objectives.
- Agreement with JAQU/National Highways is required for the inclusion of the A5036, approvals of the proposed CAZ scheme, powers and consents (including the requirement of a Charging Scheme Order under section 168 Transport Act 2000).
- The neighbouring Liverpool City Council Clean Air Plan, which may have direct impacts on any scheme implemented in Sefton, which must be understood and accounted for.

72. Ongoing monitoring and consideration of all these dependencies will be required should the scheme progress to FBC stage.

73. In addition to these key issues/dependencies/interdependencies, it is important to recognise that the implementation of a CAZ is not in itself an all-encompassing solution for air quality issues, either within or outside the CAZ. The modelling analysis for the preferred CAZ option suggests that even with the CAZ scheme in place some existing exceedances will remain at a small number of discrete locations. The ongoing expansion of the Port of Liverpool and changes in the commercial operations at the Port may result in changes in background concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, which is particularly relevant to the A565 corridor which contains three of the AQMAs. The successful implementation of the CAP therefore requires synergy with ongoing Council policies and initiatives with respect to air quality, as well as the Port Air Quality Strategy, and collaboration

# Agenda Item 5

with key stakeholders such as the National Highways and neighbouring authorities within the city region.

## Outline Business Case – Next Steps for the CAP OBC

74. Based on the OBC outcomes, a number of potential pathways have been identified. Table 6 below shows the different pathways available for Cabinet consideration, to determine the next steps for the CAP OBC.

75. The primary decision for Cabinet is whether to proceed to the preparation of a Full Business Case or not, but there are different approaches that can be taken depending on the primary decision and these are summarised below (Note – a funding source would need to be identified for Options 2 - 4).

**Table 6 -Potential CAP OBC Pathways**

A. Do not proceed to FBC for charging CAZ:		
1	Business As Usual (BAU) approach	Due to generally improving air quality situation and likely compliance with national thresholds within the next few years and the significant costs of implementing a charging CAZ - <i>Maintain current initiatives and monitoring.</i>
2	BAU <i>plus</i> Option 2A Corridor focussed measures <i>i.e. a Non-Charging CAZ (in AQ hotspots)</i>	Focus available resources on <i>additional and targeted measures to improve air quality in the proposed CAZ corridors</i> , for example supporting a vehicle upgrade programme.
2+	BAU <i>plus</i> Option 2A Corridor focussed measures <i>plus wider measures i.e. a Non-Charging CAZ (in AQ hotspots) plus wider area measures</i>	<i>As for 2 but allocate additional resources for wider measures</i> to improve air quality across south Sefton and <b>expand to include carbon reduction initiatives</b> targeted at the freight sector.
B. Proceed to FBC for a charging CAZ along the A565 and A5036:		
3	FBC for Charging CAZ ( <i>if can gain JAQU/NH support</i> )	Only if JAQU support is gained through exploring/securing funding opportunities based on OBC outcomes i.e. <i>begin approach for JAQU liaison now</i> – understand current funding position / prepare submission.
4	FBC for Charging CAZ ( <b>Council funded</b> )	Decision about submission to <i>JAQU to be made at a later date</i> i.e. Council fund FBC. <i>But also need to consider implementation/consultation/mitigation funding needed – recommend funding secured prior to proceeding to FBC.</i>

76. A two-staged approach to the Cabinet decision-making process on the progression of the CAP-OBC, is underway.

77. An ‘OBC information’ Report was presented to Cabinet in July 2022. The purpose of the report was:

- To advise Cabinet on outcomes of the CAP OBC,
- To seek approval of the OBC findings and recommendations
- To agree release of OBC into the public domain
- To agree further engagement with key stakeholders
- To share potential OBC pathway options for Cabinet to consider, as set out in **Table 6**.

78. An '**OBC Pathway Decision**' report is due to be prepared for consideration at Cabinet in Spring 2023, which will incorporate key stakeholder feedback (LCC, National Highways, Peel Ports, Joint Air Quality Unit) to inform the decision on the preferred pathway. The stakeholder engagement has been ongoing since Autumn 2022, to respond to and effectively communicate technical queries and considerations.

79. As well as the strategic high-level work underway as part of the Clean Air Plan detailed above Officers are continually looking at ways to further improve air quality and several actions are currently underway which are discussed in more detail below.

## **Joint Sefton/Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Emissions Enforcement Project**

80. Officers from Sefton working with DVSA inspectors have undertaken 2 joint vehicle emissions enforcement activities in Dec 2021 and recently in Sept 2022 to identify HGV's travelling along the A5036, A565 and motorway network which were emitting unacceptable levels of air pollution thus potentially indicating emission system control tampering and or faults.

81. During the most recent exercise last September sophisticated air pollution monitoring equipment was installed in DVSA stop cars and levels of NOx and PM were monitored in live traffic to detect suspect vehicles.

82. Exhaust plume emissions from around 150 vehicles were monitored with 11 vehicles being identified as emitting excessive emissions.

83. These vehicles were stopped at the switch Island DVSA inspection site and subject to further examination by DVSA inspectors.

84. Following the detailed examinations faults were found and 7 enforcement notices were issued to drivers by the DVSA requiring the faults to be rectified.

85. Further joint work is being considered potentially using roadside monitoring equipment to detect suspect vehicles.

## **Low-Cost Sensor co-location project Sefton/JMU**

86. Sefton Council and John Moores University (JMU) are currently undertaking a joint air quality monitoring co-location study to determine how accurate lower cost air pollution sensors are, compared to Sefton's own DEFRA approved automatic monitoring equipment.

# Agenda Item 5

87. The study is underway at our Millers Bridge monitoring site and in collaboration with JMU, 3 lower cost sensors are currently being tested for accuracy. The 3 sensors being tested are:

- Libelium Smart Cities Plug & Sense (NO<sub>2</sub>)
- Aeroqual AQY (NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>)
- Earth Sense Zephyr (NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>1</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>)

88. Comparison of NO/NO<sub>2</sub>/PM<sub>10</sub>/PM<sub>2.5</sub> data has commenced with the Earth Sense Zephyr unit showing the most accuracy when compared with the DEFRA approved monitor.

## **DEFRA Grant funded educational behaviour change project**

89. Officers from Sefton's Energy and Environmental Management Team supported by Environmental Health were successful in obtaining a DEFRA AQ grant of £122,500 to undertake an educational behaviour change project. The Project commenced in April 2021 and ran until December 2022. evaluation of the project is currently underway

90. The projects overall aim was to raise awareness of Air Quality and in turn encourage behavioural changes that will have immediate and long-term positive impacts on Air Quality in Sefton.

91. The educational behaviour programme consisted of the following elements which have been successfully delivered:

- A Termly programme of AQ support and learning all linking to core national curriculum subjects. Including lesson plans, activity sheets, homework booklets, campaigns (walk to school, anti-idling), activities, how-to guides.
- Expansion and further development of the Clean Air Crew website, including also making it appeal to KS3/4 (Secondary schools)
- Development of higher level online AQ training course for parents/ teachers/ Sefton Staff/ residents
- Installation of a state of the art, digital technology immersive room at the Eco Centre and the development of 2 immersive experiences based on AQ. This has been accessed by both schools and the wider community.
- In addition schools in and around the AQMA areas will be provided with an AQ monitoring pack and training of how to use it (including 12 monthly NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tubes that will provide localised AQ evidence of any immediate improvements).

## **Low cost AQ sensor Trial**

92. Officers from Highways and Environmental Health are currently working on a joint air quality project as part of the School Streets and active travel agenda. Three low-cost air quality sensors (Earth Sense Zephyr) have been purchased to monitor air quality levels around 3 schools identified as part of the initial phases of the School Streets/active travel agenda.



93. The monitors were installed in June 2022 to enable Air Quality levels to be monitored before and after the School Street initiatives are implemented to assess any reductions in pollution as a result of the measures. Sensors will also be used to determine the different travel methods used (walk /cycle/car). In addition the use of further sensors is currently being considered as part of the expansion schools streets project.

## **Traffic signal upgrade/incorporation of AQ sensors**

94. As part of a City Region traffic signal upgrade project, funding for 7 air quality sensors (Earthsense Zephyr) was secured which are now operational. The sensors are located at 7 key traffic light junctions in the Borough and integrated into Sefton's traffic signal control system (Stratos).

95. Real time air pollution data is now available from the sensors at these key locations, which can also be used to trigger specific traffic signal strategies to alleviate congestion if levels of localised pollution are of concern. Officers from Highways and Environmental Health are currently working together to develop potential traffic light strategies based on the sensor outputs.

## **Conclusions**

96. Whilst air quality in the majority of the Borough is within NAQS objectives, the main on-going priority in Sefton for the coming years is to fully understand the effects that the predicted increase in HGVs due to port expansion will have on air quality and how this can be mitigated.

97. This is undoubtedly the most significant challenge for the Council in terms of air quality impact in the Borough at the present time, due to the scale of the expansion and the potential for this to impact on air quality in existing AQMAs and also impact on public exposure receptor residential locations on port access routes.

98. As detailed within this report the development of the Outline Business Case for a Sefton based CAZ under the overarching Clean Air Plan is complete and has demonstrated that a corridor HGV charging CAZ covering the A5036 and A565 could achieve significant air quality improvements within the CAZ boundary and wider borough. The progression of the CAP scheme to the next stage, i.e. Full Business Case, will depend on a number of factors, which include key risks and constraints identified in the OBC work along with identification of a funding source.

99. A number of potential CAP OBC pathways have been presented to Cabinet (Table 6) and key stakeholder engagement (LCC, National Highways, Peel Ports, Joint Air Quality Unit) is underway to help inform the decision on the preferred pathway. Once the engagement has been completed a OBC pathway decision report will be presented to Cabinet for their consideration. Further update reports specifically on the OBC will be provided in line with the communication and engagement strategy.

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# Agenda Item 6

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer		
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	No	<b>Is it included in the Forward Plan?</b>	No
<b>Exempt/Confidential</b>	No		

## Purpose/Summary

To update on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group that was approved by Council in February 2020; and to seek approval for the cessation of further updates.

## Recommendations: That

- (1) The report updating on the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Ethical Business Practices Working Group be noted; and
- (2) No further update reports be submitted to Committee.

## Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with a Council resolution to update the Committee on the implementation of recommendations contained in the Working Group's final report.

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be updated on the implementation of recommendations contained in the Working Group's final report.

## What will it cost and how will it be financed?

### (A) Revenue Costs

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

### (B) Capital Costs

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

# Agenda Item 6

## Implications:

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

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>Legal: Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012</b>	
<b>Human Resources</b>	
<b>Equality</b>	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.	

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly associated with this report
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly associated with this report
Commission, broker and provide core services: The context for the Ethical Procurement Policy centres on the legal position regarding social value in procurement as defined in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012; and the statutory duty to consider the social value of public services on contracts above the European Union procurement thresholds
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly associated with this report
Drivers of change and reform: The nature of public sector services reflects many of the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice. To embed Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice an organisation needs to be operating in line with good Corporate Social Responsibility/ Ethical Business Practice in its various roles as service provider, purchaser, employer and its engagement with the public as consumers, customers and clients.

For the purposes of the Working Group the term Ethical Business Practice was used which encompassed several key elements of Corporate Social Responsibility. The Working Group focussed on:

1. Proposing a revised Ethical Investment Policy/Strategy
2. Proposing a revised Ethical Procurement Policy/Strategy to embed Social Value

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above

Greater income for social investment: The nature of public sector services reflects many of the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice. To embed Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice an organisation needs to be operating in line with good Corporate Social Responsibility/ Ethical Business Practice in its various roles as service provider, purchaser, employer and its engagement with the public as consumers, customers and clients.

For the purposes of the Working Group the term Ethical Business Practice was used which encompassed several key elements of Corporate Social Responsibility. The Working Group focussed on:

1. Proposing a revised Ethical Investment Policy/Strategy
2. Proposing a revised Ethical Procurement Policy/Strategy to embed Social Value

Cleaner Greener: In respect of the Ethical Investment Policy there are corporate social responsibility environmental aspects, e.g., reducing direct impact on the environment by managing waste, emissions and consumption of natural resources. The Working Group did not directly include this in its inquires, as it will be embedded through Green Sefton initiatives and can be included as part of the overall revision of updating policy on Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice.

## **What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7117/23) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5317/23) is the author of the report.

Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support).

## **Implementation Date for the Decision**

Immediately following the meeting

**Contact Officer:** Paul Fraser

**Tel:** 0151 934 2068

**Email:** paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

## **Background Papers:**

# Agenda Item 6

There are no background papers available for inspection

## Introduction/Background

At its meeting held on 11 September 2018 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices with the terms of reference and objectives set out below.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life, which is responsible for promoting the Seven Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership) to all those involved in the provision and delivery of public services, published a report in May 2018 "The Continuing Importance of Ethical Standards for Public Service Providers", which was a follow-up to their 2014 report on this issue.

The report identifies that the public want services to be delivered responsibly and ethically, regardless of provider and that high ethical standards need to be applied when managing public money. The report further states that, where this involves commercial arrangements, it is incumbent on government to design service delivery and manage the life cycle of the contract in such a way as to engender and reward high ethical standards. Clearly this is equally applicable to local government.

In last couple of years Sefton Council has agreed a number of motions and actions relating to ethical business, including: UNISON's Ethical Care Charter (February 2016) and Unite's Construction Charter (September 2018).

A number of other Councils have sought to address this, including: Birmingham [Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility](#) Dudley [Suppliers Code of Practice](#) and Preston [Fairness Charter](#) and the Working Group considered these approaches and others in order to both benchmark Sefton's position and identify appropriate and workable future approaches.

To review the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices, considering:

- Current Sefton practice
- Current good practice within other local authorities or similar organisations
- Areas of good practice within the Council's practices
- Areas for improvement within the Council's practices
- Recommendations for improving the Council's practices
- The provision of a policy for the ethical business practices of the Council in respect of investment, procurement and commissioning

Accordingly, the Working Group met on five occasions to undertake such review and its Final Report, together with associated recommendations, can be accessed using the link below:

<https://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD2736&ID=2736&RPID=36787769>

To set the context for the recommendations, the provision of a policy for the ethical business practices of the Council in respect of investment, procurement and

# Agenda Item 6

commissioning can be defined by the EU definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (Ethical Business Practice) as ‘the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society and organisations should have processes in place to integrate social, environmental, ethical and consumer concerns and ensure that these are embedded into their business operations and core strategy’.

The Working Group agreed that Corporate Social Responsibility was a good overarching context for improving social impact / social value, embracing the impact of what we do; how we do it; and what others (contractors) do for us.

An example of how this can be achieved is by the attached flowchart [Delivering Social Value within a Corporate Social Responsibility Framework](#)

Regarding Public Sector and Corporate Social Responsibility, the nature of public sector services reflects many of the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice. To embed Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice an organisation needs to be operating in line with good Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice in its various roles as service provider, purchaser, employer and its engagement with the public as consumers, customers and clients.

For the purposes of the Working Group the term Ethical Business Practice was used which encompassed several key elements of Corporate Social Responsibility. The Working Group focussed on:

1. Proposing a revised **Ethical Investment** Policy/Strategy
2. Proposing a revised **Ethical Procurement** Policy/Strategy to embed Social Value

In respect of the Environmental Aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility there were also CSR Environmental aspects, e.g., reducing direct impact on the environment by managing waste, emissions and consumption of natural resources. The Working Group did not directly include this in its inquires, as it would be embedded through Green Sefton initiatives and can be included as part of the overall revision of updating policy on Corporate Social Responsibility/Ethical Business Practice.

Finally, and in respect of the Ethical Procurement Policy (including Social Value) the legal position regarding social value in procurement as defined in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was used; and the statutory duty to consider the social value of public services on contracts above the European Union procurement thresholds. The position regarding social value in procurement as defined in the [Contract Procedure Rules](#) was also considered

The Working Group recognised much of the good work already taking place in relation to the above and that the policy should focus on continuous improvement.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services), Cabinet and Council subsequently approved the recommendations set out in the final report; and requested also that update reports be submitted to this Committee on the implementation of the recommendations.

# Agenda Item 6

The last report updating on the implementation of recommendations was submitted to the Committee in January 2022 and the updates provided to the meeting are contained in the table below at the end of the report.

## Current Position

The Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support) has now provided an update on the recommendations as set out below:

The Contract Procedure Rules include

“The Council goes beyond the provisions of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 in its assessment of social value in alignment with the principles laid out in the Ethical Business Practices.

The Council supported the principles on [Procurement Policy note 5/21](#) that Public procurement should be leveraged to support priority national and local outcomes for the public benefit.

The Council intends to ensure that their approach to social value supports:

- Creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills in the UK.
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience.
- Tackling climate change and reducing waste.

[Ethical business practices](#) (see report to Council 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 page 281).”

### [Social Value £20,000 to £100,000 \(whole life cost\)](#)

Social Value must be considered with appropriate social value questions embedded within the tender questionnaire. Generally, the weighting of social value should 10% of evaluation model, however this weighting can be flexible based on the opportunity within the market to deliver meaningful social value.

Works contracts below £100,000 may be excluded from social value assessment, unless the Officer believes there is a significant opportunity to embed social value into the requirements.

Client Officers are responsible for contract managing the delivery of social value outcomes.

### [1.1.8.3 Social Value over £100,000 \(whole life cost\)](#)

Social Value must be considered with use of the Social Value Portal required within the tender questionnaire. The Social Value Portal provides an opportunity for Bidders to detail the proposed social value, quantify the value of the social value against validated standards, and to provide a methodology for the delivery of the social value.

Works contracts above £100,000 are included for use of Social Value Portal

## [Social Value Portal](#)



## 1.1.8.4 Social Value weighting

Generally, the weighting of social value should be 10% of evaluation model, however this weighting can be flexible to a maximum of 15% based on the opportunity within the market to deliver meaningful social value.

## 1.1.8.5 Social Value Contract Management

Client Officers are responsible for contract managing the delivery of social value outcomes. This can be best achieved by the Contractors reporting their Social Value quarterly progress clearly identified with the contract KPI reports. Social Value Portal will proactively work with successful suppliers awarded Contracts to report Social Value outcomes delivered within the tool.

In the event of a Services tender being issued using Public Contract Regulations processes and not including social value a file note should be captured by the Procurement Officer to ensure a justification for not considering social value is captured.

Finally, over 70 staff are now trained on the use of the Social Value Portal

## **Conclusion**

Following consultation with the Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support) it is now recommended that this be the last update report to Committee as all the recommendations contained in the Final Report have now been implemented.

**UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING GROUP**

**Recommendation**

request the Head of Corporate Resources to make arrangements, via the Council’s decision-making processes, to include the revised statement of draft ethical business/investment principles as referred to below in the Treasury Management Strategy and to adopt it as part of the Council’s Policy for investment:

ETHICAL INVESTMENT POLICY

“The Local Authority at times invests surplus funds with third party organisations and institutions and the Council’s [core values](#) will play a major role in making investment decisions which will be aligned where possible to the following four overarching core principles;

- Sustainable and Responsible – manage the effect on the environment, community and for the good of society
- Value Based – invest in businesses that are aligned with the organisations core values;
- Maximising Impact – achieve a measurable positive, social or environmental impact, in addition to a financial return;
- Green – improving the environment.”

In deciding and then approving the counterparty list in which the Council will invest, the principles of security, liquidity and yield will always be the primary consideration to ensure compliance with statutory guidance. As part of this evaluation, the Council will consider ethical investment opportunities and identify and apply an appropriate weighting based on the Council’s Core Values/overarching core principles.

Where the Council deposits surplus balances overnight or for a short-term, investments will be made with financial institutions in a responsible manner (aligned to the overarching core principles/councils core values) where possible and in accordance with advice from its Treasury Management Advisor. In the event that the Council has surplus balances that it can invest for the longer term (e.g. terms over 1 year) it will exclude direct investment in financial products that do not contribute positively to society and the environment. This will include the principle that

**Update**

**June 2021**

The agreed wording was included within the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council on 27 February 2020. Action on this recommendation is now complete.

investment in specific financial products whose performance is driven by off-shore trading, financial malpractice, debt swops, short selling, the arms trade and tobacco industry will be avoided. The same rigorous criteria will be used to assess whether investment in certain countries will be contrary to Sefton's [core values](#).

It is recommended that the Head of Corporate Resources, to assess whether investment in certain countries will be contrary to Sefton's [core values](#), give consideration to the exclusion of those countries on the [EU list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions](#) (the black list and the grey list), which aims to tackle external risks of tax abuse and unfair tax competition, within the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

In order for these organisations to be included on the Council's counterparty list they will be evaluated against the same criteria as other counterparties and assessed against the Council's core values and ethical business and investment principles/policy, including the ethical weighting to ensure balance and investments are aligned with the new policy.

The Council's Treasury Management Team will be continually engage on progress in this sector, understanding where possible that Council investments and deposits are aligned with its core values – for example, generating income for social reinvestment and not investing in such companies as highlighted above.

This approach will be supported by considering the opportunity for ethical investments as part of the development of the annual Treasury Management Strategy and engaging with the Council's Treasury Management Advisors as to whether any investment is contrary to the Council's values (including the ethical investment weighting). A specific section in the annual Treasury Management report will cover how the adopted ethical investment strategy is being applied to investment decisions.

The Local Authority publishes a list of its investments to ensure openness and transparency.”

Request the Head of Strategic Support to make arrangements, via the Council's decision-making processes, to adopt the following revised statements of ethical procurement principles/policy.

**June 2021**

The Head of Strategic Support has advised that Since the agreement of the

ETHICAL PROCUREMENT POLICY

“The Local Authority routinely procures goods and services with a range of providers and the Council’s **core values** will play a major role in making procurement decisions which will be aligned where possible to the following four overarching core principles;

- Sustainable and Responsible – manage the effect on the environment, community and for the good of society
- Value Based – work with businesses that are aligned with an organisations core values;
- Maximising Impact – achieve a measurable positive, social or environmental impact, as a result of a contract;
- Green – improving the environment.”

Procurement will enhance Social impact/value, including opportunities associated with national themes of Jobs: Promoting Local Skills and Employment; Growth: Supporting Sustainable Growth of Responsible Regional Business; Social: Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities; Environment: Protecting and Improving Our Environment; and Innovation: Promoting Social Innovation; and their outcomes and measures.

Implement and enhance a Procurement Strategy, based on the Local Government Association (LGA) National Procurement Strategy providing an effective mechanism for improving the social impact/social value from our contracted providers, particularly its focus on “Achieving Community Benefit”, which includes “obtaining social value”.

The local strategy for social value opportunities to include the increased emphasis in the refreshed Corporate Commissioning Framework and on developing an updated Social Value Action Plan.

Implement a stand-alone phased two-year Social Value Action Plan to include the guiding principles of catching up with those leading the field, going beyond compliance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, maximising the full breadth of Social Value outcomes and effectively measuring, monitoring and reporting delivery.

Ethical Investment Policy the following actions have been undertaken.

All Procurement staff have received Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Ethical Accreditation, this training ensures that Procurement staff have built their understanding of how to behave ethically and establishes a commitment to ethical behaviour. The training is renewed annually to ensure they have knowledge of up to date good practice.

**December 2021**

The Head of Strategic Support has advised that Standard Social Value questions are now embedded in strategic tenders, together with supporting information to advise Bidders what social value is and key local organisations and initiatives they can engage with to deliver social value. On occasions these social value questions have been

The Social Value Action plan will address the areas for development identified through the self-assessment against the LGA strategy and include tangible, clear, measurable, timebound targets to improve social value.

Maximise Social value opportunities connected with the joined-up approach across the Liverpool City Region – LCR Procurement Hub and work undertaken with Proactis and the Social Value Portal to join-up the Chest, the National Themes, Outcomes and measures and the online Measurement Tool”

customised with project specific outcomes attached.

The Government’s procurement consultation outcome sets out its detailed proposals including: “Levelling up - under new rules, procurers will be able to give more weight to bids that create jobs for communities, build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and support the transition to net zero carbon emissions. These ‘social value’ factors mean that buyers won’t just consider price alone.”

The Cabinet Office is unable to confirm the start date of the new procurement regime as it is subject to Parliamentary process, but the plan is to give a minimum of six months’ notice before 'go-live' – once the legislative process has concluded. This will not be until 2023 at the earliest. The existing legislation will apply until the new regime goes live and will continue to

	<p>apply to procurement started under the old rules.</p>
<p>request the Head of Strategic Support to make arrangements, via the Council’s decision-making processes, to develop, adopt and implement a Social Value Action Plan in line with the following:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SOCIAL VALUE ACTION PLAN</u></p> <p>“The guiding principles for development of our approach to Social Value are to catch up with those leading the field; Go beyond compliance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012; maximise full breadth of Social Value outcomes; and effectively measure, monitor and report delivery.</p> <p>Self-assessment against “Obtaining Social Value” in the LGA National Strategy will provide a framework whereby we can evaluate what we already do and identify areas for improvement including assessment against the following statements, “the extent to which...”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the requirements of the Social Value Act are embedded into corporate policy;</li> <li>• social value awareness is embedded across all management levels;</li> <li>• social value themes, outcomes and measures are reported and used (including evaluating the usefulness of social accounting quantitative measures to evaluate impact);</li> <li>• social value requirements are embedded in the commissioning process;</li> <li>• social value requirements are embedded in the procurement process;</li> <li>• obtaining social value is part of engagement and third-party relationships;</li> <li>• social value requirements in contracts are managed;</li> <li>• social value is embedded in a wider collaborative environment;</li> <li>• obtaining social value is communicated and reported;</li> <li>• social value is embedded and managed in the commissioning and procurement process.</li> <li>• These can all be addressed within the scope of the guiding principles, through specific, tangible and time-bound actions in a Procurement/Social Value Action Plan.”</li> </ul> <p>The policy will be reviewed on completion of the SV action Plan</p>	<p><b>June 2021</b></p> <p>The Head of Strategic Support has advised that Standard Social Value questions are now embedded in strategic tenders, together with supporting information to advise Bidders what social value is and key local organisations and initiatives they can engage with to deliver social value. On occasions these social value questions have been customised with project specific outcomes attached.</p> <p>In order to support Social Value evaluation a specialist application called Social Value Portal has been procured. This tool allows bidders to put forward proposals tied into specific Themes, Outcomes and Measures which are quantifiable against nationally recognised standards. We are currently trialling the implementation of Social Value Portal on two</p>

pilot projects. Once these are completed we will review lessons learnt and roll out training to Procurement staff and Commissioners.

Once Social Value Portal is live we will create a web portal and communication plan to support Suppliers to respond to our social value expectations.

On delivery of Social Value Outcomes, Suppliers will have the facility to report their delivery to Social Value Portal who will produce a dashboard of benefits delivered to Sefton Council.

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# Agenda Item 7

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Communications and Covid-19		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

To advise of the deliberations of the informal meeting of the Committee held on 3 February 2023 in respect of Corporate Communications and Covid-19; and to seek formal approval of the recommendations made at the informal meeting

**Recommendations:** That the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be requested to approve the following recommendations:

That:

- (1) In respect of the need to connect with specific individuals, communities and groups across Sefton:
  - (a) the production of print-off information such as the Cost-of-Living flyer for elected members to distribute in their communities be supported and continued;
  - (b) the provision of elected members with regular e-shot updates on Council news stories and information be supported and continued;
  - (c) Sending press releases directly to elected members when they were sent to the media be supported and continued;
  - (d) the use of local area Facebook groups through group administrators who since COVID were happy for the Council to continue to post on the groups rather than do it for the Council be supported and continued;
  - (e) Investigating corporate use of messaging through Next Door

# Agenda Item 7

network which people used to share local messages with neighbours and communities be continued and supported; and

- (f) Accessing and using any statistical ward-based intelligence that could inform the Council of localised preferences so that the Council can tailor messages and the way they are delivered be supported and continued;
- (2) In respect of connecting better with young people across Sefton:
- (a) it was noted that feedback and research showed that young people were increasingly less likely to engage with traditional social media channels used by Sefton Council – Twitter/Facebook/Instagram. Therefore, the use of TikTok for that target age group be investigated; and
  - (b) It was noted that young people were also more likely to access information through video which would require the Council making more engaging, better-quality videos for them to be shared through the Council's corporate communications channels. This concept be supported;
- (3) In respect of recognising the level of people with restricted digital access:
- (a) the provision of regular e-shot updates (similar to those sent to elected members) to the Council's network of Community Gatekeepers who were in direct touch with their local communities or specific groups to spread important health and other messages such as financial reminders guidance be supported and continued;
  - (b) the production of print-off information such as the Cost-of-Living flyer for elected members to distribute in their communities be supported and continued;
  - (c) the provision of elected members with regular e-shot updates on Council news stories and information to disseminate to constituents be supported and continued; and
  - (d) the sending of press releases directly to elected members when they were sent to the media be supported and continued;
- (4) In respect of continuing improved Partnership working:
- (a) ongoing work through Sefton Health Information and Communications group and closer working with Sefton Partnership, including weekly updates be supported and continued;
  - (b) the use of the Sefton Health Info WhatsApp group to share

# Agenda Item 7

updates and news with Sefton Health Information and Communications group members be supported and continued;

- (c) the process of mutually alerting partners of messages and campaigns and sharing and boosting those messages through the appropriate channels available to the Council be supported and continued;
  - (d) Mutually sharing information in printed material and briefings be supported and continued; and
  - (e) the co-hosting Sefton Partnership health information on Sefton Council website be continued and supported;
- (5) In respect of relationships with colleagues:
- (a) it was noted that during the pandemic, the Communications team worked more closely with a broader range of departments and services and partner organisations and adapted the way it worked to ensure that each had its own Communications Officer acting like an agency Account Manager and providing the first point of call on proactive and reactive communications. This activity be supported and continued; and
- (6) In respect of relationships with media:
- (a) it was noted that using systems available to the Council to stay in contact with a broader range of local, regional and national media contacts who saw the Council as a proven reliable source of information about Sefton during COVID was successful. This activity be supported and continued;
  - (b) the promotion of Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health as a go-to source for Public Health matter articles, interviews and videos, as during the COVID-19 pandemic, be supported and continued; and
  - (c) the provision of an out-of-hours media contact service through a team on-call rota through budget continuation from April 2023 when current COVID funding ends be supported.

## **Reasons for the Recommendation(s):**

The informal meeting of the Committee has no formal decision-making powers. Formal approval is therefore required by this meeting of the Committee.

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

None.

## **What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

# Agenda Item 7

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The implementation of all recommendations, other than 2 (a) and (b), can be contained within existing budgetary resources. Recommendations 2 (a) and (b) relate to connecting better with young people across Sefton; and the concept of the use of TikTok, and the requirement of the Council making more engaging, better-quality videos for young people to be shared through the Council's corporate communication channels, is recommended to be investigated and supported. The implementation of these recommendations may require additional resources. If so, the Corporate Communications Manager will seek the necessary approval for any additional funding.

**(A) Revenue Costs – see above**

**(B) Capital Costs – see above**

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b> None	
<b>Legal Implications:</b> None	
<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.	

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Appendices considered by the informal meeting of the Committee detailed how contact was made with Sefton's residents and communities to provide information on how to raise awareness of the dangers of Covid-19; the isolating not isolated campaign; multiple care home communications and engagement contacts; and help with vaccination and testing. Specific information was provided regarding hard-to-reach groups and Facebook group pages; and Sefton Older People's forum and help with coping with Covid-19. Information was also provided on surge testing, letters to staff, letters to partners, letters to local community (affected wards and areas surrounding test sites)
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Appendices considered by the informal meeting of the Committee detailed a range of measures undertaken by the Council to update staff on Health and Safety issues.
Place – leadership and influencer: As detailed in the "Protect the most vulnerable" section above
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Appendices considered by the informal meeting of the Committee detailed action taken regarding Business Grants advice and promotion / Furlough scheme information; communications to businesses about reopening (e.g. health and safety advice); and the shop local/coastal campaign plan and budget
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Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
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Cleaner Greener: Appendices considered by the informal meeting of the Committee detailed coastal campaign messages.
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## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7135/23) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5335/23) is the author of the report.

Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support).

### (B) External Consultations

None

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2068
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk">paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk</a>

## Appendices:

None

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group; and that the aim of the Working Group was to assess the changes instigated by Corporate Communications in communicating with residents during the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact the changes have had and how such changes shaped the future of the Council communicating with its communities. The Scoping Document for the Working Group was approved at the meeting held on 14 June 2022.

# Agenda Item 7

- 1.2 Problems were experienced arranging Working Group meetings, and this was reported to the Committee at its meeting held on 10 January 2023. Accordingly, the Committee resolved (Minute No. 34 (3)) that that Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group be no longer continued, and the topic be dealt with at a remote, informal meeting of the Committee.

## **2. Informal Meeting of the Committee held on 3 February 2023**

- 2.1 An informal meeting of the Committee was held on 3 February 2023. The meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams.
- 2.2 The Scoping Document acknowledged that in the context of Council activity, the purpose of Corporate Communications was to inform (or even signpost and warn) our internal and external audiences (staff, stakeholders, partners and communities); and that many behaviour-change campaigns had also been delivered by the Corporate Communications Team; and It was therefore considered necessary to explore:
- The range of communications activity the Council was responsible for
  - The purposes and objectives of the communications activity
  - Who the intended audience was
  - The nature of any potential and actual impact (positive or negative), from the communications activity
  - The effectiveness of communications activity, such as changes in behaviour
  - How we influenced behaviour change in the community through standard channels
- 2.3 The informal meeting of the Committee considered information set out below, provided by the Corporate Communications Manager and the Consultation and Engagement Lead, that detailed how the above issues had been addressed:
1. List of press releases issued during Covid-19
  2. Sample of press releases (e.g., one from the very start of lockdown one, one as we came out of lockdown, one from second wave, one from surge testing/VOC, one from restrictions lifted)
  3. Isolating not isolated campaign assets
  4. Vaccination adverts on social media
  5. Surge testing, Southport, letter to staff, letter to partners, letter to local community (affected wards and areas surrounding test sites)
  6. Access to testing
  7. Sefton says thanks campaign / Sefton cares
  8. Business Grants advice and promotion / Furlough scheme information
  9. Communications to businesses about reopening (e.g. health and safety advice)
  10. List of hard-to-reach groups and Facebook group pages administrators
  11. SMBC Communications Cell Action tracker
  12. Sefton Older People's forum - coping with Covid-19

13. SYMBOL report July 2021
14. Report from Communications Manager to IPC (June 2020 Weekly activity re covid communications)
15. Overview and Scrutiny presentation - use of social media October 2020
16. Coastal campaign messages
17. Shop local/ coastal campaign plan and budget
18. Staff FAQs
19. Covid-19 vaccinations FAQs for staff
20. Message from Chief Executive and Leader to staff
21. Sample Health and Safety updates for staff
22. Sample One Council Brief
23. Sample Dwayne's blog to staff
24. Case for Liverpool City Region Media Release (#LCRFightsBack)
25. Tiers announcement (Tier 3) for Liverpool City Region/ Leader email to members
26. Covid Vaccination Community Gatekeepers (list and pack, from CCGs)
27. Lists of links to videos and published documents
28. Multiple care home communications and engagement - e.g. letters to providers, FAQs issued
  
29. Accessible Communications Policy 2022-24

## 2.4 The informal meeting of the Committee also considered:

- How and what the Council had communicated with stakeholders (staff, residents and partners) during the pandemic
- How the Council communicated with hard-to-reach communities and what lessons could be learnt for maintaining and improving these channels in the future
- Accessibility of communications activity and channels
- How the Council communicated with young people, given that this audience did not want to follow the Council on social media, so what alternative communications channels should be used to get messages to this group

## 2.5 In accordance with the Scoping Document the informal meeting reviewed:

- Current Sefton Corporate Communications Activity
- Areas of good practise within the Council
- Good practise within other local authorities or similar organisations
- Areas for improvement within the Council's policies and practise
- Recommendations for improving the Council's policies and practise

## 2.6 The Communications Team Leader updated Members on changes to Sefton Council Communications team's ways of working as a result of lessons learned through the COVID pandemic.

It was noted that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there was a huge need for communications to help keep individuals and communities safe, businesses

# Agenda Item 7

afloat and their employees protected. COVID-19's rapid emergence and the restrictions such as shielding that were put in place to restrict its spread, were initially led nationally with Sefton and other Councils helping to disseminate those messages on the Government's behalf.

As the pandemic progressed, particularly with specific testing and other arrangements for each area, the need for tailored communications increased and continued through periods of lockdown, tiered system and, eventually, the re-opening.

As well as general communication for people living and working in the Borough and those visiting it, there was also the need for specific messages for businesses including shops that were able to remain open, schools and information from Central Government and local area to the care sector. There was also the need to keep the wide range of people that were Council service users updated about how those services were being affected as well as reaching out to people in our communities who needed support or advice.

Accordingly, lessons were learned and ongoing changes to working made. It was not surprising, therefore, that these unprecedented conditions resulted in a number of lessons for the Communications team, the outcomes of which were being taken forward into the team's ongoing work. The key elements and solutions of these were identified and form the basis of the recommendations contained in this report.

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

- Communities were reassured by the Covid-19 messages emanating from the Council; and vulnerable residents welcomed the direct contacts made with them by elected Members
- Was research undertaken to find out whether various groups were not reached regarding the dissemination of information and press releases
- It was acknowledged that the demise of the Champion newspaper group in Sefton during the pandemic was a loss as the free paper, delivered to all homes, was a great way for the Council to get information out to all households; and this particularly impacted on residents who did not readily use, or had no access to, ICT facilities. Concern was raised as to how such hard to reach digitally excluded groups could be reached
- The circulation of free publications to households in various areas, such as the Formby Trader, was referred to; and a suggestion was made that potentially such publications could fill some of the gaps left following the demise of the Champion group
- The evaluation process by which the Council identified where residents and businesses heard about news stories and press releases
- It was difficult to recall the fear factor in communities at the start of the pandemic; but local communities did greatly appreciate the continuation of services, such as the cleansing service, throughout the lockdown period
- It was considered that the Council did a great job disseminating information and advice to local communities during the pandemic.



However, the problem would, by its very nature, be getting information to hard-to-reach groups. The Accessible Communications Policy, and particularly easy read, was a positive step to combat such problems

- Networking arrangements in place to obtain best practice from Liverpool City Region authorities, the Local Government Association and the wider communications industry
- The potential to produce a step-by-step guide to ensure that if similar, major incidents occurred in the future then information would be on hand to immediately commence the communication of information and advice to local communities and businesses

2.8 The informal meeting endorsed the key elements and solutions highlighted by the Communications Team Leader and form the basis of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **3. Way Forward**

3.1 As mentioned above, the informal meeting of the Committee had no formal decision-making powers. Accordingly, for decisions of the informal meeting to be actioned, formal approval is required by this meeting of the Committee.

3.2 It is therefore recommended that the decisions taken at the informal meeting held on 3 February 2023 be endorsed.

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# Agenda Item 8

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2022/23, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Recommendation:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) consideration be given to whether the Committee would like to select a topic for a Working Group review;
- (3) consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above; and
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

# Agenda Item 8

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2022/23 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:

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

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of recommendations contained in Digital inclusion Working Group Final Report will help with the aim of ensuring that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them on a day-to-

day basis - whether they be individuals, businesses or other entities e.g. the voluntary sector; and aim to reduce digital exclusion and the digital divide that can exist within society for a variety of reasons.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report. The aim of the Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group is to assess the changes instigated by in communicating with residents during the Covid-19 pandemic; the impact the changes have had; and how such changes shape the future of the Council communicating with its communities. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the presentation on the update on the Commissioning and the Procurement Policy will raise awareness of associated issues with Members. The Working Group established by the Committee to review the Council's Ethical Business Practices will look into ethical procurement. See also reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the submission of the report on Air Quality Monitoring will raise awareness of associated issues with Members.

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

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

### (B) External Consultations

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

### Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul Fraser
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Email Address:	<a href="mailto:paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk">paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk</a>

### Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2022/23
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review

# Agenda Item 8

- 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 2022/23**

- 1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2022/23 was approved by the Committee on 14 June 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2022/23 and updated, as appropriate.

### **2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2022/23**

- 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 At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group.
- 2.3 As reported to the last meeting of the Committee four attempts had been made to arrange the first meeting of the Working Group. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find a mutually agreeable date between Members.

Following consultation with the Chair of the Committee it was agreed that the Committee consider holding an informal meeting to review the topic of Corporate Communications and Covid-19; rather than via Working Group meetings.

- 2.4 The Committee agreed this course of action at its last meeting and the informal meeting of the Committee was held on 3 February 2023. A report on the outcome of the informal meeting is elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.
- 2.5 The Committee is requested to consider whether a Working Group should be selected.
- 2.4 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

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

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

## **4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 4.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.

### **4.4 Role**

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

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or

# Agenda Item 8

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.

## 4.5 Membership

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

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

## 4.6 Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be Members of the majority group. Councillor Steve Radford, a Liberal Party and Independent Group Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year; and Councillor Pat Moloney, a Liberal Democrat Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Vice-Chair.

## 4.7 Quoracy Issues

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

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

## 4.8 Meetings

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

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

4.9 The last meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 19 January 2023. The Committee considered the following items:

- Combined Authority Budget 2023/24
- Corporate Plan 2021-24; Quarter 2 (July to September) 2022-23 Performance Update
- Fair Employment Charter: Implementation and Next Steps
- Appointment to the Audit and Governance Committee

4.10 The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 1 March 2023.



# Agenda Item 8

At the time of writing this report the agenda for the meeting has not been published. An update will be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) WORK  
PROGRAMME 2022/23**

**Tuesday, 10 January 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle**

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Stephan Van Arendsen/Diane Turner
2.	Financial Performance Monitoring	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
3.	Air Quality Monitoring	Peter Moore/Greg Martin
4.	“Tool Kit” for Armed Forces Covenant	Shaun Pimblett
5.	Members’ Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones
6.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
7.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser
8.	Corporate Communications Update - Presentation	Elena Lloyd
9.	Update on Progress of LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts

**Tuesday, 7 February 2023, 6.30 p.m., Budget Meeting - Town Hall, Bootle**

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
2.	Financial Performance Monitoring	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
3.	Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Prudential Indicators	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
4.	Treasury Management Policy and Strategy	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
5.	Capital Strategy 2023/24 and Future Years	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
6.	Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy – Update Position	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
7.	Robustness of the 2023/24 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – local Government Act 2003 – Section 25	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly

Tuesday, 28 February 2023, 6.30 p.m. Town Hall, Southport		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Annual ICT Update Report (Performance of Agilisys)	Helen Spreadbury
2.	Ethical Business Practices Working Group – Update on Recommendations	Paul Fraser
3.	Members’ Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones
4.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
5.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser
6.	Air Quality Monitoring	Peter Moore/Greg Martin

## APPENDIX 2

### CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

<b>Criteria for Selecting Items</b>
▪ 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

<b>Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items</b>
▪ 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 8

## APPENDIX 2

### SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

<b>DO</b>
◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process</li><li>◆ Is not opposition</li></ul>
◆ 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

<b>◆ DON'T</b>
◆ 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 MARCH 2023 - 30 JUNE 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE or accessed from the Council's website: [www.sefton.gov.uk](http://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 8

## 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](http://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
Land at Foul Lane, Southport	Suzanne Rimmer <a href="mailto:suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk">suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk</a>
Park & Ride Bus Contract	Dave Marrin <a href="mailto:dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk">dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 934 4295
Parking & Environmental Enforcement Contract	Dave Marrin <a href="mailto:dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk">dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 934 4295
Council's Insurance Provision	David Eden <a href="mailto:david.eden@sefton.gov.uk">david.eden@sefton.gov.uk</a>
Provision of Liquid Fuels	Chris Magee <a href="mailto:chris.magee@sefton.gov.uk">chris.magee@sefton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 934 4069
Annual Health and Safety Report	David Eden <a href="mailto:david.eden@sefton.gov.uk">david.eden@sefton.gov.uk</a>
Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale	Suzanne Rimmer <a href="mailto:suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk">suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk</a>
Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 - March Update	Paul Reilly <a href="mailto:paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk">paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 934 4106
Climate Emergency Update report	Stephanie Jukes <a href="mailto:stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk">stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 934 4552

# Agenda Item 8

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Land at Foul Lane, Southport</b> To seek approval to the Heads of Terms for the proposed sale of land at Foul Lane, Southport.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/02/2023 to 09/03/2023. Reason: negotiations are still ongoing on the proposal			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Paragraph 3)			
Wards Affected	Norwood			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	SCIG - Strategic Capital Investment Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Land at Foul Lane, Southport			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Rimmer <a href="mailto:suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk">suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk</a>			

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Park &amp; Ride Bus Contract</b> To seek an extension of the Park & Ride Bus Contract			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member – Locality Services and Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Park & Ride Bus Contract			
Contact Officer(s) details	Dave Marrin dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4295			

# Agenda Item 8

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Parking &amp; Environmental Enforcement Contract</b> To seek authorisation to tender the Parking & Environmental Enforcement Contract			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member – Locality Services and Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Parking & Environmental Enforcement Contract			
Contact Officer(s) details	Dave Marrin dave.marrin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4295			

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Council's Insurance Provision</b> Request approval to proceed with a procurement exercise for the Council's insurance arrangements during the 2023 calendar year			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services; SLB; Cabinet Member - Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Resources			
Method(s) of Consultation	Consultation undertaken with reports to SLB, Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services and Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Resources			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Council's Insurance Provision			
Contact Officer(s) details	David Eden david.eden@sefton.gov.uk			

# Agenda Item 8

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Provision of Liquid Fuels</b> To seek approval to commit to the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation framework for the supply of Liquid Fuels for the period 2023 to 2027			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, and Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Method(s) of Consultation	Formal LD/FD Process			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Provision of Liquid Fuels			
Contact Officer(s) details	Chris Magee chris.magee@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4069			



## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Annual Health and Safety Report</b> Provide an update on the embedding of Health and Safety within the Council.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer			
Method(s) of Consultation	Internal consultation process			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Annual Health and Safety Report			
Contact Officer(s) details	David Eden david.eden@sefton.gov.uk			

# Agenda Item 8

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale</b> Seek Cabinet approval to the terms and conditions for the disposal of the premises			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/02/2023 to 09/03/2023. Reason: work is ongoing on details that will inform the cost of the Short-Term Assessment Unit			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Paragraph 3)			
Wards Affected	Ainsdale			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Councillors as part of the above			
Method(s) of Consultation	Updates on disposal previously reported to Cabinet			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Rimmer <a href="mailto:suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk">suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk</a>			

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 - March Update</b> Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – March Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

# Agenda Item 8

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Climate Emergency Update report</b> Update on progress during phase 1 (3-year period) and plans for Phase 2 and 3 - taking us to 2030			
Decision Maker	Cabinet  Council			
Decision Expected	9 Mar 2023  20 Apr 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support)  Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Not applicable			
Method(s) of Consultation	Not applicable			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Climate Emergency Update report			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552			



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# Agenda Item 9

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Cabinet Member Report – January 2023 to February 2023		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report for the period January 2023 to February 2023 relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Recommendation:

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

## Reasons for the Recommendation:

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

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

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

## What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

**(A) Revenue Costs – see above**

# Agenda Item 9

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
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 report 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 Lappin's portfolio during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to her portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose.
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
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Cleaner Greener: As above
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## 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.

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

## Appendices:

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

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

### 1. Introduction/Background

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

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<b>CABINET MEMBER REPORT</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) -</b>		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Period of Report</b>
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	February 2023

## **Finance**

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

The latest budget monitoring report was presented to Cabinet and Council in February. This highlighted the growing financial pressure that the Council is facing in 2022/2023, particularly relating to Children’s Social Care, the pay award and energy. There is a remedial action plan agreed to meet the majority of the current forecast pressure in 2022/2023 – however, this is mainly through utilising one-off funding (e.g., general balances and earmarked reserves) which isn’t a sustainable solution to the ongoing impact of these pressure in future years. In addition, the Council has introduced a recruitment freeze across a number of service areas, as well as identifying areas of non-essential spend to try to offset some of the pressures being faced.

The Council’s annual suite of Budget Reports for 2023/24 have now been published and considered by Overview and Scrutiny and Budget Cabinet. The implications for 2024/25 and 2025/26 are also being considered. These will then be considered by Budget Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. The final Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 which confirmed the details previously announced in the Provisional Settlement published on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022. A follow-on report will be published for Budget Council with details of levies and precepts and any other updated information. This will include a draft Council Tax Resolution for agreement by Council.

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/2021 was published at the end of July 2021 with the final Statement of Accounts being presented to Audit and Governance Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> December. However, although nearly all work has been finalised, the audit is still to be completed. This is mainly due to a technical valuation issue that needed to be resolved at a national level – the Government has now introduced legislation that will allow councils to resolve the issue. Officers are working with the Council’s external auditors to understand what changes, if any, are required. Should any further amendments be required since the December 2021 Committee, the Chair has been granted delegated authority to approve the final Statement of Accounts following these changes.

The work to close the accounts for 2021/2022 was completed, with the revenue and capital outturn position reported to Cabinet in July. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022 have been published. The Council’s external auditors are continuing with their audit. It is anticipated that this will be completed in time for the accounts to be approved at Audit and Governance Committee in March 2023.

## **Customer Centric Services**

The Service has experienced an extremely busy start to 2023, dealing with high workloads, especially relating to Council Tax. Staff continue to work extra hours at weekends to reduce customer waiting times and processing delays.

# Agenda Item 9

## Customer Services

Customer Services managed a very busy January for call volumes and visits to both One Stop Shops. In total, 18,676 telephone calls were answered, around a 28% increase compared to 14,632 calls answered in January 2022.

The Contact Centre is continuing to receive a high volume of telephone calls from residents stating that they are unable to pay their monthly Council Tax due to the cost-of-living crisis and their outgoing financial priorities being elsewhere. All residents are being offered as much support as possible, including access to ELAS and Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF). Extended payment plans are also being offered to residents who have recently received a reminder, or a summons and they are being encouraged to visit Bootle One Stop Shop should they need access to any digital support.

Demand for ELAS is high, with the teams in both the Contact Centre and the Benefits service dealing with a significant increase in customer enquiries and applications. In fact, the Contact Centre handled 1,504 ELAS calls in January 2023 which is the highest volume of monthly calls since it first delivered the service in April 2013. Demand is now exceeding pre-pandemic levels. As at the end of January, the Council has received a total of 12,038 applications for support. 4,143 food vouchers have been issued, 6,443 utility awards and 1,020 essential household goods provided. Staff resource continues to be managed to ensure that claims are processed without delay.

With customer demand at Bootle One Stop Shop increasing week-by-week, the reinstated full drop-in service continues to be very well received by customers who have complex enquiries or requiring financial support.

In January, 2,635 customers attended Bootle One Stop Shop. This included 624 taxi drivers, 126 of which had an appointment and a further 498 who 'dropped in'. There were 1,011 customers who attended with a Council Tax or Benefits enquiry, and 91 customers seeking ELAS support. The remaining 909 customers were seeking general council-related advice at reception.

At Southport, 677 customers attended the Atkinson, with 189 customers booking an appointment to discuss their Council Tax or benefit and the remainder seeking general council – related advice at reception.

While overall customer contact is increasing, enquiries for Social Care and ELAS remain prioritised above all other services that are offered by Customer Services.

## Recently announced Government Financial Support Schemes

The Service is preparing to implement two new financial support schemes on behalf of central Government, i.e.:

- Council Tax Support Scheme, i.e., a payment of up to £25 to households in receipt of Council Tax Support to help them pay Council Tax in 2023/24, and proposals for a discretionary scheme will be developed for Cabinet consideration, and,
- Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) – Alternative Funding, i.e., a one-off £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically to help with their energy bills between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023 but are still facing increased energy costs.

## Annual Billing 2023/24

The project to issue all Council Tax and Business Rates bills, and annual benefit letters in March 2023, in respect of 2023/24, is well underway. Testing will take place during February 2023 incorporating the revaluation of all business properties, an amended Retail Hospitality and Leisure relief for eligible businesses, and a new transitional relief scheme to limit the impact of significant increases in rateable value resulting from revaluation.

Testing of the recently announced Council Tax Support Scheme payments of up to £25 to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will also take place to enable the payments to be included on the annual bills.

## Migration of Revenues and Benefits document management system

The Service successfully achieved a key milestone by going live with a new Revenues and Benefits electronic document management system on 26th January 2023. Planned work is now progressing as expected to migrate approximately 4.5 Million historic customer records and outstanding workloads.

This will bring almost all Revenues and Benefits software under one supplier, NEC (Northgate) to reduce costs and enable greater automation and integration.

There has been an initial impact on increasing outstanding workloads due to the time required for training and as staff become familiar with the system.

## Risk and Audit

The **Internal Audit** team are continuing to work on delivering the internal audit plan with a current focus on reviews of:

- Covid Grants assurance,
- ASC Finance Budget Management
- ASC Debt Management
- Review of number of Schools.
- Risk Management
- Highways Maintenance
- Fleet Management
- SHOL Governance review
- SND Governance review

We have appointed a temporary Principal Auditor to a vacant position and are on track to start the recruitment of a permanent staff member in February 2023.

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

- We have completed the procurement exercise for the re-valuation for insurance purposes of the remaining Council properties which have not been subject to a re-valuation in the past two years. The re-valuations are due to be completed by 30 April 2023 and feed into the September 2023 renewal.
- A paper on the proposed tender for the Council's insurance arrangements is due to be presented to Cabinet in March 2023. Consultation has been started with the Schools. The insurance market remains focused on technical pricing to achieve profit rather than in the past focused on market share.
- We have used some of the "free days" as part of the insurance programme risk bursary to examine how the Council's trees are managed effectively in accordance with our legal

# Agenda Item 9

responsibilities. Other days have been used to look at the Council's Highways Winter Service Policy, provide training for duty holders and manage contractors on site.

- We are working with insurers and the Council's liability insurers to robustly defend claims and in limited circumstances will pursue through the Courts claimants to recover Council costs where the claims are proven to be exaggerated.
- Team continues to work extensively with Service Teams including Highways, Green Sefton and Tourism to improve the management of insurable risk in areas where there are high numbers of claims or areas of concern.

## The **Risk and Resilience Team.**

Business Continuity we are reviewing the current Service Area Business Continuity Plans with the Service Area to develop be spoke power outage BC plans. We arranged an exercise of the Council's BC arrangements in January 2023.

The **Risk and Resilience Team** have completed a Severe Weather Protocol and are currently working on the Council's Risk Appetite which is due which is due to complete in March 2023 as well as facilitating the updates of the Council's Corporate Risk Register working with the Risk Owners to update the risk register. Other work includes:

- Working with the Merseyside Resilience Forum
- Development of a Shoreline Pollution Plan
- Loggist training

The **Assurance Team** were seconded to the Business Grants Team to provide support and assistance for the delivery of grants to local businesses until the end of June 2022. Subsequently two of the Team were seconded to Revenues and Benefits to provide additional support to the Team until the end of March 2023.

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

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

## ICT

The ICT Service continues to work on a number of significant transformation programmes as well as delivering the BAU ICT Service alongside Agilisys. A key priority over the last period has been to support the moves into Magdalen House and ensuring the delivery and installation of all ICT equipment. There have been some challenges with obtaining equipment in a timely fashion due to worldwide supply issues, but we are now pleased to be able to now report that moves of large teams are now completed, and the focus is now upon backfilling the remaining desks in Magdalen House with Keyboards, Mice, Monitors and docking stations to support hotdesking.

Data centre rationalisation and right sizing is nearing completion within the existing Data Centre at St Peters with planning now starting for a move to Bootle Town Hall during financial year 23/24.

The Cloud telephony project is now closed, the final work to be completed during the next few months is to remove the remaining infrastructure supporting a legacy telephony range which is not linked to the historical Mitel telephony system (which 8x8 replaced). Most of these direct dial numbers are thought to be historical but unfortunately it is not possible to report on the usage of these lines, work is to be planned with Virgin to soft cease these numbers to assess impact prior to removal. Communications will be issued in advance across the Council.

The new CXP solution went live across all services in January this year, and the authority has removed all legacy online services, this reduces the security risk to the authority, due to the fact the old Northgate system is hosted on an operating system which is end of life and no longer receives security updates. The legacy system is still in use as a back-office system for two service areas, due to the complexity of the CXP build, however access is restricted to a handful of key personnel with plans to remove completely as soon as possible.

Work continues the rolling website improvement programme; an external web agency (Ozum) has been commissioned to carry out the required work which is now nearing completion and undergoing user acceptance testing. In addition, quotes have been requested for the upgrade of the Umbraco web content management system (to be planned in next year). Alongside this, the Communications team continues with an ongoing content review and is also reviewing ancillary sites to see if any of these should be incorporated into the main Council website.

The migration of legacy bulk print jobs to the Council's new bulk print provider is now completed, and the legacy system has been formally decommissioned and removed from the estate

Procurement activity continues to be a challenge; however, the team is pleased to report that we have now appointed a new permanent ICT Category Manager into the team, and he started with the authority on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, a new forward plan is now under development and will be presented to ELT and the Cabinet member within the next couple of months.

Deployment of Canon devices is now completed across all sites, some sites have had some teething problems affecting a handful of users, resolution of all issues encountered is underway and overall, the project went very well deploying nearly 200 new devices in two weeks prior to the Christmas break.

As per the last update the procurement for Corporate Connectivity did not complete with a successful outcome, with no bidders meeting the requirements of the authority. The Client team is now exploring alternative routes to market, with a potential for joint procurement across the Liverpool City Region, a Cabinet member report is underway outlining next steps to ensure continuity of the existing service whilst options are reviewed.

# Agenda Item 9

The threat level in relation to Cyber Security remains high and the team are working hard to implement new technologies and tools to stay one step ahead of the risk. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is now deployed for all officers, with Councillors due to go live by the end of January. In addition, Microsoft Defender has been deployed across all end user devices and the authority is now using a Microsoft's web filtering tool rather than a separate third-party product. Finally, defender has now been pushed out to all Council Mobile phones to further protect the estate.

Finally, the ICT client team have worked with Agilisys colleagues to develop a business continuity plan for Power Outages should these occur over the next few months

## Property Services

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

### Asset Management / FM

- Ongoing work to deliver approved Asset Disposals with further phases being considered.
- Ongoing work supporting Growth Board projects.
- Asset records input and liaison with Building Maintenance colleagues for new (property based) IT system nearing completion.
- Working in conjunction with Children's Services to support their accommodation strategy.

### Maintenance Management & Building Services

- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Corporate Buildings.
- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Education Capital programme.
- Delivery of reactive maintenance and statutory compliance services to Corporate and Educational buildings.
- Professional advice and support on a broad range of regeneration programmes.
- Development and implementation of a new coordinated (property based) IT system in support of Corporate & Education Properties nearing completion.
- Managing remedial works scheme
- Phase 1 essential maintenance delivery plan for corporate buildings progressing.
- Formulating asset survey delivery plan alongside the essential maintenance.
- Delivering services in support of major adaptation to vulnerable and disabled residents.

### Project Management

- Provide professional support to Growth Board on several projects.
- Project manage various Education capital schemes.
- Provide support to other teams on Asset Disposal, Building Maintenance, Asset Management, Energy and Statutory Compliance colleagues.

### Energy Management

- Continues to be a busy period for the affordable warmth team, supporting residents without adequate heating for range of reasons. Additional funding secured to help repair boilers or provide emergency top ups for gas/electricity meters.



# Agenda Item 9

- Sefton Council Retrofit programme (LAD3, HUG) – Providing insulation to privately owned properties (worst/not insulated & for poorest residents). LAD3 (gas heated properties) will be fully delivered 332 homes upgraded HUG 1 (non gas properties) has a target of improving 75 homes currently 40% delivered and efforts to find additional properties continues. A request to extend the scheme and deliver additional work has been submitted to government.
- A programme of work to support schools (after large energy price rises) is underway.
- Feasibility Study for a replacement Wind turbine at Southport Eco Centre is ongoing. Work to establish a land lease and a power purchase agreement is the current focus before the feasibility funding ends 31 March 23.
- Energy price rises are being modelled for the remainder of 2023/24, after the Government price guarantee announcement. Prices are currently falling and it is anticipated that Sefton council will not receive support under the new arrangement from 1 April 23.
- Review of Climate Emergency works required for 2023-26 underway.
- Results of the Climate Emergency Consultation and subsequent action plan to be presented to the Engagement panel and Member Reference group.
- Work to assess the risks around the effects of Climate change e.g. more intense weather events to take place in Spring 23.

## Legal Services

### Democratic Services Team – Overview

#### Overview and Scrutiny

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)**

A meeting of the Committee was held on 3 January 2023. The following reports were considered at the meeting:

- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
- Paediatric Radiotherapy Services
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Winter Plan
- Adult Social Care Local Government Association Peer Review
- National GP Access Survey
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Sefton – Update Report
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Sefton - Health Provider Performance Dashboard
- Cabinet Member Reports
- Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

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

A meeting of the Committee was held on 31 January 2023. The following reports were considered at the meeting:

- Attendance of Paul Boyce, Improvement Board Chair
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Annual Update
- Sefton Corporate Parenting Board – Annual Report 2022
- Children's Services Improvement Programme Phase 2
- Recruitment and Support for Newly Qualified Social Workers
- Cabinet Member Reports
- Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

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

# Agenda Item 9

A meeting of the Committee was held on 17 January 2023. The following reports were considered at the meeting:

- Update on the Progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy – Presentation
- Sandway Homes Limited and Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - 2021/22 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies
- Sefton Economic Strategy
- Work Programme
- Cabinet Member Reports

- **Informal Meeting of the Committee – 6 February 2023**

An informal meeting of the Committee was held on 6 February 2023 and undertook scrutiny on matters associated with Housing and considered reports on Leasehold House Sales and an update on the operation of Sandway Homes.

Arrangements are still ongoing to organise an informal meeting to review the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the borough

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

A meeting of the Committee was held on 10 January 2023. The following reports were considered at the meeting:

- Update on the Progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy – Presentation
- Corporate Communications Update – Presentation
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Council Tax Base 2023/24
- Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 – Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – January Update
- Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Reference Group – Update
- Work Programme
- Cabinet Member report

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

An informal meeting of the Committee was held on 3 February 2023 to review the topic of Corporate Communications and Covid-19. Recommendations from the informal meeting will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 28 February 2023 for formal approval

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

A meeting of the Committee was held on 7 February 2023 to consider budget reports prior to their consideration by Cabinet and Council

- **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

A meeting of the Management Board was held on 10 January 2023. The following reports were considered at the meeting:

- Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Link - Councillor Christine Howard
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny – Newsletters
- Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network
- Updates on Working Groups
- The Management Board also considered issues associated with the Member Development Survey and the scrutiny of Children’s Services

# Agenda Item 9

- **Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

A meeting of the Committee was held on 19 January 2023. A summary of the key items considered at the meeting is provided below:

- Combined Authority Budget 2023/24 Corporate Plan 2021-24; Quarter 2 (July to September)
- 2022-23 Performance Update
  
- Fair Employment Charter: Implementation and Next Steps
- Appointment to the Audit and Governance Committee

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 1 March 2023. Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link

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

## School Appeals

The Section has continued to organise and clerk school admission appeal hearings and school exclusion reviews.

The academic year continues to be a busy time for the Clerk to Education Appeals. Between January and February, 24 LEA appeals were heard, and 1 Diocese (Church of England voluntary aided schools) appeals were scheduled. Five Archdiocese (Catholic voluntary aided schools) appeals were heard.

## Civic and Mayoral Services

- The Freedom of the Borough for the NHS Organisations took place on 26<sup>th</sup> January it was very well attended and received by the organisations; the next Freedom Ceremony for HMS Mersey will take place on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April, followed by a Parade on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April.
- The Mayor's Charity 80's Night takes place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February, this is going to be well attended and will raise money for the Mayor's Charity Fund.

## Member Development

### Member Development Steering Group (MDSG)

- A survey on Member Development was circulated to all Members of the Council prior to Christmas for completion on the **Your Sefton Your Say** feedback system by 23 January 2023, extended to 30 January 2023. 26 responses were received and presented to the Member Development Steering Group on 14 February 2023 which made recommendations for implementation in respect of future member development provision.
- The MDSG was also provided mandatory course completion statistics to end of January 2023 and given the poor take-up for some of the courses it was agreed that the Whips for the respective political groups be sent details of non-completion by Councillors to encourage their members to undertake the mandatory courses as soon as possible.

# Agenda Item 9

## Electoral Services

### Annual Canvass of the Register of Electors

The annual canvass is now complete, and the 2023 register of electors was published on the 1 December 2022. The published electorate figure was 211,916, which is a drop on the December 2021 figure of 214,360 (-2,444). Electorate figures are fluid and peak at times of national elections, so we have seen a drop off since the 2019 General Election, however, changes to way the annual canvass is conducted has also be a contributing factor to the reduction in the electorate. The new reforms make the canvass more cost effective and generate savings, but it is now clear that the new rules have impacted on overall electorate. We expect these figures to pick up again as we move towards the next general election.

### Elections Act 2022 Voter ID

We are now in the first phase of Voter ID following its introduction on the 16 January 2023. This includes the ability for those people who do not have photo ID or do wish to use the photo ID they have to apply to the Electoral Registration Officer for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC). To date we have received 98 applications, 14 of which were not registered to vote, this has now been rectified. 15 applications are currently on hold due the quality of the photograph provided, which did not meet the standard required to produce the certificate.

In addition, the Electoral Commission media campaigns, our local campaign IDeal Time to Vote will go live at the end of February, to encourage voter registration and provide information on the photo ID in polling stations.

It is important to send out the message that Voter ID only applies to those electors who vote in person in polling stations and does not impact on the arrangements for those voters who choose to vote by post.

In addition to Voter ID, the Election Act 2022 will also introduce the following changes to the electoral process over the coming months

1. Change of voting and candidacy rights for EU citizens – June 2023
2. Online Postal Vote Applications – July 2023
3. Remove the 15-year ceiling for overseas electors – July 2023
4. Requirement for existing postal voters to re-apply every 3 years – January 2024
5. Limit the numbers or electors someone can act as a proxy for – May 2024

### Local Government & Parish Council Elections – 4 May 2023

Plans for the Local Government Elections on Thursday 4 May 2023 are now at an advanced stage. Members have been invited to comment on the current polling scheme which had been audited to ensure compliance with new accessibility rules and to ensure that private spaces will be available for those voters who wear face coverings.

Nomination papers will be made available from the week beginning 6 March 2023. New rules have come into force, which now only require the nomination paper to be supported by a Proposer and seconder (in the same way the rules were amended for the 2021 Covid elections).

- Notice of Election will be published on Friday 24 March 2023.
- The nomination period will run from Monday 27 March 2023 to 4pm on Tuesday 4 April 2023.
- The last day to register vote is Monday 3 April 2023.

# Agenda Item 9

- The last time to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 18 April 2023
- Postal Ballot packs will be issued from Thursday 21 April 2023
- The last time to appoint a proxy or apply for a Voter Authority Certificate is 5pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023
- Election Day is Thursday 4 May 2023 between the hours of 07.00am and 10.00pm
- The verification and counting of votes will take place after the close of poll on Thursday 4 May 2023 at Aintree Racecourse (Bootle and Sefton Central wards) and Dunes Leisure Centre (Southport Ward)
- The counting of parish council ballot papers will take place at Aintree on Friday 5 May 2023

## **PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT**

### **Operational Issues**

Advice and support are provided to all service areas regarding employment/staffing matters.

Predominantly, work and support are focused on Children's Social Care. There is a small, dedicated HR team in Children's Social Care providing advice and guidance on all staffing issues. The challenge continues to be the recruitment and retention of Social Work staff combined with developing improvements in the service area overall.

The majority of the HR team are working from home with agile working at office sites as required and in accordance with the advice and guidance from the Health and Safety team.

Matters relating to disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work continue to be lesser than usual. Formal meetings are being held via Microsoft Teams, although in person meetings are arranged as necessary. Advice and support in the management of sickness absence continues and formal action under the sickness absence policy is being taken, again via Microsoft Teams but can be arranged in person as necessary.

Operational Teams appreciate the need for sensitive advice given the pressures on Employees and the Authority.

### **Pay & Grading and Establishment Control Team**

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

The Establishment Control team are responsible for building any revised structures and changes to reporting hierarchies into the Councils operating systems. Service managers are responsible for advising the Establishment control officers of these changes.

The Establishment Control deal with all requests in relation to the release of vacancies, changes of hours, temporary arrangements. These changes are mapped to ensure correct payments are made, hierarchical organisational structures are appropriate and operational processes are

# Agenda Item 9

effectively maintained. A review of the EC forms used by managers has been completed and a revised suite of forms and guidance is now available for use.

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

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

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

The team manage the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of Agency workers. Agency recruitment is currently at an all-time high relative to social worker and associated positions especially within Children's Services

The team manage sickness absence data, including production of management reports, sickness absence analysis and quarterly absence figures for SLT.

Officers are involved with Employment Tribunal claims (approx. 580) relative to employees seeking backdating of amendments to Term Time Only salary calculations. Consultations are ongoing in relation to the potential settlement of these claims following a Court of Appeal case.

The team includes a Policy Officer responsible for undertaking reviews of policy, procedures and guidance and introduce new policies as required in line with current legislation. The officer is also involved in Corporate Equalities initiatives, staff support groups, responding to Freedom of Information and subject access requests, and assistance with mandatory training for managers.

Team members are responsible for the production of Agenda and minutes in relation to the Joint Trade Union meetings held on a 2 week cycle.

## **Transactional HR Payroll & Pension (THRP) Services**

There are still issues with Monthly Data Collection (MDC) for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which we are working with MHR and Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) to resolve. The last file to be sent was for May 2022. A meeting was held with MPF and MHR and meetings have been held and Sefton are currently working on a 7-month return from June to December 2022 which can be submitted to MPF in January 2023 and this will enable Sefton to get up to date.

Teachers Pensions Monthly data collection (MDC) moves to Monthly Contribution Reconciliation (MCR) has been delayed until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and a further delay may be requested as the iTrent software has several known issues.

The staff are still learning the new system are still working extremely hard and long hours to ensure all staff are paid on time.

There are backlogs in the teams due to process, reporting and resource issues and all work is being prioritised.

Some THRP staff are continuing to work from home and more staff are coming into the office. Some processes have had to be changed and the staff have embraced these changes. The number of staff going into the office is still being closely monitored.

# Agenda Item 9

The Local Government pay award from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 has been agreed and is being processed in December 2022 pay. The Teachers pay award has also been agreed backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2002 and again is being processed in December 2022.

## Children's Services

HR continue to provide a business support model to Children's Social Care during their improvement Journey. HR sits within the membership of the project board for both International Recruitment, which is underway and progressing, and Residential Homes which is currently considering the possibility of opening additional in-house residential care. The Myspace team creation and Business Support review are nearing implementation with HR supporting fully in the final stages of the process. Maintenance of the establishment remains ongoing and imperative to respond to the recruitment and retention Challenges. HR working closely with the department on the introduction and implementation of the amended Recruitment and Retention incentives as approved by Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023, these incentives alongside a review of Recruitment Processes within Sefton, is aimed at responding positively to the workforce challenges that Children Social Care and Education continue to face. It remains an interesting and exciting time and HR will continue to provide the highest level of guidance and support as they the Service moves upwards on its improvement journey.

## Health Unit

During December 2022 and January 2023, a total of 130 referrals for SMBC employees were made to the Health Unit. This is an increase of 14.04% when compared to the same period in the previous 12 months in which there were 114 referrals.

Referrals during this latest period included Education Excellence (61.54%), Operational -In-House Services (10.00%) and Children's Services (8.46%). As usual the main reasons were stress and mental health related (46.15%), chronic medical illness (15.38%) and musculoskeletal (13.08%).

Demand for mental health support continues to dominate referrals which only serves to reflect the situation within the local community and countrywide. Referrals of this nature to the Unit area are a mixture of personal and work circumstances both of which exacerbate each other and are difficult to disentangle in many cases. The Unit endeavours to ensure that employees are afforded support as soon as availability allows.

## Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)

### **Apprenticeships**

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

We recruited two Occupational Therapy (OT) trainees in September 2022 to join the **Level 6 Occupational Therapy Degree** in March 2023, they were successfully interviewed by Sheffield Hallam University and were offered a place on the course. The degree will take 3 years to complete and on completion the trainees will be able to register with the Health and Care Professions (HCPC) Council.

### **Training delivery**

The Workforce Learning and Development Team continues to deliver a number of training programmes and initiatives. These include:

# Agenda Item 9

- **Corporate Mandatory Training** – this includes Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Adults Awareness, Safeguarding Children & Young People Awareness and Climate Change. Monthly reports are shared with ELT/SLB to encourage staff to complete these courses.
- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** training delivery is going well. To date, we have trained 170 Sefton Council and schools' staff.
- **LCRCA Race Equality Training** – working with the LCRCA and neighbouring LAs to develop a training programme to complement existing E&D awareness training. This will include the 'lived experience' to enable us to address the structural and systemic racial biases that exist in some organisations and to challenges micro aggressions and unconscious biases in the workplace.  
We have now completed Phase 1 of the Race Equality LCR Training Programme. The total number of staff who attended was 145– 70 for non-managers and 75 for managers. 64.44% of available places (225). Further sessions are being planned from May 2023.
- The development of a **Personalisation Training Programme** for students, ASYEs and for new any starters working across Adult Social Care, who have not undertaken this training previously. The target date for completion is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- Developed a **Personalisation Survey** to find out how Adult Social Care have progressed in their Personalisation journey. The aim is to find out how learning is being embedded into everyday practice and any challenges experienced in doing so.

## Workforce/Organisational Development

We have been supporting Children's Social Care with a number of workforce development actions following the recent Ofsted inspection:

- Commissioned Insights Leadership Training for Children's Services Directors and Service Managers. The Director training took place on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022, and we received excellent feedback from those who attended. The Service Manager session is scheduled to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- Finished designing a team building session for Children's Services Service Managers, to be delivered on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The aim of the session is to build collaborative working relationships across the service, to prepare the managers for their Insights Leadership training scheduled to take place in April 2023.
- Developing a core training offer for Children's Services which will include an essential training for Social Workers and Managers. Target date for completion is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- There are two care experienced young people on apprenticeships (1 doing Teaching Assistant Level 3 at Holy Family High) (1 doing Heavy Vehicle Maintenance Level 3 in the depot).
- We are working with the Leaving Care Team to develop a training programme for Care Leavers. This will grant Care Leavers access to selected Mandatory Training courses to provide them with foundation skills and knowledge in each topic. Care leavers will also have access to many other online courses, including external courses provided by Matrix in budget management, voting and LinkedIn.

We delivered a Culture session to a cross section of Senior Managers to explore our culture and our teams from different perspectives (organisational, own peer group, service areas) and looking to the future which included the positive elements of Sefton's culture now. We are planning to replicate these sessions with a cross section of middle managers sometime in January/February 2023.



## **Strategic Support**

The team is now focused to providing support across the various services with policy & strategy development, service reviews and transformation activity, including support for the Children's Social Care Improvement plan. This extends to the options appraisal for In-House Children's Residential Homes, the review of Business Support and process mapping,.

## **Procurement**

It is anticipated that the new Procurement Legislation will be finalised in Parliament late 2023. It is understood that the Cabinet Office will be facilitating Procurement Policy training at that time which the Procurement Team will be required to attend. This will enable the Council to adopt the changes in legislation to ensure the Council is fully compliant in our Procurement Procedures and Regulations which will require updating at that time.

The Council Social Value Policy is being followed up with over sixty members of staff attending during January 2023 to understand how to practically apply the policy in tender evaluations, measuring the delivery of Social Value through Contract Management and Reporting.

## **Communications**

In February last year (2022), Sefton Council launched a refreshed version of its corporate website. The upgraded site presents a modern, customer friendly design, incorporating imagery of the borough, icon led pages and the integration of the My Services customer experience portal. The upgraded Council website has an accessibility score of 'Good' (67%), from 'Poor' (39%) – this score is set to improve again when further improvements are completed. Improvements to the site will also include a My Sefton news microsite integrated into the homepage, the ability to choose more services from the homepage and an alert banner for breaking news.

The Comms Team has created and launched a Sefton-specific campaign aimed at raising awareness of the need for photo ID when voting in the upcoming elections. The iDeal time campaign is the only local campaign in Merseyside, with all other Local Authorities choosing to simply utilise the national campaign materials.

The Comms team were involved with the announcements of the resignation of the Director of Children's Services and Council Chief Executive, this included follow up media interest, and will continue to support in the recruitment campaigns.

The Mayor's Toy Appeal in 2022 was the most successful to date, thanks in part to the support and activity of the communications team in promoting the appeal.

Members of the team were also present at the Freedom of the Borough ceremony, and generated lots of interest in the social media posts and press release.

The team are now finalising details of the key messages and infographics in anticipation of approval of the 2023/24 budget.

Comms support is being provided to the Sefton Women's Network as they plan to mark their 1-year anniversary, and International Women's Day, on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

The Comms team has already initiated discussions with colleagues from across the Council in relation to any plans to mark the coronation of King Charles III and how we can best support our communities in their plans.

# Agenda Item 9

## **Performance & Business Intelligence**

The Business Intelligence team is continuing to support many work streams across the Council including Economic Regeneration, Education Excellence, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Public Health Services. The team have developed a new performance framework for Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care services, using the recently implemented Data Warehouse and Power BI. Progress continues with the development of the Council's new enterprise data warehouse platform, which will enable cross-Council big data analysis. The team are currently supporting Children's Services with the preparation for the Ofsted Monitoring Visit.

The team continues to support the Integrated Care System (ICS), leading on Population Health Management workstream and has now completed population health profiles for each Sefton Ward.

## **Consultation & Engagement, Complaints and Information Governance.**

The Service continues to support consultation and engagement activities, respond to complaints and subject access requests in a timely manner and provide information, advice, and guidance across the Council on matters relating to information governance and data protection. There is a challenge with capacity in the Complaints team, but the Service has successfully recruited to vacant posts to address the issue.

Council has recently approved a refreshed Consultation and Engagement Framework.

The project to digitise the Council's historic paper records continues at pace. All legacy records stored at disparate 3<sup>rd</sup> party locations have now been moved to the Council's preferred secured storage provider, taking opportunity to destroy legacy records and digitise those that are not required to be kept in original paper format. The team has recently begun to process legacy records stored at the former Thomas Gray School site.