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Sefton Council 

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

DATE: Thursday, 22nd September 2022

TIME: 6.30 p.m.

VENUE: Committee Room, Town Hall Bootle

Member

Councillor
Cllr. Susan Bradshaw (Chair)
Cllr. Leslie Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Maria Bennett
Cllr. Robert Brennan
Cllr. Natasha Carlin
Cllr. Sinclair D'Albuquerque
Cllr. Janet Grace
Cllr. Nina Killen
Cllr. Dave Robinson
Cllr. Simon Shaw

Substitute

Councillor
Cllr. Steve McGinnity
Cllr. Paula Murphy
Cllr. David Irving
Cllr. Greg Myers
Cllr. Catie Page
Cllr. Terry Jones
Cllr. Michael Roche

Cllr. Carla Thomas
Cllr. Leo Evans

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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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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A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(Pages 5 - 8)

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022

4. Member Development Programme

At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee considered Councillor Lappin's Cabinet Member report.

Members of the Committee referred to the Member Development Programme and Member take-up statistics for courses, particularly on-line courses. Members considered that some courses were a little lengthy and it was agreed that the Workforce Learning and Development Manager be invited to attend the Committee to discuss Members' training and development.

Michael Mainwaring, Workforce Learning and Development Manager and Ruth Appleby, Democratic Services Officer will be in attendance at the meeting to discuss the issue with Members.

5. Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work and Sickness Absence

(Pages 9 - 18)

Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services

- 6. Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – September Update** (Pages 19 - 36)

Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services
- 7. Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 37 - 64)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
- 8. Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Reference Group - Update** (Pages 65 - 68)

Briefing Note of the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services
- 9. Cabinet Member Report - June 2022 to August 2022** (Pages 69 - 94)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM,
TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 14TH JUNE, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Brennan, Carlin, Irving (Substitute
Member for Councillor Bennett), Jones (Substitute
Member for Councillor D'Albuquerque), Killen,
Roche (Substitute Member for Councillor Grace),
Shaw and Thomas (Substitute Member for
Councillor Robinson)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory,
Compliance and Corporate Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett,
D'Albuquerque, Grace and Robinson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 be confirmed as a
correct record.

4. OVERVIEW AND SECURITY UPDATE CLOUD MARCH 22

The Committee received a presentation from Helen Spreadbury, Senior
Manager ICT & Digital that provided a security update on the Cloud
Migration.

Ms. Spreadbury highlighted:

- That a Cloud First Strategy was required because Sefton's ICT Infrastructure was aging and required significant investment to ensure it could scale up to meet increasing demands for ICT resource and capacity
- One of the objectives of the Strategy set out in 2016 was to provide an Integrated Cloud Service

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- The Cloud Migration Position Statement
- The forecast end position
- The next steps once migration was completed would include decommissioning and right sizing of the data centre at St Peters House; the removal of legacy applications no longer in use; planning the decommissioning of legacy applications in line with the implementation and deployment of new solutions such as telephony; the rationalisation of the remaining applications onto a smaller server footprint; that it would be necessary to align the forward plan for procurement to those applications that could not currently be moved to Cloud; and that the above work would inform the final sizing of the new Data Centre at Bootle Town Hall

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

- Activities by other local authorities.
- GPs and other primary care providers should be considering Cloud Migration.
- Assurances that servers were not provided by hostile nations.
- Up-to-date licenses and systems.
- Assurances against anti-hacking, website issues and outages.
- Security aspects of Microsoft Azure.
- Use of pen-drives by the Council.
- The carbon footprint produced by the central servers.
- The reduction of 4 servers to 2 servers.
- Multi-factor authentication, including fingerprints.
- Device security.
- Use of laptops by Council users outside the UK.
- Generators within the Council.
- Power surges and alarms.

RESOLVED:

That Helen Spreadbury be thanked for her informative presentation.

5. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the approval of the Committee of the Work Programme for 2022/23; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and providing an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Further to Minute No. 40 (2) of 1 March 2022 the Committee was advised that following consultation with Members, a preference had been

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expressed for the Committee to undertake a review of “Corporate Communications and Covid-19” rather than “Cyber Security” as a topic for review; and scoping documents in respect of the two topics were attached as appendices to the report.

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

- the Procurement for the Provision of Enforcement Agent Services on the latest Key Decision Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) Corporate Communications and Covid-19 be selected as a topic for review by a Working Group; and the following Members be appointed to the Working Group:
 - Councillor Byrom; and
 - Carlin;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to contact other Members of the Committee to seek their willingness to serve on the Working Group;
- (4) the contents of the Key Decision Forward Plan for the period 1 July– 31 October 2022, be noted; and enquiries be undertaken to provide further information to Members of the Committee on the Procurement for the Provision of Enforcement Agent Services; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

6. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - MARCH 2022 TO JUNE 2022

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

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

- The Council Tax Energy Rebate. Staff were commended for dealing with the volume of eligible households.
- The Member Development Programme and Member take-up statistics for courses, particularly on-line courses. Members considered that some courses were a little lengthy. The Workforce

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Learning and Development Manager could be invited to attend the Committee to discuss Members' training and development.

- Responses to queries by the One Stop Shop.
- The Elections Act 2022 and the requirement of photographic identification in polling stations. The impact of the legislation could be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be noted;
- (2) the Workforce Learning and Development Manager be invited to attend the Committee to discuss Members' training and development; and
- (3) the impact of the Elections Act 2022 and the requirement for voters to produce photographic identification in polling stations, be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	22 September 2022
Subject:	Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work and Sickness Absence		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance & Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To provide a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of levels of discipline, grievance, dignity at work and sickness absence within the Council (excluding schools).

Recommendation(s):

The Overview & Scrutiny - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Receive the report in terms of discipline, grievance, dignity at work and sickness levels.
- (2) Note the latest information in respect of ongoing work.
- (3) Note the initiatives currently being implemented.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The recommendations reflect the request made by Overview & Scrutiny – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services Committee for info

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

N/A

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What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs - N/A

(B) Capital Costs – N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
N/A	
Legal Implications:	
N/A	
Equality Implications:	
There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
<p>For more information contact julia.thorpe@sefton.gov.uk or stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk (tel. 0151 934 4552).</p>	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Achieving the correct application of procedures, facilitating the protection of the most vulnerable.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: N/A
Commission, broker and provide core services: Absences can have a detrimental effect upon core service delivery
Place – leadership and influencer: Correct workforce allocation allows leadership and influencing
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6942/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5142/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

N/A

Contact Officer:	Marie Lambert
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 3388
Email Address:	marie.lambert@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the levels of disciplinary, grievance, dignity at work and sickness absence within the Authority (excluding schools).

1.2 The management of the workforce is an important activity to ensure outcomes for our communities are achieved and to ensure that the workforce is appropriately managed and motivated.

2. Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work

2.1 The organisation enjoys a comparatively good level of cases and this reflects on the whole, both the good overall industrial relations environment, the partnership approach that is undertaken and also the work undertaken within departments.

2.2 A lot of effort is taken to avoid formal procedures where possible.

3. Suspensions

3.1 In the period October 2021 to June 2022, 7 employees were suspended from duty (not including schools).

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- 3.2** Suspension takes place in order to facilitate an investigation into matters which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. Some investigations will also include a potential referral to a professional body such as the Health Care and Professionals Council. Personnel continue to press departments to resource investigations appropriately.
- 3.3** Whether a suspension is appropriate will be a decision taken by a Senior Manager with the advice of the Personnel Department.

4. Disciplinaries

- 4.1** During the period October 2021 to June 2022, there have been 13 disciplinary investigations as per the table below:

Department	No. of Investigations	Outcome
Adult Social Care	3	1 dismissal 1 management instruction 1 case on-going
Children's Social Care	1	Final Written Warning
Communities - (Public Health)	1	Dismissal (End of Fixed Term Contract)
In House Operational Services – Cemeteries	4	1 Final Written Warning 3 No case to answer
In House Operational Services – Catering	1	Case on-going
In House Operational Services – Cleansing	2	1 First Written Warning 1 No case to answer
In-House Operational Services – Security	1	1 Final Written Warning

5. Grievances

- 5.1** During the period October 2021 to June 2022, there have been 3 Grievances as follows:

Department	Outcome
Adult Social Care	Partially upheld
Public Protection & Highways	Upheld
In-house Operational Services (Cleansing)	On-hold

6. Dignity at Work Complaints (DAW)

- 6.1** No DAW complaints have been received during October 2021 to June 2022.

7. Council Sickness Absence - Year End 2021/22 plus First Quarter of 2022/23

7.1 This report contains statistical data for the full year 2021/22 (01.04.21 to 31.03.22) and for Quarter 1 2022/23 (01.04.22 – 30.06.22). The information details ‘Short Term’, ‘Long Term’ and ‘All Absence’ along with comparisons with previous years for all Service Areas. Sickness percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total FTE days available.

7.2 Assistant Directors are presented with their own service area information each quarter. The information presented is dependent on all service areas maintaining and updating sickness absence records on the Absence Feeder in an accurate and timely manner.

7.3 Service Area Analysis – Year End (April 2021 to March 2022)

Short Term Sickness Absence

Short term sickness absence is defined as absence lasting less than 4 weeks for any single episode. The Council’s long-standing target for short term absence is 2.2%.

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON 2019/20	COMPARISON 2020/21	SHORT TERM SICKNESS YEAR END 2021/22
Adult Social Care	1.94%	1.40%	2.38%
Children’s Social Care	1.44%	1.18%	1.43%
Communities	1.68%	1.19%	1.80%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	1.48%	0.95%	1.28%
Economic Growth & Housing	1.68%	0.88%	1.36%
Education Excellence	1.47%	0.64%	1.12%
Highways & Public Protection	1.89%	1.03%	1.63%
Operational In-House Services	2.23%	1.56%	3.17%
Public Health & Wellbeing	1.17%	2.05%	2.56%
Strategic Support	1.82%	1.13%	1.74%

All service areas (based on recordings input into the system) remain largely under the Council target of 2.2% for short term sickness absence.

Long Term Sickness Absence

Long term sickness absence is defined as absence lasting more than 4 weeks for any single episode. The Council’s long-standing target for long term absence is 1.8%.

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SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON 2019/20	COMPARISON 2020/21	LONG TERM SICKNESS YEAR END 2021/22
Adult Social Care	5.36%	5.38%	4.73%
Children's Social Care	7.08%	5.54%	5.23%
Communities	5.03%	4.23%	5.05%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	2.52%	2.69%	2.35%
Economic Growth & Housing	2.83%	1.04%	1.49%
Education Excellence	5.88%	4.29%	2.95%
Highways & Public Protection	5.39%	3.37%	2.69%
Operational In-House Services	4.07%	4.76%	4.26%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.00%	0.00%	2.48%
Strategic Support	6.90%	4.34%	5.02%

All service areas except one have a long-term sickness percentage over the Councils target of 1.8% for 2021/22, indicated in bold.

7.4 'All' Sickness Absence – Short and Long Combined

The Council's long-standing target for 'all' sickness is 4%

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON 2019/20	COMPARISON 2020/21	ALL SICKNESS YEAR END 2021/22
Adult Social Care	7.30%	6.79%	7.11%
Children's Social Care	8.52%	6.72%	6.66%
Communities	6.72%	5.42%	6.85%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	4.00%	3.63%	3.63%
Economic Growth & Housing	4.51%	1.93%	2.85%
Education Excellence	7.35%	4.93%	4.07%
Highways & Public Protection	7.27%	4.40%	4.32%
Operational In-House Services	6.30%	6.32%	7.43%
Public Health & Wellbeing	1.17%	2.05%	5.04%
Strategic Support	8.72%	5.48%	6.76%

The service areas ending 2021/22 with a percentage above the 4% Council target are indicated in bold. 2 service areas are under 4%, 2 have a lower figure from previous years and are just above the 4%. 6 Services areas are between 5% and 7.43%, 5 of which show a higher percentage than the previous 12 months

7.5 Council As a Whole – Year End Analysis

The year-end percentages for the Council as a whole over the last 7 years;

COUNCIL ALL SERVICE AREAS COMBINED	Short Term %	Long-Term %	Overall %
21/22	2.08	3.85	5.93
20/21	1.25	4.06	5.31
19/20	1.82	4.47	6.29
18/19	1.92	4.34	6.26
17/18	1.88	3.87	5.75
16/17	1.89	3.86	5.75
15/16	1.92	4.19	6.11

7.6 Service Area Analysis Quarter 1 - April to June 2022

Short Term Sickness Percentages (Council target 2.2%)

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q1 2019/20	COMPARISON Q1 2020/21	COMPARISON Q1 2021/22	SHORT TERM SICKNESS Q1 CURRENT YEAR 2022/23
Adult Social Care	2.49%	1.11%	1.30%	2.85%
Children's Social Care	1.07%	1.41%	1.21%	1.10%
Communities	1.63%	1.03%	1.16%	2.26%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	1.49%	0.91%	0.77%	1.41%
Economic Growth & Housing	1.37%	0.99%	0.83%	1.20%
Education Excellence	1.73%	0.82%	1.03%	1.92%
Highways & Public Protection	2.18%	0.50%	0.88%	1.19%
Operational In-House Services	2.64%	1.42%	2.12%	3.66%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.53%	0.00%	0.74%	3.00%
Strategic Support	1.66%	1.17%	1.59%	1.84%

Three service areas are over the Council's 2.2% target for short term sickness.

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Long Term sickness Percentages (Council Target 1.8%)

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q1 2019/20	COMPARISON Q1 2020/21	COMPARISON Q1 2021/22	LONG TERM SICKNESS Q1 CURRENT YEAR 2022/23
Adult Social Care	4.81%	4.58%	6.23%	5.01%
Children's Social Care	4.64%	4.74%	3.59%	3.68%
Communities	4.57%	4.15%	2.97%	2.95%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	2.12%	2.64%	1.90%	2.11%
Economic Growth & Housing	3.15%	0.85%	1.77%	2.05%
Education Excellence	5.30%	5.21%	3.15%	2.54%
Highways & Public Protection	3.79%	4.39%	3.91%	1.25%
Operational In-House Services	3.92%	4.80%	5.43%	4.31%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.26%
Strategic Support	2.44%	6.86%	2.46%	3.38%

Seven service areas are above the long-term sickness percentage target of 1.8%.

7.7 Short & Long Term Sickness Combined (Council target 4.0%)

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q1 2019/20	COMPARISON Q1 2020/21	COMPARISON Q1 2021/22	'ALL' SICKNESS Q1 CURRENT YEAR 2022/23
Adult Social Care	7.30%	5.70%	7.53%	7.86%
Children's Social Care	5.71%	6.15%	4.80%	4.77%
Communities	6.20%	5.18%	4.13%	5.21%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	3.61%	3.55%	2.67%	3.52%
Economic Growth & Housing	4.52%	1.84%	2.60%	3.24%

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Education Excellence	7.03%	6.03%	4.18%	4.46%
Highways & Public Protection	5.97%	4.89%	4.79%	2.44%
Operational In-House Services	6.56%	6.22%	7.55%	7.97%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.53%	0.00%	0.74%	4.26%
Strategic Support	4.10%	8.03%	4.05%	5.22%

A number of service areas are above the Council's 4% target.

8. Health Unit Data

A new report will be built via the new iTrent system to provide information on percentage of sickness reasons across the Council. Past reports have always shown the top 3 reasons to interchange between Mental Health, Musculoskeletal and Medical Illness /Infection. As soon as this information is once again available it will be included as part of this report.

8.1 Occupational Health Referrals

Excluding schools, the reasons for referral to occupational health during 2021/22 were as follows:

Mental Health	47.38%
Musculoskeletal	17.71%
Medical Illness	17.21%
Bereavement	5.49%
Accidents	3.99%
Infections	3.49%
Post Operative Recovery	2.49%
Reproductive	2.24%

Referrals to the Health Unit include requests for support from employees who are not absent.

8.2 As in previous years' mental health related issues continue to be the main reason for referral. Operational In-House Services, Communities and Adult Social Care are the areas with the highest number of referrals overall.

8.3 The Assistant Directors in each service area continue to act to ensure:

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- sickness absence records are maintained in a timely manner using the reporting system fully and accurately
- managers keep their skills refreshed with online sickness absence training and effectively manage absence
- health and wellbeing is discussed on a regular basis during one to one sessions
- managing absence is prioritised seeking appropriate advice from Corporate Personnel or the Health Unit.

9. Initiatives

- 9.1** Strategic Leadership Board continues to monitor and encourage the reduction of levels of both short and long-term absence.
- 9.2** Sickness reports are provided to Assistant Directors on a quarterly basis and on an ad hoc basis on request.
- 9.3** Managers are encouraged to manage absence in accordance with Council policy and procedures and to use the online testing package to fill any knowledge gaps. Briefing sessions and targeted training is arranged as required from the results of the online testing.
- 9.4** Targeted support will continue within departments to help with sickness absence. Support through the Occupational Health Unit is a combination of telephone consultations and appointment in person with the Occupational Health Adviser. Physiotherapy is now being provided back in-house.
- 9.5** The Personnel Team work closely with departments providing information and advice and appropriate levels of support, advising managers on informal processes and assisting managers with the more formal and complex levels of sickness absence management. The Personnel team continue to monitor sickness absence and will report to the Chief Personnel Officer any issues or trends that are cause for concern.

10. Managing Absence

- 10.1** The Council has a Sickness Absence Policy which operates in a partnership with trade unions. Long term absence is being dealt with in accordance with overall business need and short-term absence is operated in accordance with recognised and agreed trigger points. All policies, where applicable, are subject to modification in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.2** Trade unions and management recognise the need for correct management of sickness absence to provide appropriate support to lessen the demands on employees who remain at work.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	22 September 2022
Subject:	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – September Update		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Leader of the Council		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To inform **Overview and Scrutiny** of:

- 1 The current position relating to the 2022/23 revenue budget.
- 2 The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2022/23.
- 3 The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2023:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.

Recommendation(s):

Overview and Scrutiny is recommended to:

Revenue Budget

- 1) Note the current position relating to the 2022/23 revenue budget.
- 2) Note the Remedial Action Plan to offset the budget pressures being faced in 2022/23.
- 3) Note the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2022/23 revenue budget and acknowledge that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn

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position and financial sustainability can be achieved.

- 4) Note the current position relating to the High Needs budget and that officers are currently reviewing all options available to the Council to mitigate the additional pressure and to make the overall High Needs budget financially sustainable.

Capital Programme

- 5) Note the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 7.1).
- 6) Note the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 July 2022 of £7.535m (paragraph 7.5); the latest full year forecast is £42.814m (paragraph 7.6).
- 7) Note explanations of variances to project budgets (paragraph 7.1).

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure Overview and Scrutiny are informed of the current position in relation to the 2022/23 revenue budget.

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

To keep members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2022/23 and agreed allocations for future years.

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

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

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The report indicates that for 2022/23 an overspend position of £0.046m is currently forecast after mitigating actions have been implemented to ensure the Council currently remains in a financial sustainable position.

(B) Capital Costs

The Council's capital budget in 2022/23 is £42.777m. As at the end of July 2022 expenditure of £7.535m has been incurred and a full year outturn of £42.814m is currently forecast.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

Currently an overspend position of £0.046m is forecast for 2022/23 after mitigating actions have been implemented to ensure the Council currently remains in a financial sustainable position. However, it should be noted that significant pressure and risk remains, particularly relating to Children's Social Care and energy costs. If these

budgets experience further demand and inflationary pressure during the remainder of the year further corresponding savings will need to be identified.

Legal Implications:

None

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	No

The allocations of capital funding outlined in section 7 may be spent on projects that will have a high climate change impact as they could relate to new build, rebuild, refurbishment, retrofit and demolition proposals. Environmental consideration will be taken into account when specific projects are designed and tendered – which will help to mitigate negative impacts.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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

Protect the most vulnerable:

See comment above

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

See comment above

Commission, broker and provide core services:

See comment above

Place – leadership and influencer:

See comment above

Drivers of change and reform:

See comment above

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:

See comment above

Greater income for social investment:

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See comment above

Cleaner Greener:

See comment above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Customer Services is the author of the report (FD 6904/22)

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD 5104/22).

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 On 3 March 2022, Members approved the Budget for the financial year 2022/23. This budget was developed throughout the preceding nine months and took account of all known issues. Within that report, and as with previous years, the inherent financial risk within the budget, especially with respect to Children's Services, was identified. This was further reflected within the reserves' strategy for the Council.
- 1.2 A report to June's Cabinet and Council on 14 July, provided an update for Members of the financial position with the Council for events that had materialised since the budget was approved in March, including the increased cost of providing Children's Services and the increase in energy costs affecting the Council from global price increases. A remedial action plan was presented in the report and approved by Council.
- 1.3 The report to July's Cabinet outlined that pressures continued across a number of service areas, that an overspend in the region of £2.2m was forecast and that remedial actions would be put in place and presented to this Committee to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability would be achieved.
- 1.4 This report is the second of the Council's monthly budget monitoring reports and updates the revenue forecast outturn position for all services, including the pressures previously identified in the June and July reports.
- 1.5 The report also outlines the current position regarding key income streams for the Authority, namely Council Tax and Business Rates. Variations against expected receipts in these two areas will also affect the Council's financial position in future years.
- 1.6 The capital section of the report informs Members of the latest estimate of capital expenditure for 2022/23 and forecast expenditure for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The capital budget to date is presented in paragraph 7.1. Paragraphs 7.2 to 7.8 review progress of the capital programme. Finally, paragraphs 7.38 to 7.40 confirm that there are adequate levels of resources available to finance the capital programme.

2. **Revenue Budget 2022/23 – Forecast Outturn Position as at the end of July 2022**

- 2.1 Members are provided with updates of the Council's forecast financial revenue position each month during the financial year from July.
- 2.2 The report to Cabinet in June 2022 highlighted the significant financial pressures being faced by the Council relating to Children's Social Care and energy costs. A remedial action plan was approved to meet these estimated costs during 2022/23. These are included in the forecast outturn position below.
- 2.3 The report to Cabinet in July 2022 outlined that pressures had continued in several service areas and a net overspend of £2.197m was forecast. It was acknowledged that the July report was the first full budget monitoring report of the year, so

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forecasts included a number of assumptions on anticipated expenditure and income for the remainder of the year. It was also outlined that a full review of budgets and assumptions would be undertaken to refine the forecasts for this report and would outline remedial actions to be implemented to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position, potentially including the adoption of financial principles used in previous years.

2.4 The review of budgets and assumptions has resulted in forecasts in some service areas being reduced. However, there has been a significant worsening of the position relating to Children's Social Care accommodation costs as well as the impact of the potential local government pay award (these are both discussed below). As at the end of July 2022, the forecast outturn shows a net overspend of **£7.743m**. As with all organisations at this time, the Council is operating in a very challenging financial environment. However, it is vital that the Council achieves a balanced forecast outturn position to ensure its financial sustainability. Proposals to meet this forecast overspend are outlined in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11.

2.5 The table below highlights the variations across services that make up the £7.743m forecast overspend:

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance to June
	£m	£m	£m	
<u>Services</u>				
Strategic Management	4.024	4.036	0.012	0.003
Adult Social Care	102.055	102.055	0.000	0.000
Children's Social Care	52.151	64.246	10.895	2.540
Communities	17.591	17.488	-0.103	-0.646
Corporate Resources	5.407	5.204	-0.203	-0.025
Economic Growth & Housing	6.583	6.545	-0.038	-0.115
Education Excellence	11.296	12.257	0.961	0.041
Health & Wellbeing	19.349	19.123	-0.226	-0.226
Highways & Public Protection	11.364	11.261	-0.103	0.016
Operational In-House Services	14.867	15.688	0.821	0.031
Energy Costs	0.000	4.300	4.300	0.000
Additional Pay Award Provision	0.000	4.100	4.100	4.100
Total Service Net Expenditure	244.687	259.384	20.416	5.719
Council Wide Budgets	0.180	0.180	-0.173	-0.173
Levies	35.222	35.222	0.000	0.000
General Government Grants	(72.356)	(72.356)	0.000	0.000
Remedial Action Plan	0.000	-12.500	-12.500	0.000
Total Net Expenditure	207.733	209.930		

<u>Forecast Year-End Deficit</u>		<u>7.743</u>	<u>5.546</u>
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2.6 The key areas relating to the outturn position are as follows:

- **Adult Social Care** – The current forecast assumes that the Adult Social Care budget will break-even during 2022/23. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties that could impact on this position before the year-end. This budget has historically underspent each financial year therefore, officers are continuing to review the forecasts and assumptions to ensure that any potential flexibility or otherwise is raised as early as possible in the financial year given the issues facing the Council.
- **Children’s Social Care** – The current forecast shows a potential overspend of £10.895m, a significant increase in the figure of £8.355m reported to Cabinet in July.

As has been regularly reported over the last three years, the cost of accommodation is the largest risk to the Council’s budget position. Since the July report a number of additional high-cost placements have had to be entered into which have contributed to the increase in the forecast. Since the budget was set in March there has been an increase in Independent Residential Placements from 69 to 74. In addition, there are now more cases requiring high-cost accommodation and support than previously, and the costs of these have also risen significantly. Some new cases are now initially costing £24,000 per week. There are currently 621 cared for children and a further 419 children on child protection plans.

The current forecast assumes that these costs will continue for a number of months. Work is currently being undertaken to understand if any of these cases will continue beyond this and the impact this would have on the current forecast – this could potentially be a further £2m - £3m of additional budget pressure and an update will be provided for the next report in October along with a clear plan on how this will be funded.

The Council is currently working on developing a range of options to address the inherent demand and costs of Looked After Children whilst supporting the most vulnerable residents, but this budget remains under pressure and purely from a financial point of view this is likely to continue during this year and into the next financial year.

- **Education Excellence** – The current forecast shows a potential overspend of £0.961m relating to Home to School Transport. There has been an increase in the number of children being transported, especially relating to out of borough placements. In addition, there has been an increase in the cost of providing the transport.
- **Operational In-House Services** The current forecast shows a potential overspend of £0.821m. This relates to a number of areas across the Service, including forecast shortfalls in income on Burials and Cremations, Catering, Green Sefton activities (mainly golf courses) and vehicle maintenance.

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- **Energy Costs** – As reported in June, the global increase in energy prices is having a significant impact on the Council's energy and fuel costs. This is currently estimated at £4.300m and is being closely monitored as more information becomes available from the Council's framework providers on the fees being paid. It should be noted that this is a national issue affecting all local authorities. However, the Government have advised that no additional funding will be made available for local government, despite representations made both nationally and locally,
- **Additional Pay Award Provision** – The approved Base Budget included a provision for the 202/23 pay award of 3%. This was line with most other local authorities who had budgeted for between 2.5% and 3% (and when the Spending Review 2021 was published, the Office for Budget Responsibility was forecasting inflation to be 4% in 2022). On 25 July 2022, the National Employers for local government services body made an offer to trade unions of a fixed increase of £1,925 (plus an additional day's annual leave from April 2023). For Sefton, this equates to an increase in the pay bill of about 6.5% or an additional £4.100m above the amount included in the 2022/23 budget. It should be noted that this is the latest offer and has yet to be accepted by Trade Unions – any increase in the offer will therefore require additional resources to be identified. As previously mentioned for energy costs, this is a national issue for local government however Government have made it clear that no additional funding will be made available.

From the above it can be seen that additional pressures of about £20.2m are being experienced and this mainly reflects the pressure in Children's Social Care and that experienced from energy costs and the additional pay award. Whilst the pressure on Children's Social Care can be deemed to be Sefton specific (although many of the causes are being seen nationally, e.g., increases in numbers of Looked After Children and increases in accommodation costs), the energy and pay award pressures of £8.4m are impacting on all local authorities. These costs were not reflected in the funding provided as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/2023 and the Government has made it clear than no additional funding will be made available, meaning the Council needs to make remedial plans to meet these pressures.

Remedial Action Plan

- 2.7 Given the scale of the current forecast deficit it is proposed to utilise one-off resources to enable a balanced forecast outturn position to ensure its financial sustainability. The sources of these resources are:

Emergency Funding

- 2.8 The Council received unringfenced Emergency Funding from the Government in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to help with the costs associated with the COVID19 pandemic. As has been regularly reported, the Council has utilised this funding to offset costs as well as the loss of income from Council Tax, Business Rates and Sales, Fees and Charges. It is now proposed to utilise **£1.700m** of the remaining funding to fund some of the pressures in 2022/23.

Reduction in General Fund Balances

- 2.9 The Robustness Report approved by Budget Council in March highlighted that given the risks faced by the Council, the level of General Balances should be set at

6.5% of the Council's net revenue budget. An element of this related to the rising demand for Children's Social Care as well as economic uncertainty faced by the Council. It is therefore proposed to reduce balances to 5% (the minimum level of balances that should be held by the Council regardless of the level of economic uncertainty). The remedial action plan approved in June included the use of £0.700m of General Balances, therefore reducing Balances by 1.5% would allow a further **£2.900m** to be utilised.

- 2.10 Given the current environment and financial risks faced by the Council, it is considered imperative that the Council increases Balances at the earliest opportunity from 2023/24 to reflect these risks. In the event that the financial position of the Council improves compared to this latest forecast, e.g., through an underspend on Adult Social Care, there will be a corresponding reduced call on general balances.

Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 2.11 Officers have undertaken a review of Earmarked Reserves to determine if any are no longer required for their original purpose and can be released to support the in-year pressures. The exercise has identified **£3.100m** of reserves that can be released, the most significant are:
- Business Rates Income Reserve – the Council maintains a reserve to allow for the timing of S31 grants to be managed across years, as well as fluctuations in Business Rates income. A review of the reserve has identified that £1.666m can be released. In line with Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council the release of this reserve.
 - Local Authority EU Exit Preparation Grant – The Council received funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to assist with any costs incurred relating to the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. After funding all known costs, £0.427m can now be released. In line with the FPR's this has been approved by the S151 Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive.
 - COVID-19 New Burdens Grant Funding – the Council received a number of different strands of new burdens funding relating to the administration of various programmes on behalf of the Government. Due to some of the administration being undertaken by existing staff, and after funding all known costs, £0.300m can now be released as this grant is not ringfenced. In line with the FPR's this has been approved by the S151 Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive.
 - Other Earmarked Reserves – in addition, a number of smaller reserves totalling £0.700m can now be released. In line with the FPR's these have been approved by the S151 Officer.

Summary 2022/23

- 2.12 After the implementation of the remedial actions above, an overspend of £0.046m is currently forecast. This represents the current position that has been forecast to the year end- in the event that further pressure is experienced, further remedial action will be required. However, as a result of using the options above, and those previously approved in June, there is no flexibility left for the use of existing reserves and general balances- as a result this pressure will need to be met from within the existing Council budget and delivery monitored carefully and reported to Cabinet. Any remedial action required will need to consider the adoption of financial principles used in previous years.

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3. **Medium Term Financial Planning**

- 3.1 The report to Cabinet in June / Council in July highlighted that the pressures in Children's Social Care, as well as increased Energy costs, would have a significant ongoing impact on the Council's budget in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Whilst some of this pressure was considered to be temporary, much would be permanent.
- 3.2 The report also highlighted that there would be additional pressures from 2023/24 as a result of potential increases in the National Living Wage and the impact that this would have on both the Council pay structure as well as external providers, particularly in Adult Social Care. In addition, the current high levels of inflation would lead to significant pressure on many areas of the Council.
- 3.3 The ongoing impact of the current 2022/2023 pay award offer will now also need to be met in 2023/24 given it has been funded from one-off resources in 2022/23. In addition, the Council will need to assess the ongoing impact of the additional pressures reported this month in Children's Social Care as well as other service areas.
- 3.4 Based on all of these issues, the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will start to be refined and updated, however it is clear that based on this update, budget proposals will need to be developed for implementation from April 2023 (pending further Central Government advice on future funding levels) in order that the Council maintains financial sustainability. This will not be easy with extremely tight financial constraints being in existence and demand for Council services increasing continually (and councils being asked to carry out more functions); however, it is essential that this planning commences from this point. The annual comprehensive Medium-Term Financial Plan will be presented to Cabinet in October 2022.

4. **Council Tax Income – Update**

- 4.1 Council Tax income is shared between the billing authority (Sefton Council) and the three major precepting authorities (the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Authority – Mayoral Precept) pro-rata to their demand on the Collection Fund. The Council's Budget included a Council Tax Requirement of £150.008m for 2022/23 (including Parish Precepts), which represents 84% of the net Council Tax income of £178.590m.
- 4.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2022 is a surplus of -£1.797m. This variation is primarily due to: -
- The surplus on the fund at the end of 2021/22 being higher than estimated (-£0.517m).
 - Gross Council Tax Charges in 2022/23 being higher than estimated (-£0.266m).

- Exemptions and Discounts (including a forecasting adjustment) being lower than estimated (-£1.014m).

4.3 Due to Collection Fund regulations, the Council Tax surplus will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2022/23 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

4.4 A forecast surplus of £2.022m was declared on the 15 January 2022 of which Sefton's share is £1.699m (84.1%). This is the amount that will be recovered from the Collection Fund in 2022/23. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2023/24 and future years.

5. **Business Rates Income – Update**

5.1 Since 1 April 2017, Business Rates income has been shared between the Council (99%) and the Fire and Rescue Authority (1%). The Council's Budget included retained Business Rates income of £56.664m for 2022/23, which represents 99% of the net Business Rates income of £57.236m. Business Rates income has historically been very volatile making it difficult to forecast accurately.

5.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2022 is a surplus of -£6.598m on Business Rates income. This is due to:

- The deficit on the fund at the end of 2022/23 being lower than estimated (-£0.091m).
- Increase in the gross charge on rateable properties (-£1.068m).
- A number of reliefs announced for 2022/23 were assumed in the NNDR1 return with the loss of income as a result of these reliefs covered by Section 31 grant payments. It is now forecast that the value of these reliefs will be less than anticipated (-£5.439m).

5.3 When taking into account the lower Section 31 grants due on the additional reliefs, a net surplus of £1.244m is forecast.

5.4 Due to Collection Fund regulations, a Business Rates deficit will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2022/23 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

5.5 A forecast deficit of £18.702m was declared in January 2022. Sefton's share of this is £18.515m. This is the amount that will be distributed from the Collection Fund in 2022/23. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2023/24 and future years.

6. **High Needs Budget**

6.1 A report was presented to Cabinet in July regard to the High Needs budget and the changes that are proposed, details of sufficiency planning, the Council's engagement on the Delivering Better Value Programme and the current high needs deficit and the risk around future central government decision making in respect of this deficit.

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- 6.2 In light of these factors, the SEND green paper, the commencement of the Delivering Better Value Programme and the potential changes to accounting treatment of these high needs deficits that exist in a substantial number of councils in England, it was proposed that a monthly financial forecast be presented to Cabinet each month that reflects financial performance against budget and remedial planning - this would be considered alongside the wider quarterly performance report that will be presented to Cabinet and Council.
- 6.3 The High Needs Quarterly Update report presented to Cabinet in July outlined that the overspend on the High Needs budget in 2021/2022 was £4.2m resulting in an accumulated deficit of £12.5m at the end of 2021/22. The report also highlighted that a deficit for 2022/23 was forecast to be between £2.3m - £4.0m.
- 6.4 Given the increase in placements in September 2022, the current forecast overspend will be at least £2.9m, despite the provision of additional places at Sefton specialist provision schools from September. Between April and September, there has been an increase of 52 children placed at our specialist schools / SEND resource units, 172 additional EHCPs (total now 2,437 with 150 in progress) and a further 18 out of borough placements. The position is exacerbated by the additional pressures from currently proposed pay awards for 2022/23, particularly at the non-specialist provision schools where any additional cost has to be met from the High Needs budget as schools are only required to make a fixed contribution per qualifying pupil.
- 6.5 In light of the current position officers are reviewing all options available to the Council to mitigate this additional pressure during the current year and to reduce the impact on the High Needs deficit. This will include accelerating the proposals reported to members in the July Cabinet paper and determining new proposals to improve sufficiency.
- 6.6 During the next month the Council will be responding to central government's call for evidence on how High Needs deficits should be considered going forward, especially in respect of the potential for the ringfence of this deficit to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to come to an end from April 2023. Such a decision obviously presents significant financial risk to all councils if this moves from being a DSG issue to one that could impact on a council's General Fund. The response to this will be shared with relevant Cabinet Members and the next comprehensive report on High Needs to October Cabinet and November Council will provide an update on this.

7. Capital Programme 2022/23 – 2024/25

Capital Budget

- 7.1 The Capital Budget and profile of expenditure for the three years 2022/23 to 2024/25 is as follows:

2022/23	£42.777m
2023/24	£16.063m
2024/25	£6.680m

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

- **Adult Social Care** – the Cabinet Member for Adult Social care has, under delegated authority, approved revised budgets for the Wider Social Care programme and Community Equipment Stores funded from the Better Care Fund – Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The total amount approved was £4.934m for Adult Social Care and £0.550m for Children’s Social Care.
- **Communities** – £0.270m has been added to the programme for essential Health and Safety works at Dunes Splashworld funded by borrowing.
- **Economic Growth & Housing**
 - £0.556m has been added to the programme for Bootle Canal Side Business Plan funded by earmarked reserves.
 - Town Deal Projects – Les Transformations de Southport and Enterprise Arcade budgets have been phased from 2022/23 to 2023/24 (£1.584m) to align with the ongoing development of the Town Deal programme and summary business cases previously reported to Cabinet.
- **Education Excellence** – the following schemes have been rephased for delivery in 2023/24 financial year:
 - Lydiate Primary Rewire £0.104m
 - Hudson Primary Replacement Windows / Roof Refurbishment £0.146m
 - Merefield Roof Repairs £0.115m

7.3 In addition to the above capital budgets the following capital grant allocations have been approved by Cabinet and Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme 2022/23 and 2023/24:

Capital Grant	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Education Excellence		
Schools Condition Allocation	2,426,403	-
High Needs Provision Capital Allocation	2,062,067	2,908,641
Basic Needs Funding	-	878,823
Highways and Public Protection		
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	6,210,000	-
Key Route Network *	400,000	400,000
Transforming Cities Fund - Urban Traffic Control	660,049	440,033
Traffic Signal Maintenance	250,000	-
TOTAL	12,008,519	4,627,497

7.4 Authority has been delegated to Cabinet Member to assign funding to individual capital schemes for Adult Social Care, Highways and the Schools block allocations reported above. The list of schemes for 2022/23 is being fully developed and will be

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presented to the individual Cabinet Members for approval. A full list of the approved capital schemes will be presented in future reports to Cabinet.

Budget Monitoring Position to July 2022

- 7.5 The current position of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of June 2022 is shown in the table below. It should be noted that budgets are profiled dependent upon the timing of when works are to be carried out and the anticipated spend over the financial year. For example, Education Excellence will typically carry out most of its capital works during key school's holiday periods such as the summer recess, whilst Highways and Public Protection will complete most of its programmed works during quarters two and four of the financial year. The budget to date in the table below reflects the profiles of each individual scheme.

Service Area	Budget to Jul-22	Actual Expenditure to Jul-22	Variance to Jul-22
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	1.038	1.014	-0.024
Children's Social Care	0.060	0.060	-
Communities	0.221	0.221	-
Corporate Resources	0.324	0.289	-0.035
Economic Growth & Housing	2.442	2.591	0.148
Education Excellence	0.674	0.678	0.004
Highways & Public Protection	2.172	2.123	-0.049
In House Operational Services	0.585	0.559	-0.026
Total Programme	7.516	7.535	0.019

Capital Programme Forecast Outturn 2022/23

- 7.6 The current forecast of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of 2022/23 and the profile of budgets for future years is shown in the table below:

Service Area	Full Year Budget 2022/23	Forecast Out-turn	Variance to Budget	Full Year Budget 2023/24	Full Year Budget 2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	6.217	6.217	-	1.774	1.610
Children's Social Care	0.450	0.450	-	0.100	-
Communities	2.188	2.188	-	0.290	-
Corporate Resources	6.145	6.120	-0.025	0.819	
Economic Growth & Housing	9.386	9.507	0.121	2.795	0.075
Education Excellence	4.271	4.212	-0.059	3.457	0.007
Highways & Public Protection	9.165	9.165	-	4.934	3.663
In House Operational Services	4.954	4.954	-	1.893	1.326
Total Programme	42.777	42.814	0.037	16.062	6.680

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

- 7.7 The current 2022/23 budgeted spend is £42.777m with a budgeted spend to July of £7.516m. The full year budget includes exceptional items such as £2.033m for vehicle replacement, £4.439m for Green Homes and Sustainable Warmth schemes, £8.427m for Growth and Strategic Investment projects, previously approved amounts for essential repairs and maintenance (£1.183m) and a significant scheme to upgrade to LED Street Lighting (£3.887m).
- 7.8 Typically, on an annual basis the capital programme spends in the region of £25m. Given this typical annual level of spend it is likely that reprofiling of spend into 2023/24 will occur as the year progresses.
- 7.9 An overspend on the Economic Growth and Housing budget has been forecast in relation to the Cambridge Road Redevelopment project. A change control has been submitted and accepted by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to secure additional grant funding for the project alongside identified match funding from the Council. Approval to increase the project budget will be sought on a future report to Cabinet once legal paperwork has been finalised for the additional grant.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- 7.10 Expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants has been increasing steadily since 2021/22 and will continue to do so with development of the Adult Social Care online Portal, development of extended warranties and revised means testing for applicants. The Council's core programme for Disabled Facilities Grants in 2022/23 will therefore be £2.000m, an increase on the target of £1.474m set in 2021/22's capital programme. This will be fully funded from the block allocation of the Better Care Fund – Disabled Facilities Grant.
- 7.11 As mentioned in paragraph 2.2, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care has, under delegated authority, approved revised budgets up to a value of £1m for the Wider Social Care Programme and Community Equipment Stores funded from the Better Care Fund – Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A full list of approved Adults and Children's Social Care schemes can be found at Appendix A.

Updates to Highways Funding

- 7.12 Several updates to funding allocations for the Highways Capital Programme have been received since the initial block allocations were approved by Cabinet and Council in March and then further revised in June. The following updates are now presented for consideration and approval:
- 7.12.1 The LCRCA has provided revenue funding of £1.064m from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to support the delivery of the capital programme. This is to fund posts or support from the framework partner in the development and management of projects during the 5 years of the settlement. The details of how the funding will be expended to support the programme are being determined.

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- 7.12.2 The LCRCA previously approved an Outline Business Cases for both the Maritime Corridor and Southport Eastern access schemes and have invited the Council to develop both projects to Full Business Case (FBC). They have asked that the detailed design of both projects is undertaken prior to the FBC's being submitted. Consequently, they have provided funding from their pipeline development fund to enable the design and other necessary work to progress.
- 7.12.3 The Council has secured funding from a number of developers via the Section 106 process. This will help support a number of specific Highways capital projects. The most significant contribution will be towards the modification works to the junction of the A59 and Kenyon's Lane in Maghull.
- 7.12.4 A specific allocation of funding from the CRSTS has been identified for the funding of projects on the Key Route Network. The Grant Funding agreement, which will cover the entire 5-year programme, has yet to be received. The indicative allocation is £0.468m identified for spend in 2022-23 (note: this updates the estimate of £0.400m shown in paragraph 7.3). This is likely to be funding for works programmed for Marine Drive, with a contribution to the A59 cycleway and Kenyon's Lane project.
- 7.12.5 An allocation of funding has been confirmed from Tranche 3 of the Active travel Fund for £1.620m. This is to fund improvements to the A59 and the implementation of school streets proposals. The expectation is that the schemes will be committed in 2022/23, but not expended until 2023/24.
- 7.12.6 As mentioned in paragraph 7.4, authority has been delegated to Cabinet Member – Locality Services to assign funding to individual capital schemes up to £1m for the Highways block allocations reported above. The list of schemes for 2022/23 has been fully developed and will be presented to Cabinet Member for approval. A full list of the approved capital schemes will be presented on future reports to Cabinet.
- 7.12.7 It is also proposed to allocate an amount of the CRSTS funding to the Council's regular Highways Capital Maintenance budget for carriageway resurfacing and treatments.

Programme Funding

- 7.13 The table below shows how the capital programme will be funding in 2022/23:

Source	£m
Grants	30.034
Prudential Borrowing	7.940
Capital Receipts	2.193
Contributions (incl. Section 106)	2.609
Total Programme Funding	42.777

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

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

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2022/22 to 2024/25

Capital Project	Budget		
	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Adult Social Care			
New Directions Programme	390,000	-	-
Digitising Social Care	455,000	-	-
Sefton Carers Centre	30,000	-	-
Core DFG Programme	132,351	-	-
Double to Single Handed Care Equipment	150,000	-	-
Community Equipment Provision	300,000	-	-
ICT Development & Transformation	928,556	-	-
Occupational Therapy Support	603,774	-	-
Care Home Improvements	987,559	-	-
Changing Places	92,507	-	-
Retail Model within Health and Wellbeing Hubs	450,000	-	-
Extra Care Housing	-	750,000	750,000
Short Term Assessment Unit	860,000	860,000	860,000
Technology Enabled Care	420,806	13,750	-
Community Equipment Stores	250,000	100,000	-
Programme Support	166,625	50,000	-
Children's Social Care			
Support for Fostering Placements	100,000	100,000	-
Community Equipment – Children's	250,000	-	-
Springbrook Refurbishment	100,000	-	-
Communities			
Dunes Splashworld – Essential Repairs	463,133	101,874	-
Dunes Splashworld – Health and Safety Works	270,000	-	-
Orrell Mount Sports Hub	1,198,667	-	-
Libraries - Centres of Excellence	90,000	188,019	-
Section 106 Funded Projects	166,432	-	-
Corporate Resources			
Council Wide Essential Maintenance	1,051,028	818,833	-
STCC Essential Maintenance	54,650	-	-
Victoria Baths Essential Works	76,960	-	-
Bootle & Southport Town Hall Retrofit Energy Saving	29,950	-	-
Green Homes Grant Sustainable Warmth Schemes	4,438,882	-	-
ICT Transformation	493,281	-	-
Economic Growth & Housing			
Strategic Acquisitions - Bootle	17,620	-	-
Cambridge Road Centre Development	53,930	-	-
Crosby Lakeside Development	1,544,913	-	-
Town Centre Commission Bootle Canal Side	240,263	-	-

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Bootle Canal Side Business Plan	556,862		
Southport Market Redevelopment	47,335	-	-
Strategic Acquisitions - Ainsdale	90,600	836,423	-
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£	£
Marine Lake Events Centre	3,175,637	-	-
Enterprise Arcade	660,000	834,000	-
Transformations De Southport	2,000,000	750,000	-
Strand Business Plan	40,000	375,000	75,000
Housing Investment	33,960	-	-
Brownfield Fund for Housing Development	537,790	-	-
Social Housing Allocations Scheme	65,000	-	-
Southport Pier	321,822	-	-
Education Excellence			
Schools Programme	3,538,629	3,457,299	7,055
Planned Maintenance	197,617	-	-
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	535,143	-	-
Highways and Public Protection			
Transport Schemes	5,277,913	1,328,620	-
LED Street Lighting Upgrade	3,886,920	3,605,580	3,662,630
Locality Services			
Burials & Cremation Service – Vehicles & Equipment	47,713	-	-
Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management	1,504,248	1,656,926	1,306,000
Parks Schemes	110,426	102,989	-
Tree Planting Programme	134,505	19,769	19,769
Golf Driving Range Developments	290,268	-	-
Ainsdale Coastal Gateway	327,712	-	-
Crosby Marine Lake Improvements – Phase 1	30,339	-	-
Green Sefton – Plant & Machinery	131,152	-	-
Vehicle Replacement Programme	2,033,329	113,000	-
Wheeled Bins	345,000	-	-
TOTAL PROGRAMME	42,776,807	16,602,082	6,680,454

Agenda Item 7

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	22 September 2022
Subject:	Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 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; to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and to update on issues considered at previous meetings of the 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 further topic for a Working Group review; or wait until the completion of the recently established Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group;
- (3) consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) the update on matters considered at previous meetings of the Committee in relation to the procurement for the provision of enforcement agent services and the Elections Act 2022 be noted.

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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:

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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2022/23
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 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 last meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group.
- 2.3 The Committee is requested to consider whether a further Working Group should be selected; or wait until the completion of the recently established Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group.
- 2.4 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

2.5 **Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group**

At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group. The aim of the Working Group is 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 shape the future of the Council communicating with its communities.

Councillors Bradshaw, Byrom, Carlin and Robinson have agreed to serve on the Working Group.

At the time of preparation of this report the first meeting of the Working Group was being arranged. Updates on meetings of the Working Group will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

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

4.4 **Role**

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

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- 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 Waterfield 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 13 July 2022. The Committee considered the following items:

- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2022/23
- Verbal update from Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram
- Appointments of Scrutiny Members to the Audit and Governance Committee 2022/23
- LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-23
- Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group - Final Report 2021/22
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Corporate Plan 2021-24 - Q4 Performance Report 2021-22
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
- The Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy Engagement Proposals

4.10 The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 7 September 2022. At this meeting the Committee will consider items relating to:

- Portfolio Holder Update - Business Support
- Race Equality Programme
- Recommendations of the Improving Disability Employment Opportunities in the Liverpool City Region Task and Finish Group
- Work Programme Update

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

5. ITEMS CONSIDERED AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.1 Procurement for the Provision of Enforcement Agent Services

5.2 At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee the work programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year. This report also contained the latest Forward Plan showing anticipated matters for consideration by Cabinet that fell within the remit of the Committee. One such matter related to the procurement for the provision of enforcement agent services; and the Committee requested that enquiries be undertaken to provide further information on this issue.

5.3 A report on this matter was considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 28 July 2022. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided with a copy of this report by email on 2 August 2022. A link to the Cabinet meeting containing the report can be found below:

[Sefton Home](#)

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5.4 **Elections Act 2022**

At its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee also requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the impact of the Elections Act 2022 and the requirement for voters to produce photographic identification in polling stations. It is anticipated that a report will be submitted on this matter to the meeting to be held on 1 November 2022 and the Work Programme has been updated accordingly.

APPENDIX 1

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

	14 JUNE 22	13 SEPTEMBER 22	1 NOVEMBER 22	10 JANUARY 23	7 FEBRUARY 23 (BUDGET MEETING)	28 FEBRUARY 23
Cabinet Member Update Report - Paul Fraser	x	x	x	x		x
Work Programme - Update Paul Fraser	x	x	x	x		x
Service Operational Reports:						
New Ways of Working Dominic Ellis			x			
Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Stephan Van Arendsen/Diane Turner				x		
Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy Stephan Van Arendsen/Dom Ellis			x			
Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update Margaret Jones	x	x	x	x		x
Air Quality Monitoring - Peter Moore/Greg Martin				x		
“Tool-Kit” for Armed Forces Covenant - Shaun Pimblett				x		
Annual ICT Update Report (Performance of						x

APPENDIX 1

Agilisys) Helen Spreadbury						
Impact of the Elections Act 2022 and the requirement for voters to produce photographic identification in polling stations Neil Middlehurst			x			
Scrutiny Review Progress Reports:						
Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations - Paul Fraser			x			
Ethical Business Practices Working Group - Update on Recommendations - Paul Fraser				x		x
Financial Scrutiny:						
Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Financial Performance Monitoring - Stephan Van Arendsen		x	x	x	x	
Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Prudential Indicators - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Treasury Management Policy and Strategy - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	

APPENDIX 1

Capital Strategy 2023/24 and Future Years - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy – Update Position Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Robustness of the 2023/24 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – local Government Act 2003 – Section 25 - Stephan Van Arendsen					x	
Presentations						
Corporate Communications Update - Elena Lloyd				x		
Cloud Migration Update – Helen Spreadbury	x					
Update on Progress of LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy - Andrea Watts			x			

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APPENDIX 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

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

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

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

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APPENDIX 2

SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

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

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

APPENDIX 2

KEY QUESTIONS

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

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

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2022 - 31 JANUARY 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

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

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

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APPENDIX 3

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

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

NOTE:

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

Dwayne Johnson
Chief Executive

APPENDIX 3

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Land at Holgate Thornton	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk
Digital Inclusion Strategy	Helen Spreadbury helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk
Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – October Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247
Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – November Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Treasury Management Position to September 2022	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100
Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – December Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – January Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106

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APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Land at Holgate Thornton To seek approval to the terms and conditions provisionally agreed for the sale of the Council's freehold interest in the land for housing development			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Oct 2022 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 01/09/2022 to 06/10/2022. Reason: The off-site costs for the site allowed for in the Option Agreement have not yet been provided by the purchaser Company.			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Fully exempt			
Wards Affected	Park			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Councillors			
Method(s) of Consultation	Previous reports submitted for Asset Disposal and subsequent updates.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Land at Holgate Thornton			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Digital Inclusion Strategy To obtain Cabinet Member approval for the Digital Inclusion Strategy			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Oct 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Members of ELT and SLB and across key working groups as well as externally with key partners including the NHS, CCG, DWP, CVS and Liverpool City Region; Sefton Leadership Collaborative Multi Agency Working Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Consultation on the content of the Digital Inclusion Strategy has taken place both internally, with members of ELT and SLB and across key working groups as well as externally with key partners including the NHS, CCG, DWP, CVS and Liverpool City Region. In addition it was shared for comment at the Sefton Leadership Collaborative Multi Agency Working Group			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Digital Inclusion Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Helen Spreadbury helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – October Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Oct 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – October Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale Seek Cabinet approval to the terms and conditions for the disposal of the premises			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Oct 2022			
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			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Councillors as part of the above			
Method(s) of Consultation	Updates on disposal previously reported to Cabinet			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sale of Ainsdale ATC and the Meadows Ainsdale			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andy Bond andy.bond@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3247			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – November Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	3 Nov 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – November Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Treasury Management Position to September 2022 This report provides Members with a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 30th September 2022. This document is the Second report of the ongoing quarterly monitoring provided to Audit & Governance Committee and the mid-year report to Cabinet and Council, whose role it is to carry out scrutiny of treasury management policies and practices.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	3 Nov 2022 17 Nov 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	N/A			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Treasury Management Position to September 2022			
Contact Officer(s) details	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – December Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	1 Dec 2022			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial		Community Impact	
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – December Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – January Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council’s Framework for Change 2020, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Jan 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Framework for Change 2020 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2022/23 – January Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

**Cabinet Member Brief
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
(Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)
22nd September 2022**

Welfare Reform & Anti-Poverty Update

The Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Cabinet Member Reference Group met on 24th of August 2022. The following updates were received:

Updates from the Welfare Reform & Anti-Poverty Steering Group

Officers from Public Health provided an update from the Partnership Steering Group meeting held 24th August 2022.

The Cost of Living Crisis was discussed. The focus of the meeting was what actions can be taken by local agencies. There is an aim to enhance all local opportunities and collaboration. Sefton Councils' new landing page and handout were promoted, the webpage taking residents directly to a Cost of Living support page.

Members were updated on enhancing support via Community Warm Hubs. Community spaces are being surveyed, such as libraries and leisure centres, and how they can be enhanced as constructive spaces, for example providing cook and eat sessions, wellbeing activities.

Sefton CVS is conducting research on how voluntary sector partners might provide support, e.g., warm hubs, drop in for coffee, meals, advice etc.

The group collectively endorsed the importance of the research as sharing findings can support long-term planning and can also promote the wider work that Sefton Council and the NHS are providing.

NHS advised they have a 100-day challenge to discharge patients; this information will be useful for onward support.

Community Pantry Update

Cabinet Members received an update regarding the community pantry model in Sefton.

Recruitment has begun for a position in the sustainable affordable living program. This role is to investigate, coordinate and access resources to develop a stronger program going forward.

The Members were informed that St Leonard's has opened three pantries, however, are already having to make changes to meet demands including opening an extra day.

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Figures for the first three weeks of the summer food program have been analysed, so far, we have provided 2072 meals, giving a 40% increase from last year. Support is on the ground, however, more innovation and collaboration is needed with partners in order to maintain provision.

Childhood Poverty in Sefton

Cabinet Members received an update on the Childhood Poverty Strategy. Officers from Public Health presented a draft report of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy which has now been developed. It details how Child Poverty would be tackled in Sefton. It was advised that a data refresh update is already needed.

It was requested that Cabinet Members comment on accuracy, design, style, tone, and pace. It was noted that the draft has been peer-reviewed by members of the University College London Institute of Health Equity group and received positive responses. The Strategy has been presented to the Cheshire and Mersey Marmot group, it received positive comments on the partnership approach, and it is now seen as a blueprint for a regional approach.

Next steps: the final strategy will go to Cabinet for approval in October 2022. A formal launch is planned for October/November 2022.

Feedback from C&M Marmot work

Cabinet members were advised that the last Marmot meeting was devoted to the Sefton Childhood Poverty Strategy and how they can replicate Sefton's approach.

It was noted that going forward, performance monitoring of the Marmot indicators will need to be prioritised. The indicators have been increased from 6 to 8 priorities, and there are now 28 sub-indicators, discussions to be taken outside of the group and updated at next meeting.

Council Tax Energy Rebate

Cabinet Members received an update on the Energy Rebate Scheme. Payments of £150 to all households on bands A-D. In Sefton, there were almost 110,000 households that required payment. 109,464 households have now received the payment.

Members were made aware that there has been a discretionary scheme set up, £700,00 for appropriate relevant cases in houses from band E-H with a Council Tax reduction. Payments are still being processed and should be completed by end of September 2022.

ELAS Update

Cabinet Members received an update on ELAS performance for the Council's local welfare support scheme up to July 2022. It was reported that ELAS volumes are very high, but manageable from an operational perspective.

- End of July 4308 - double volume in the same period year before.
- Food vouchers 1336 - up 55% in the same period year before.
- Utility vouchers 2100 - 70% in the same period year before

Child Poverty and Children Entering Care

Cabinet members were made aware of The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) report and recent research exploring the link between poverty and entering care.

Poverty is associated with poorer outcomes for children, that is higher rates of overweight and obesity and an increased risk of entering care. Researchers have estimated that between 2015 and 2020 just over 8% of care entries nationally were linked to rising poverty.

Cabinet members noted the relationship with wider health and care issues associated with poverty.

Household Support Grant

Officers from communities updated on the Household Support Grant. It was highlighted that initial conversations with the DWP have taken place about Household Support Fund 3 (HSF3). This will run from October 2022 to March 2023. Funding allocation is yet to be confirmed, however, it has been noted that it will be similar to HSF2 allocations. Final guidance is due imminently.

Healthy Start Voucher Uptake

Cabinet members received an update on Healthy Start Voucher Uptake.

Uptake has increased from December 2021 at 55% to June 2022 at 67%. There are suggestions that uptake has increased further with access now being digital.

Healthy Start Champions are now front of house in Family Wellbeing Centres and maternity services are now back in Centres from September 2022. Early help staff hope this will further help promotion. Other ideas being considered are the inclusion of information in the child's red book.

Requests for Action

Cabinet Members requested that Period Poverty I to be discussed at the next meeting.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	22 September 2022
Subject:	Cabinet Member Report – June 2022 to August 2022		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report for the period June 2022 to August 2022 relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

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

Reasons for the Recommendation:

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

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

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(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Legal Implications:	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
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

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

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

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

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

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CABINET MEMBER REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) -		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	August 2022

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

Finance

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

The latest budget monitoring report will be presented to Cabinet and Council in September. This highlights the growing financial pressure that the Council is facing in 2022/2023, particularly in Children’s Social Care, with an additional pressure now included relating to the pay award offer. There is a remedial action plan proposed to meet 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. It should also be noted that the forecast pressures in Children’s Social Care may be worse given the number of high-cost cases and the potential for them to be extended beyond the current forecasts.

The implications on the Medium-Term Financial Plan will be assessed, in terms of the overall pressures and what is permanent or temporary, and proposals are currently being formulated to enable to the Council to set a robust and sustainable budget in 2023/2024.

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 15th December. However, although nearly all work has been finalised, the audit is still to be completed. This is mainly due to an emerging technical valuation issue that needs to be resolved at a national level – CIPFA consulted on a practical solution that would enable audits to be completed. However, the consultation was inconclusive, so no solution has been proposed – CIPFA plan to consult on the issue again in the near future. 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. There have been delays in producing the draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022, partly due to the issue with the 2020/2021 Statement of Accounts described above. The accounts will be published by the end of August 2022. Officers are meeting with our external auditors in early September to discuss their plans for the audit.

Customer Centric Services

The Service continues to manage high workloads, especially relating to Council Tax, with outstanding work volumes starting to reduce, albeit slowly. The priority over the last few months has been the extensive work required to make payments for the Energy Rebate Scheme announced by the Government in February 2022.

New staff recruited to the Contact Centre earlier this year to manage the peak of Energy Rebate calls are now being trained to handle a range of enquiries for other Council services to reduce customer delays. Staff in Revenues and Benefits continue to work extra hours at weekends to reduce work volumes.

Council Tax Energy Rebate

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The Council is administering two aspects of the Government's Energy Rebate Scheme to support households with the rising costs of energy bills, i.e., the Council Tax Energy Rebate and a discretionary Energy Rebate fund.

The Council Tax Energy Rebate, i.e., a one-off £150.00 payment, has been made to approximately 109,000 households in the borough in Council Tax bands A-D to bring this part of the Government's scheme to an end.

A Discretionary Scheme has been approved by Cabinet. Software has been installed and tested and it is expected that discretionary payments will commence from the end of August. A significant part of the Discretionary Fund will be awarded directly to specific targeted groups, with no requirement for an application process. These recipients will also receive a letter of notification advising of the payment and for a small number of these cases, bank details will be required for payment to be made into a nominated bank account.

The Customer Services team continues to support digitally excluded customers who need to provide bank details to receive payment under the Scheme, via the Contact Centre and the One Stop Shop service in Bootle and The Atkinson, Southport. A comprehensive set of frequently asked questions and answers is available on the Council's website, is reviewed, and updated regularly. Press releases and social media have also been used to keep residents as up to date as possible.

Customer Services

The Contact Centre continues to handle a high volume of telephone calls, e-mail enquiries and social media contact. Priority service continues to be provided for customers calling with Social Care and ELAS enquiries.

Energy Rebate telephone enquiries have significantly reduced as households have received their payment. Enquiries about bin collections were high during June and July whilst there was disruption with the service. There was also an increase in telephone calls for Highways which were primarily due to the burst water main in the Litherland area and the major gas leak in Bootle.

Contact by social media continues to increase with more customers using the digital contact options that are available, however it is apparent that some residents prefer to deal with the Council in person at the One Stop Shops: - in July 2022, 2,303 customers attended Bootle One Stop Shop, this included 409 taxi drivers who were offered an appointment to discuss their licence application. A further 590 appointments were made for customers with a Council Tax, ELAS or Benefits enquiry. The remaining 1,304 customers were seeking general council-related advice at reception.

It is proposed for customer drop-ins to be reinstated on specific days at Bootle One Stop Shop from mid-August, ensuring customers requiring financial support can be seen immediately and without an appointment.

There were 518 customers who attended the Atkinson in Southport, this included 146 customers who were offered an appointment to discuss their Council Tax, ELAS or Benefits enquiry. There were a further 372 customers seeking general council related advice at reception, such as Blue Badges and Parking.

Taxi-Licensing

Progress with Taxi Licensing continues to be excellent, with the licensing of vehicle plates being processed within 48-hours of being received. This has been acknowledged by trade representative and they have complimented the speedy turnaround and efficiency of the service.

With Sefton's primary training provider Antrec closing for business on 31st July 2022, all their outstanding 'new driver applications' were processed at Bootle One Stop Shop before they closed. New driver applications that have been received by e-mail are now starting to be processed, with drivers invited to Bootle One Stop Shop for an appointment if they have submitted all the required evidence to be licenced. If a knowledge test is required, this will also be offered at Bootle One Stop Shop.

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Unfortunately, there remain some technical issues with scanners and printers at the Atkinson that will need to be resolved before the Taxi Licensing service can be reinstated from that location. Further site visits are required, however once up and running, it is proposed that a service will be offered every Tuesday and Thursday. Arrangements will be closely monitored, and the number of days the service is offered may increase should there be an increase in customer demand.

With the new staff that have been recruited now integrating extremely well within the team, positive progress continues to be made. Following discussions with Council representatives from Licensing, the customer drop-in facility for certain elements of the service is likely to be reinstated from 5th September 2022. This is another service improvement that will be widely appreciated by all key stakeholders of Taxi Licensing.

Risk and Audit

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

- Operators Licence,
- Annual Governance Statement,
- Corporate Governance Review
- Beach Car Parking,
- Golf Income,
- Performance Management,
- Grants assurance and a review of number of Schools.
- Climate Change
- Risk Management

We have successfully recruited to the first of two permanent Principal Auditors positions with the staff member starting in July 2022. We are currently advertising for the second position and hope to have a second candidate in post shortly.

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

- We are looking at the procurement 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.
- We are currently working on the insurance renewal which we expect to be challenging from a cost perspective as the increase in inflation in the construction industry is feeding through into claims costs and subsequently insurance premiums. 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 responsibilities. Other days have been used to look at the Council's Highways Winter Service Policy.
- 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.
- We are currently ensuring that outstanding risk actions from the Risk Improvement Surveys completed by the material damage insurer have been implemented which will help the renewal in 2022.

The **Risk and Resilience Team**. The Emergency Planning focus during the previous quarter was on a gas leak, water mains burst in Litherland and the heatwave during July.

Business Continuity we are reviewing the current Service Area Business Continuity Plans with the teams and are looking to undertake another activation test of the BC plans. We are currently exploring a proposed exercise of the Council's BC arrangements in October/ November 2022

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The **Risk and Resilience Team** are currently working on the Council's Risk Appetite which is due which is due to complete in October 2022 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
- Development of Severe Weather Protocol

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.

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.
- Undertaking a planned review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and completing the Annual Health and Safety report.
- Focus on improving the accuracy of incident reporting across the Council will continue to ensure incidents of threatening and abusive behaviours towards staff are reported.
- Continue to deliver a health and safety management audit and inspection regime across the Council, to schools with a Service Level Agreement with the Council and those schools where the Council retains responsibility for the health and safety as the employer. This will provide assurance that health and safety management systems are suitable and effective.

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 of Children's Services 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, we continue to work through these to complete the programme of work, once completed the focus will move onto equipping the remaining floors.

The main phase of Cloud Migration project is now completed with 79 servers, (with associated applications) along with 20 additional standalone databases now located in the Azure Cloud, the final phase will include the migration of the Liquid Logic system to its new environment (which is a further 11 servers), planned for September and the upgrade and migration of the libraries Net loans system (1 additional server), which is being arranged with the supplier. Work is now focused on to the remaining on premise Data Centre Rationalisation and rightsizing, ready for an eventual move of the Data Centre to Bootle Town Hall.

Cloud Telephony deployment is now completed with number porting from the Virgin Contract to 8x8 due to take place in two phases, August and September.

Further deployment of the new CXP solution is now planned for the forthcoming period. 9 processes are now live, with a further 8 due to go-live early September. Clinical Waste and Bins Not Emptied processes are also expected to go-live in September subject to senior management and Contact Centre sign-off. Work on the transfer of the remaining 6 legacy processes will continue over the next few months.

Work continues on the rolling website improvement programme. Quotes have been received from external web agencies for further improvements to wwwPage76uk and this work is expected to be

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commissioned in early September. In addition, quotes have been requested for the upgrade of the Umbraco web content management system. 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 continues and is expected to complete by the end of September.

Procurement activity continues to be a challenge, a new procurement forward plan has been developed to take account of the reduce resource. However the team is pleased to report that we have now secured the support of a Procurement Consultant via a matrix recruitment, and he starts with the Council in September for a six month period, whilst we explore further options for permanent recruitment. Procurement is now completed for Managed Print, with an award to Canon, Xerox devices will be replaced from September 2022. Procurement is well underway for Corporate Connectivity, with evaluators now reviewing the bids received, the next projects will include ESP for Leisure and the Mobile Phones Contract which is up for renewal.

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. Recently Sefton commissioned Microsoft to complete a Cyber Security Assessment, our result was positive with Sefton scoring above average based on the scores of other local authorities assessed however a full action plan is now in development to work through the improvements recommended. In addition the LGA will be completing a Cyber 360 in October this year, the results of which will also feed into our continuous Cyber Security improvement plan.

Property Services

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

Asset Management / FM

- Ongoing work to deliver Phase 1 Asset Disposals.
- Negotiations with Landlord of Magdalen House for the re gear of the Lease complete.
- Asset records input and liaison with Building Maintenance colleagues for new (property based) IT system in support of Corporate Landlord Implementation Ongoing.
- New Strategic Asset Manager appointed.
- Agreement of terms and reporting for Lease of various assets ongoing.
- Reoccupation of Magdalen House to accommodate future ways of working 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 Landlord Implementation.
- Managing remedial works scheme
- Formulated phase 1 essential maintenance delivery plan for corporate buildings.
- 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 s

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- Provide support to other teams on Asset Disposal, Building Maintenance, Asset Management, Energy and Statutory Compliance colleagues.
- Provide support for new ways of working agile model proposal.

Energy Management

- 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.
- Local Authority Delivery of Green homes Grant (LAD, GHG) – Providing insulation to privately owned properties (worst/not insulated & for poorest residents)
- Works to upgrade roof insulation and improve glazing at Southport and Bootle Town Halls is complete apart from works to restore/insulate the BTH ballroom window will be completed by August 2022.
- A programme of work to support schools (after large energy price rises) is being developed to be delivered this year.
- Feasibility Study for a replacement Wind turbine at Southport Eco Centre is ongoing. Sefton officers are working on providing a long land lease and power purchase agreement to support the project.

Legal Services

Democratic Services Team – Overview

- All meetings are now being held in person.
- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)**
The first meeting of the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year was held on 21 June 2022. A summary of the items considered at the meeting is provided below.

Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups - Update Report

The Committee considered the usual update from the Sefton CCGs, including the impact of the introduction of the Integrated Care System in Cheshire and Merseyside and how this would affect reporting to Overview and Scrutiny. The Committee agreed to consider an informal briefing session on GP practices and requested up-to-date figures for the take-up of the covid vaccine across the Borough.

Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups – Health Provider Performance Dashboard

The Committee considered data on key performance areas for local Hospital NHS Trusts, the GP extended access scheme and local ambulance response times. Responses for the Friends and Family Test were also provided. Members requested up-to-date figures for the waiting times for Mental Health – IAPT; and paid tribute to Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for the Sefton CCGs, as it was Fiona's final meeting of the Committee before retirement.

Public Health Outcomes Framework

The Committee received the report of the Director of Public Health that provided an update on the Public Health Outcomes Framework and discussed issues of health inequalities.

Cabinet Member Reports

The Committee considered and noted the most recent update report from the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care, whose portfolio fell within the remit of the Committee.

Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee agreed its Work Programme for 2022/23; and noted the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the progress made on the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (Hyper-Acute Services) and the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee – Liverpool University Hospitals University Foundation Trust (LUFT), and the recent activities undertaken by Healthwatch Sefton. Progress made to date on the recommendations made by the former Mental Health Issues Working Group, was also noted.

Rather than establish a traditional working group during 2022/23, it was agreed that all Members of the Committee would be invited to participate in informal briefing sessions, and consideration be given to the suggestions raised. At the time of drafting this report, Officers are holding discussions regarding the possibility of holding informal briefing sessions on GP practices, to be delivered by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside – Sefton (formerly the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups); and health inequalities, to be delivered by the Public Health Team.

Next Meeting of the Committee – 6 September 2022

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 6 September 2022 and it is anticipated that the meeting will consider the following reports/presentations in the approved Work Programme:

- Update on Implementation of Mental Health Services Working Group Recommendations;
 - Domestic Abuse; and
 - Sefton Integrated Care Partnership - Development
- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)**
The first meeting of the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year was held on 14 June 2022. Provided below is a summary of the items

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Cloud First Strategy - a presentation that provided a security update on the Cloud Migration. Members were advised that a Cloud First Strategy was required because Sefton's ICT Infrastructure was aging and required significant investment to ensure it could scale up to meet increasing demands for ICT resource and capacity.

Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee approved its Work Programme for 2022/23; and selected Corporate Communications and Covid-19 as a topic for review by a Working Group.

From a pre-scrutiny perspective the Committee sought further information on the Procurement for the Provision of Enforcement Agent Services.

Cabinet Member Report - March 2022 to June 2022

The Committee sought further information at future meetings on the topics of:

The Member Development Programme - The Workforce Learning and Development Manager has been invited to attend the Committee to discuss Members' training and development.

The Elections Act 2022 and the requirement of photographic identification in polling stations; and it was agreed that the impact of the legislation could be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Next Meeting of the Committee – 13 September 2022

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 13 September 2022. It is anticipated that the meeting will consider the following reports/presentations in the approved Work Programme:

- New Ways of Working
- Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring
- Financial Performance Monitoring

Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group

As mentioned above, the Committee selected a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 as topic for review by a Working Group. Councillors Bradshaw, Byrom, Carlin and Robinson have agreed to serve on the Working Group. The first meeting of the Working Group will take place on 25 August 2022. It has been agreed that Working Group meetings will be held remotely. Updates will be provided as part of the next Cabinet Member update report.

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

The first meeting of the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year was held on 28 June 2022. The meeting was Chaired for the first time by Councillor Dowd. Provided below is a summary of the items considered at the meeting:

Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Pilot – a report was considered that provided an overview of the Pilot; and indicated that one of the actions within Sefton's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 was to undertake a strategic review of temporary accommodation in Sefton to ensure that the provision was suitable.

The Committee requested the Head of Economic Growth and Housing to request Riverside Housing to compile feedback from communities in which their properties associated with the pilot were located for circulation to Members.

Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee approved its Work Programme for 2022/23; and agreed a fresh approach to the operation of the Committee during the year. The new approach will see two additional informal meetings to be held:

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- The week commencing 10 October 2022 to focus on Locality Services and to consider an update on the Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services and the Green Sefton 2021/2022 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2022/23; and
- The week commencing 6 February 2023 to focus on Housing and to consider reports on Leasehold House Sales and an update on the operation of Sandway Homes.

This new proposal would obviate the need for the Committee to establish Working Groups as short reviews of services could be undertaken by all Members at informal meetings.

Cabinet Member Report - March 2022 to June 2022

As is the usual practice at each meeting, the Committee considered Cabinet Member reports relating to the Communities and Housing, Health and Wellbeing; Locality Services, Planning and Building Control and Regeneration and Skills portfolios.

Next Meeting of the Committee – 20 September 2022

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 20 September 2022. It is anticipated that the meeting will consider the following reports/presentations in the approved Work Programme:

- Domestic Abuse report
 - Southport Market Update
 - Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Final Report – Update on Recommendations
 - Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations
- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)**
The first meeting of the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year was held on 21 June 2022. A summary of the items considered at the meeting is provided below.

Ofsted Report and Improvement Plan

The Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education provided a verbal update on the above matter, and the Committee agreed that the Improvement Plan should be submitted to a Special meeting of the Committee prior to its submission to Ofsted; and the Improvement Advisor who chairs the Improvement Board should be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee.

At the time of drafting this report a confidential informal briefing for Members of the Committee is scheduled to take place during mid-August 2022, in respect of the Sefton Children's Improvement Plan.

Ofsted Inspection Reports

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education updating on recent Ofsted Inspection Reports and the work of the School Improvement Team. It was agreed that the Head of Education would be requested to submit a report of the event with Headteachers of Catholic High Schools to be held on 6 July 2022, particularly regarding views on academisation and the Archdiocese; and that a letter would be forwarded to the representatives of the Diocese and Archdiocese on the Committee, requesting them to attend meetings.

Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group - Final Report

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer presenting formally the Final Report of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group and Councillor Spencer, Lead Member, introduced the Final Report. The Committee agreed the Final Report and recommended that the Cabinet and the Council be to approve the recommendations.

Cabinet Member Reports

The Committee considered the most recent update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care, and the Cabinet Member – Education, whose portfolios fell within the remit of the Committee. It was agreed that the Head of Children's Social Care be requested to submit a report on recruitment and support for newly qualified social workers to the Committee in 6 months' time;

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and that information regarding attendance and sanctions be provided, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee agreed its Work Programme for 2022/23; and noted the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group; the latest Key Decision Forward Plan; and the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group will be considered further at the next meeting. All Members of the Committee were invited to participate in informal briefing sessions, to include the topics of the Leeds Family Values and the Sunderland model; and the MacAlister Review.

Next Meeting of the Committee – 27 September 2022

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 27 September 2022 and it is anticipated that the meeting will consider the following reports/presentations in the approved Work Programme:

- Update on Ofsted Report and Improvement Plan;
- Children's Social Care Improvement Journey;
- Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2021-2025 – Presentation of Strategy;
- Domestic Abuse; and
- Sefton Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – Update.

Members will also be asked to consider the establishment of a working group to review children's health services in Sefton, as part of the Children's Improvement Plan.

• **School Appeals**

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

School admission appeals continue to be busy for the Clerk to the Education Appeal Panel.

Following the allocation of secondary school places on 1 March and primary school places on 19 April the school admission appeal 'transition' period commenced in May. This period is the busiest time of year for school admission appeals and presents very many challenges for the team in terms of time, resources, and general logistics. Hearings commenced on 10 May and were scheduled to conclude on 19 July 2022. However, following the submission of a number of late appeals, there will be 3 secondary school and 4 primary school appeals heard during September. During this period, 288 appeals for 10 High Schools and 18 Primary Schools were/will be organised, administered and clerked. In addition to this figure, during the same period 72 'in-year' appeals were/will be held, bringing the overall figure for school admission May to September to 370. This figure might increase due to requests from the Archdiocese.

The Independent Review Panel, which consider appeals against school permanent exclusion, considered two exclusions in February and May.

Legislation that enabled school appeals to be heard remotely brought in under Covid rules. Initially this change was due to last until 30 September 2022. However, following consultation, the changes to school appeals have been made permanent and they will continue to be held remotely. The arrangements proved popular with Panel members and officers with virtually no negative feedback from parents/guardians.

• **Civic & Mayoral**

Following Cllr Carragher's installation as Mayor of Sefton for a second term in May, work has already begun on fundraising activities for the Mayor's Charity Fund, we are currently planning a Charity Quiz Night; there will be a World Cup Sweepstake for staff to take part in; a possible 80s themed Charity Night in late January and finally the Mayor's Gala Charity Ball which will take place on Saturday 1st April 2023.

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On Monday 1st August, the Mayor, along with a Deputy Lord Lieutenant planted a tree to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Year as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Campaign, the tree was planted in Runnells Lane Park in Thornton to coincide with a recent park refurbishment that has taken place there.

On Sunday 11th September the Mayor will be hosting her Civic Sunday Service at St William of York Church, Thornton. Planning is well underway for this event, the service will start at 9.30am, Mayor's from other Merseyside Borough's along with the High Sheriff will be in attendance at this event.

• Member Development

1. Member Development Programme

The Member Development Programme 2022-2023 is now well underway with Members being invited to attend Courses listed in the Member Development Handbook. Courses are held in a variety of formats, namely, E-learning; remotely via Microsoft Teams; and face-to-face. Some of the Teams and face to face sessions are provided at a number of alternative dates and times of the day to give Members plenty of opportunity to attend (e.g. Corporate Parenting and Accessible Information Awareness).

Member attendance at sessions is notified to the Corporate Learning Centre (CLC) and added to Members' learning records.

Members can access their individual learning records of courses attended by logging onto the CLC Me-Learning website. Members are encouraged to complete course evaluation feedback forms at the end of each session and subsequent sessions adapted accordingly if required.

An update on courses run so far this year is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Member Development Steering Group

Following Council approval on 22 April 2022, the Cabinet Member Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services approval was given on 19 August 2022 for the establishment of a Member Development Steering Group comprising herself as Chair and up to 9 Members to be Member Development Champions (one to three members) from each of the respective political groups
Decision - Establishment of a Member Development Steering Group

Accordingly, the respective political group leaders have been emailed requesting nominations for one to three members of their group to be Member Development Champions/Members of the Steering Group. No responses have been received so far, but reminders will be sent to those who still haven't responded after the summer holiday period.

Cabinet Member approval was also given for the Steering Group Terms of Reference as detailed below:

- To formulate a strategy designed to meet the training and development needs of all Elected Members.
- To create an awareness amongst Elected Members of the training and learning opportunities available.
- To gain commitment from all Members to their training and development needs.
- To develop a training plan based on an analysis of Members' needs and which reflects the needs and priorities of the Council as set out in the 2030 Vision and Council's Core Purpose.
- To co-ordinate the work to achieve accreditation under the North-West Charter on Elected Member Development.
- To review and evaluate the effectiveness of Member training.

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- To ensure all new Members are inducted into the work of the Council and their role as a Councillor.

Cabinet Member approval was also given for the following Officers to support the Member Development Steering Group:

- Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (Lead)
- The Democratic Services Manager
- Democratic Services Officer (Member Development and Committee administration and minutes)
- Workforce Learning and Development Officer

3. North-West Development Charter

It is proposed to work towards Sefton's achievement of the North-West Development Charter and the Member Development Steering Group will take an active role in this.

The North-West Member Development Charter will provide an established framework to help the Council undertake a self-assessment to develop and review good practice in relation to Member Development.

Member Development Courses Update - 25 May to 23 August 2022

Course Title	Date(s)	Format	Nos completed/attended	Comments
Annual Planning Committee Training Mandatory for Committee Members and Substitutes	25/5/22 + Mop-up sessions	Face to Face Teams	15 Members 13 Subs 3 non-Committee Members	All of the Members and 13 of the Substitutes have now received mandatory training. The remaining 2 substitutes have yet to be appointed to the Planning Committee and will receive mop-up training via Teams once their appointment is approved by Council on 15 September 2022.
Overview and Scrutiny Training	26/5/22	Teams	20 Members and Substitute O&S Committee Members	Proposed that this course will be mandatory for Members and Substitutes from 2023 onwards. This was the only course offered by an external provider (Centre for Government Scrutiny – CfGS - Cost: £800)
L&R training (Mandatory for new Members of L&R Committee)	31/5/22	Teams	9 (5 of whom were new Members)	Proposed to hold this session face-to-face next year
Health Improvement and Prevention	15/6/22	Teams	19	The session was provided jointly by the Local Government Association (at no cost to the authority) and Sefton's Public Health Team. Proposed to hold this course face-to-face next year in the afternoon (rather than morning).
Accessible Information Awareness	21/6/22	Teams	6	This course was provided on a number of dates in 2021-22. To date 35 Councillors have attended. It is due to run again on 5/10/22
Corporate Parenting (Mandatory)	12/7/22	Teams	14	This course was provided on a number of dates in 2021-2022 when 45 Councillors attended. This course was provided on a number of dates in 2021-2022 when 45 Councillors attended. It is due to run again on 5 Nov 2022, 24 Jan 2023 and 1 Feb 2023.

Course Title	Date(s)	Format	Nos Completed/attended	Comments
Getting Started on Social Media – Guidance for Councillors	22/07/22	Face to Face	N/A	This course was cancelled due to the presenter testing positive for Covid. It will be rescheduled in due course. In the meantime, Members have been invited to attend one-to-one sessions if required.
Information & Compliance (Mandatory)	Once a year	E-learning	28 so far this year	Reminders are sent to Councillors by the CLC each year.
Safeguarding Adults Awareness (Mandatory)	Recommended completion date 29/07/22	E-learning	12 in 2021 3 in 2022 15 total	It is proposed that Members will be required to repeat the training every three years.
Safeguarding Children & Young People Awareness (Mandatory)	Recommended completion date 29/07/22	E-learning	11 in 2021 5 in 2022 16 total	It is proposed that Members will be required to repeat the training every three years.
Equality and Diversity Awareness (Mandatory)	Recommended completion date 30/09/22	E-learning	5 in 2021 1 in 2022	Council approval was given on 22 April 2022 for this course to be mandatory It is proposed that Members will be required to repeat the training every three years.

Electoral Services

Annual Canvass of the Register of Electors

The annual canvass to update the register of electors is underway and initial contact has been made with the 130,500 residential properties on our register database. Work will continue through the autumn months to update the register with those areas with substantial new developments being targeted as well as promoting electoral registration with young people. The new 2023 Register of Electors will be published on the 1 December 2022.

Linacre Ward

Following the passing of Councillor Gordon Friel, there is a vacancy for the office of Councillor in Linacre Ward. The Returning Officer has now published a Notice of Vacancy. A by-election will be held if the Returning Officer receives a request from two local government electors from within the area of Sefton. If no requests are received, then the vacancy will be filled at the next round of local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Elections Act 2022

Progress of the Elections Act 2022 has been relatively slow, despite a huge amount of work being undertaken to develop policy to introduce each new element of the Act. This was also impacted by Ministerial changes. The new Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities is The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP with strategic oversight of the Department's business. The Minister of State at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for London: Paul Scully MP with responsibility for the Electoral Integrity Programme.

Ministers have made some key decisions which are summarised below:

1. Voter identification implementation has been moved from December 2022 to January 2023. The policy will be in place for scheduled polls in May 2023 and the voter card application service is expected to go live in January 2023.
2. Postal vote handling and secrecy measures will now be implemented after the May 2023 polls. They will most likely come into force in Autumn 2023.
3. The voter card, or electoral identification document, could be an A4 paper-based document with inherent security features, such as watermarks and holograms.
4. The voter card application deadline will be six working days ahead of a poll. This will enable central production and delivery management, removing pressure on local authorities in the immediate lead-up to a poll.
5. Electoral Registration Officers will be able to appoint an emergency proxy up until 5pm on polling day for electors whose photo ID is no longer available to them after the application deadline (in the case of their voter id being lost or destroyed).

The delay in pushing back the implementation of Voter ID to January 2023 will have a significant impact on preparations for the May 2024 elections as its introduction will coincide with other key time events in the run up to the elections.

A Voter ID card will only be required if electors don't hold requisite means of photographic identification. Further details will emerge once secondary legislation is in place and guidance issued on implementation of this part of the Act.

Other measures which will be introduced:

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 of electors someone can act as a proxy for – May 2024

Boundary Reviews

The Boundary Commission for England have now confirmed that an electoral review of Sefton will take place starting in March 2023

It is nearly 20 years since our last review, which culminated in all-out elections in 2004. The outcome of the review will be the Commission recommending to government the number of councillors we have and the number and geographical make-up of the wards in the borough.

The Commissioners will consider the warding arrangements in the borough based on the principles of equality of electors, community identity and the effectiveness and convenience of local government.

Interestingly, unlike parliamentary reviews which are based on factual evidence from an earlier point in time, they will base their recommendations on the estimated borough population in 2029.

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The process will start in March 2023 with final recommendations going to government in April 2024 in time for all-out elections in 2026 (we have a fallow year in 2025).

The Boundary Commissioners will brief all Members on 15th September 2022 via a Teams meeting.

The Council have recently received a request from Thornton Parish Council to undertake a Community Governance Review to consider proposals to extend the existing parish boundaries. In light of the Boundary Commission undertaking a review of Sefton, Thornton Parish Council have been advised that their request and any similar requests to create new parish or amend existing boundaries will be postponed until the Boundary Commission final recommendations have been agreed and actioned.

The Parliamentary Boundary Review is still scheduled to be completed in July 2023. The next Parliamentary General Election must be called no later than December 2024.

Legal Services

- **Children and Social Care Team**

The Children's and Social Care Team have worked through a very difficult period for the client departments and continues to face unprecedented levels of demand on the service. The impact of the pandemic has brought increased pressures and there has been a significant rise in court proceedings which has been a very challenging time for the team. Nationally there has been a significant and sustained rise in children being deemed at risk during Covid and Sefton have had a rise in care proceedings during this period which together with cases not being able to be concluded due to Covid restrictions has brought increased workloads for the team. There also continues to be a rise in cases with an international element.

- **Contracts**

The team remains extremely busy working, supporting across the entire spectrum of Council departments and services. The team continues to play a key role in advising on and steering the structuring of the Council's major projects under the Growth Programme, in particular the MLEC project, other development projects in Southport, the continuing transformation of the CLAC and the various Bootle regeneration projects. We also continue to advise on a number of long-running projects in which difficulties/disputes have arisen e.g. removal of the non-performing contractor on CLAC, the fallout from VIAM's insolvency and its impact on the delivery of highways work, ongoing negotiations around the Crosby Leisure PFI project, delivery of improvement works relating to the Southport Business Park/housing, etc. We have provided support in terms of governance to address historic practices of service areas commissioning services based on informal, undocumented arrangements.

The team continues to be heavily involved in advising on the Council's commercialisation ventures including initiatives, and the nuanced issues around how the Council interacts with its wholly-owned companies such as SHOL, Sandway, SND and advising on the pros and cons of different commercialisation options. The team is also advising on the Council's initiatives to re-enter the council housing market including potential grant funding from Homes England and other housing support programmes, and on the subsidy control aspects of many funding schemes including the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda.

The after-effects of Covid pandemic continues to impact the Council's procurement and contracting activity which Legal Contracts supports, including ongoing variations reacting to the pandemic, extensions of existing contracts to endure service continuity in a sub-optimal market for fresh procurement) and numerous post-Covid recovery schemes particularly around social care provision, work restart schemes, mental health schemes, etc.

Brexit also continues to have a transformative effect on the Council's contracting and procurement activity and Legal Contracts continues to provide proactive advice around forthcoming changes to the UK's public procurement regime (both the general regime, and the proposals for a bespoke health and social care regime) and new subsidy control (formerly state aid).

- **Prosecutions and Regulation**

The Litigation and Regulatory team continues to be busy working across a range of prosecution, regulation and compliance issues supporting a range of Council functions. Highlights include: the

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team have represented the council in a taxi appeal at Sefton Magistrates court and obtained a warrant under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 in order to investigate the state of a property; the debt recovery team have now secured a legal charge on a property in relation to a debt of £73K that dates back to 2004; and recovered an historic nursing home debt of £16,477.12.

The team also provides employment law advice on a range of day to day and strategic matters for both the Council and the schools in the Borough. The team also have conduct of all of the Council's employment tribunal cases and a broad range of cases for schools under service level agreements. The team has been providing strategic support on high profile employment work including recruitment issues and incentives in Children's Services and a proposal to apply for immigration sponsorship licenses for overseas social workers.

- **Property and Planning**

The property team has been very busy over the summer; with some significant matters concluding such as the re-gear of the Magdalen House lease. Planning matters also continue having recently concluded the full day appeal of the SAFE, St Mary's Complex, Waverley Street, Bootle development.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Operational Issues

Advice and support are provided to all service areas regarding employment/staffing matters. Work continues in Children's Social Care and a number of key recruitments have taken place as well as guidance on staffing matters in order to help workforce improvements. The Personnel team has formed a distinct Business Support Unit which is providing support on a number of operational and HR related matters. Work in relation to Children's Social Care is providing a challenge to some other resources.

There is still an impact on service provision relative to the Coronavirus pandemic, but this is much less than in previous reports.

Arrangements are continuing with regard to a planned return to work in accordance with the advice and guidance from the Health and Safety team and risk assessments are being undertaken in this regard. Most staff are continuing to work from home with agile working at office sites as required.

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 can be 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. The team members have been heavily involved in the project of implementing the new iTrent Payroll and HR system. The Managers Self Service (MSS) module was rolled out in April 22 to include Children's services following a full review of the CS structure, and consequently managers should be able to access all their direct reports.

The Establishment Control deal with all requests in relation to the release of vacancies, changes of hours, temporary arrangements. These changes are made to ensure correct payments are made, hierarchical

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organisational structures are appropriate and operational processes are effectively maintained. A review of the EC forms used by managers is underway and a revised suite of forms and guidance will be available shortly.

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.

Work with colleagues from ICT to implement the required linkage between the JE database and the iTrent system is 90% completed and work is ongoing with some minor anomalies.

Officers are involved with Employment Tribunal claims (approx. 580) relative to employees seeking backdating of amendments to Term Time Only salary calculations. The claims have been stayed pending a recent Court of Appeal case and the stay is now lifted.

Within the Policy unit the officers undertake regular reviews of policy, procedures and guidance and introduce new policies as required in line with current legislation. They are 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.

Transactional HR Payroll & Pension (THRP) Services

THRP are now live in iTrent

There are still issues Monthly Data Collection (MDC) for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which we are working with MHR and Merseyside Pension Fund to resolve. The last file to be sent was for April 2022.

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

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.

Employee Self Service (ESS) has been rolled out to all Sefton employees, for viewing of payslips and to amend address, bank details etc. and paper payslips and P60s have been produced for staff who are unable to access the Internet.

Claiming expenses via ESS and approved via Manager Self Service (MSS) is now live and being promoted to staff to use.

The team have now completed, Year End Processing (P60s etc), Teachers End of Year Certificates and NHS annual Pension returns.

Teachers Pensions Monthly data collection (MDC) move to Monthly Contribution Reconciliation (MCR) from 1st April 2022 has been delayed until later in the year and a further delay has been requested as the iTrent software has several known issues.

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The Local Government pay award from 1st April 2022 is still to be agreed.

The Youth Pay Award from 1st September 2021 will be paid in August 2022 pay.

Occupational Health

Health Unit

During May, June and July 2022, a total of 184 referrals for SMBC employees were made to the Health Unit. This is a decrease of 7.54% when compared to the same period in the previous 12 months in which there were 199 referrals.

Referrals during this latest period included Education Excellence (52.72%), Locality Services (19.02%), and Adult Social Care (8.15%). As usual the main reasons were stress and mental health related (45.65%), chronic medical illness (23.37%) and musculoskeletal (15.22%).

As previously advised face to face physiotherapy sessions have resumed and have been welcomed by the employees who have accessed these.

Annual school crossing patrol medicals are currently being carried out face to face for the first time since 2019. The SCP Officers are also extremely receptive to these.

The Unit will continue to gradually increase face to face services, as risk assessments allow.

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.

There are plans to recruit two Occupational Therapy (OT) trainees from September 2022 to join the **Level 6 Occupational Therapy Degree** in March 2023. The degree will take 4 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:

- **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 153 Sefton Council and schools' staff, an increase of 7 since the previous report (May 2022).
- **Training Needs Analysis / Performance Development Review** – the PDR cycle for 2022/23 begins 1st September 2022. To support this year's process, we are producing an online survey to capture staff L&D needs and requirements. To support the PDR, we are producing an online reporting tool to capture the total number of PDR returns by service area.
- **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. Sefton was allocated 225 places for the 1st phase of the training to commence October 2022, this will include a cross section of middle managers and hard to reach groups.
- **Corporate Induction** eLearning goes live on Friday 19th August. The eLearning will be for new starters joining the organisation and including: Module 1 provides an overview of the

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landscape and the people of Sefton; Module 2 includes the services provided by the Council and Module 3 provides information that supports employees initial period with the Council e.g., a range of services and resources available for new starters.

Workforce/Organisational Development

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

The current priority is supporting the senior management team to roll out a training programme to support the implementation of the Leeds Family Valued Model. This includes:

- **Relational Leadership Management Programme** to discuss and reflect on practice and management issues, and how to progress their own and their team members' understanding and application of a restorative practice approach.
- **Core Components for Effective Team Leadership** - Provides opportunities to focus on particular themes, which highlights findings from Ofsted reports, audits, case reviews and research continuously highlight as areas for improvement.
- **Restorative Practice Awareness / Principles into Practice** – this will introduce the main features of Restorative Practice and further develop restorative approaches in key areas of practice.
- **A series of Practitioner Briefings / Practice Forums** – provides opportunities to explore a specific piece of research or practice in depth e.g., Reimagining Child Welfare. Values and Principles and using Language.
- **Series of Practice Forums** which include SMART Planning and Review of Impact Plans, Restorative Practice Approach to Domestic Violence, Family Led Decision Making, Voice of the Child.

Courses are being added to Me Learning and we are sending out comms to various audiences to ensure staff sign up to the programmes that are relevant to them.

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 some time in the Autumn of 2022.

Strategic Support Business Intelligence

The Business Intelligence team is continuing to support many work streams across the Council including Children's Social Care, Economic Regeneration, Education Excellence, Adult Social Care, and Public Health Services. The team has developed a new performance report for the new Executive Director Children's Social Care and Education and his leadership team. The team will continue to work with Children's Services to further develop this area. In parallel the team is also supporting the development of a new performance framework for data Adults Social Care for inspection preparedness.

The team is supporting the Integrated Care System (ICS) and leading on Population Health Management workstream.

Progress continues with the implementation of the Council's new enterprise data warehouse platform, which will enable big data analytics.

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.

The project to digitise the Council's historic paper records continues at pace, with work ongoing to move records stored at disparate locations to the Council's contracted 3rd party secured storage provider, taking opportunity to destroy legacy records and digitise what are not required to be kept in original paper

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format. The team has recently begun to process legacy records stored at the former Thomas Gray School site.

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 Council 2023 and supporting the Children's Social Care Improvement plan.

Members of the team are also supporting Children's Services team with the actions in the Improvement Plan and associated review work.

Procurement

The Council Social Value Policy has been agreed by Cabinet Member Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Communications

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

The Comms Team promoted and attended the PRIDE march. An excellent video was created and posted to our social media channels.

Press releases issued by the team on Levelling Up funding bids for Crosby and Bootle received good coverage, as did the release on the Council's bid to host Dippy the Dinosaur at Bootle Strand.

Coastal comms with partners from Sefton Coastal Landscape Partnership (which includes Merseyside Police, MFRS, RNLI, National Trust and others) were well received, and as the weather warmed up the team promoted Drowning Prevention and Water Safety assets and warnings.

The team worked with colleagues at Sefton's 2 CCGs to ensure coverage of the newly formed Integrated Care Partnership, with effect from 1 July, and the closure of the 2 CCGs.

Over the summer the team has helped to promote high profile events in the borough such as the Southport Flower show and the Air Show, and the Bootle Climate Action Festival. The team helped to promote Southport Market's first birthday, and other Town Deal stories, such as the progress with the Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC) project.

The imminent launch of the Lake House at Crosby Lakeside will hopefully generate more positive coverage in the media.

The new Web Content Officer continues to make good progress on updating and reconfiguring the Council website.

A specific area which captures all the information and advice residents may need about the Cost of Living support available is being created, and will be live and fully populated before the end of August.

The Communications Team have been providing significant support to colleagues in Children's Services; most recently with support to promote a number of management job vacancies, and the launch of the Sefton Caring Charter, helping to organise the launch event and generate positive media coverage. The team will continue to work closely with colleagues across the Council on this initiative, and may do a second round of media comms after 6 or 12 months, but will this time be able to include positive case studies of care experienced young people and the benefits of the caring charter scheme for them and local businesses.

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