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Sefton Council 

MEETING: CABINET
DATE: Thursday, 1st February, 2024
TIME: 10.00 a.m.
VENUE: Committee Room, Town Hall, Bootle

DECISION MAKER: **CABINET**

Councillor Atkinson (Chair)
Councillor Cummins
Councillor Doyle
Councillor Fairclough
Councillor Hardy
Councillor Howard
Councillor Lappin
Councillor Moncur
Councillor Roscoe
Councillor Veidman

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Debbie Campbell
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The Cabinet is responsible for making what are known as Key Decisions, which will be notified on the Forward Plan. Items marked with an * on the agenda involve Key Decisions

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution, is: -

- 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
- 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

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

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

A G E N D A

Items marked with an * involve key decisions

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Subject/Author(s)</u>	<u>Wards Affected</u>	
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 - 18)
	Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2024		
* 4	Adoption of the Extra Care Allocations Policy Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health	All Wards	(Pages 19 - 56)
* 5	Existing Extra Care Housing Contract Arrangements Report of the Assistant Director – Integrated Life Course Commissioning	All Wards	(Pages 57 - 62)

* 6	Culture Strategy Report of the Executive Director - People	All Wards	(Pages 63 - 100)
* 7	Financial Management 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2023/24 – February Update Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	All Wards	(Pages 101 - 118)
8	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>To comply with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, notice has been published regarding the intention to consider the following matter(s) in private for the reasons set out below.</p> <p>The Cabinet is recommended to pass the following resolution:</p> <p>That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.</p>		
9	Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service - Exempt Appendix Exempt appendix of the Executive Director - People		(Pages 119 - 120)
10	<p>Re-admittance of the Public</p> <p>The Cabinet meeting will now move back into open session to consider the following agenda item</p>		
* 11	Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service Report of the Executive Director - People	All Wards	(Pages 121 - 134)

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THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2024. MINUTES NOD. 105 (2), 107 (2), (3), (4), (5) AND (6) ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 4TH JANUARY, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, Doyle, Hardy, Lappin and
Roscoe

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE

99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cummins, Fairclough, Moncur and Veidman.

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Ian Maher	Minute No. 103 - Procurement Strategy for Maritime Corridor Scheme - Phase 1	He is a Trustee of Netherton Park Community Centre.

101. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

102. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTHPORT EASTERN ACCESS - PHASE 1

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) seeking approval to appoint Balfour

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Beatty under the Scape Framework to provide Early Contract Involvement in the development of the works information for the first Phase of the Southport Eastern Access scheme with a view to a further appointment to deliver the works. The Southport Eastern Access scheme sought to deliver highway improvement measures at a series of junctions and links on the eastern approaches to Southport to improve access and safety for all road users to the town centre from the east. The Scape Framework allowed a contractor to be appointed during the scheme design and development; to provide a Feasibility report at no cost, followed by an Early Contractor involvement stage during which a Target Cost was established and other pre-construction activities undertaken, leading to a Contract to deliver the works.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix A - General Arrangement Plans.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the appointment of Balfour Beatty under the Scape Framework to offer Feasibility Input into the development of the first Phase of the Southport Eastern Access Scheme, at no cost to the Council, be approved;
- (2) the Assistant Director of Place – (Highways and Public Protection), following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to award the Contract for Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) in the construction of Southport Eastern Access Phase 1 works, to Balfour Beatty, subject to the Feasibility Input, as set out in (1) above, and receipt of a Grant Funding Agreement from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary Development Funding to enable the ECI stage of the project to be undertaken;
- (4) the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection), following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to award the Contract for the construction of Southport Eastern Access Phase 1 works to Balfour Beatty, subject to the Feasibility Input and ECI, as set out in (1), (2) and (3) above, and receipt of a Grant Funding Agreement;
- (5) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary works funding to enable the construction stage of the project to be undertaken; and

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- (6) a supplementary capital estimate of £450,000 for Development Funding secured from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority into the Transport Capital Programme for 2023-24, be approved, pending receipt of a Grant Funding agreement.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) had received a City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement allocation from the Department for Transport to deliver highway improvement and maintenance projects throughout the City Region by March 2027. Within the recently completed re-baselining exercise an allocation of funding for £16.8m had been identified to fund Southport Eastern Access projects. It was recognised that careful planning and co-ordination of all the elements of work would be critical to ensure the works were delivered within the window and that disruption was minimised as far as possible. Early Contractor Involvement, as offered by the Scape Framework, had the advantage of ensuring that the works were well programmed, buildability of the scheme was considered at an early stage and that the period between completing the design (and agreeing a contract cost) and the works commencing would be reduced. This should ensure that greater cost certainty was achieved, construction risks were reduced and the works were more likely to be delivered within the funding window.

The use of the Scape Framework had been welcomed by the LCRCA as they recognised the benefits, particularly in allowing greater certainty of delivering the scheme within the timeframe.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The works could be delivered using a tendering process. This would introduce some further competition into the procurement process. However, the project planning would not have the benefit of contractor input until following the award of the contract for the works, thus increasing the risk of delay and claims. There was also the risk that contractors might choose not to tender due to current workloads. The tender appraisal process would also shorten the time available for construction and therefore increase the risk of the funds not being expended by the deadline.

103. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR MARITIME CORRIDOR SCHEME - PHASE 1

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) seeking approval to appoint Balfour Beatty under the Scape Framework to provide Early Contract Involvement in the development of the works information for the first Phase of the Maritime Corridor scheme, with a view to a further appointment to deliver the works. The Maritime Corridor scheme sought to deliver measures in the south of the Borough to improve access for all highway users to employment sites. The Scape Framework allowed a contractor to be

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appointed during the scheme design and development; to provide a Feasibility report at no costs, followed by an Early Contractor Involvement stage during which a Target Cost was established and other pre-construction activities undertaken leading to a Contract to deliver the works.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix A - General Arrangement Plans.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the appointment of Balfour Beatty under the Scape Framework to offer Feasibility input into the development of the first Phase of the Maritime Corridor Scheme, at no cost to the Council, be approved;
- (2) the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection), following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to award the Contract for Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) in the construction of Maritime Corridor Phase 1 works to Balfour Beatty, subject to the Feasibility Input, as set out in (1) above, and receipt of a Grant Funding Agreement or similar confirmation of funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary Development Funding to enable the ECI stage of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 project to be undertaken;
- (4) the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection), following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to award the Contract for the construction of Maritime Corridor Phase 1 works to Balfour Beatty, subject to the Feasibility Input and EIC, as set out in (1) and (2) above, and receipt of a Grant Funding Agreement;
- (5) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Locality Services, be authorised to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary Funding to enable the Construction stage of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 project to be undertaken; and
- (6) a supplementary capital estimate of £500,000 for Development Funding secured from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority into the Transport Capital Programme for 2023-24, be approved.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) had received funding from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to deliver a number of linked transport projects throughout the City Region including elements of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1. This funding was conditional on all the funds being expended by March 2025. Early Contractor Involvement had the advantage of ensuring that the works were well programmed, buildability of the scheme was considered at an early stage and that the period between completing the design (and agreeing a contract cost) and the works commencing would be reduced. This should ensure that greater cost certainty was achieved, construction risks were reduced and the works were more likely to be delivered within the funding window.

The use of the Scape Framework had been welcomed by the LCRCA as they recognised the benefits, particularly in offering greater certainty of delivering the scheme in the timeframe.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The works could be delivered using a tendering process. This would introduce some further competition into the procurement process. However, the project planning would not have the benefit of contractor input until following the award of the contract for the works, thus increasing the risk of delay and claims. There was also the risk that contractors might choose not to tender due to current workloads. The tender appraisal process would also shorten the time available for construction and therefore increase the risk of the funds not being expended by the deadline. The SCAPE Framework was developed following a fully compliant OJEU Procurement process.

104. SOUTHPORT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Place that considered the Southport Business Improvement District (BID) Business Plan for the period 2024 - 2029 and sought agreement for the next steps by the Council as part of the BID ballot process.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the proposals for the Southport Business Improvement District (BID) be approved;
- (2) the Executive Director - Place be authorised to submit a positive vote on behalf of the Council;
- (3) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Section 151 Officer, be authorised to sign a future BID Baseline Agreement on behalf of the Council;

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- (4) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services be authorised to complete the necessary formal agreements required for the collection of the BID Levy if a Yes vote is achieved; and
- (5) as the relevant ballot holder, Civica be authorised to hold the BID ballot.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

To allow the BID ballot to commence and then thereafter for the BID company to deliver a new 5-year term.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There were no other alternative options for BID delivery, or a similar model that would secure the level of private sector investment into Southport. If the Council were to refuse a new BID ballot the existing BID would cease at the end of October 2024, and this would result in a loss of £2.4m invested over the next 5 years.

105. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking approval of a Programme of Meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Annex A - Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet in 2024/25
- Annex B - Programme of Meetings for the Council, Members' Briefing Sessions and Regulatory Committees in 2024/25
- Annex C - Programme of Meetings for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2024/25
- Annex D - Programme of Meetings for the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2024/25
- Calendar of meetings 2024/25

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet, Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, and Safer Sefton Together for 2024/25, as set out in Annexes A and D of the report, be approved; and

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- (2) the Programme of Meetings for the Council, Member Briefing Sessions; Regulatory Committees; Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Health and Wellbeing Board for 2024/25, as set out in Annexes B, C of the report be noted; and submitted to the Council for approval.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

To enable the business of the Council and its various Committees/bodies to be conducted during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None. The Council was required to produce a programme of meetings.

106. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that provided assurance on the progress made to implement the Council's Health and Safety policy during 2022/23.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Annual Health and Safety report.

Decision Made:

That the progress on implementing the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy during 2022/23 be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The annual report provided assurance to the Cabinet, which had strategic responsibility for employee health and safety, that there was continued progress to implement and enhance an effective health and safety system across the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

107. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2024/25 AND REVIEW OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS FOR LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services providing details of the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the current year 2023/24, and proposing that there was a change made to the scheme with effect from 1

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April 2024 for working-age households, in employment, in receipt of Universal Credit.

The report also proposed the introduction of new discretionary council tax premiums on 'dwellings left empty for 1 year or more' from 1 April 2024 and on 'dwellings occupied periodically' (second homes) from 1 April 2025.

A summary was provided of the feedback received on recent consultations undertaken on changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and on the proposals to introduce new discretionary council tax premiums along with the associated equality impact assessments.

The report also provided an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2024/25.

The following Annexes were attached to the report:

- Annex A: Council Tax Base Report 2024/25.
- Annex B: Proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25, including consultation summary and equalities impact assessment.
- Annex C: Proposed introduction of new council tax premiums on 'dwellings left empty for 1 year or more' and on 'dwellings occupied periodically', including consultation summary and equalities impact assessment.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the content of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the current year, 2023/24, be noted;

Council

- (2) the Council be recommended to note the content of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the current year, 2023/24;
- (3) the Council be recommended to note the outcome of a public consultation exercise and approve a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working-age households, in employment and in receipt of Universal Credit with effect from 1 April 2024;
- (4) the Council be recommended to approve the introduction of a 100% council tax premium on dwellings left empty for 1 year or more from 1 April 2024;

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- (5) the Council be recommended to approve the introduction of a 100% council tax premium on dwellings occupied periodically from 1 April 2025; and
- (6) the Council be recommended to approve the relevant Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish Area for 2024/25, as set out in Annex A of the report.

Reasons for the Decisions:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Each financial year, the Council had to consider whether to revise or replace its local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council was required to approve and adopt the 2024/25 Council Tax Reduction Scheme by 11 March 2024, as set out in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017.

The report provided an update on key aspects of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the current year, and also provided details of a public consultation exercise that had recently been undertaken to seek views on making a change to the scheme affecting working-age households, in employment, and also in receipt of Universal Credit. After consideration of the factors outlined later in the report, it was proposed that the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25 was changed for working-age households, in employment, in receipt of Universal Credit.

Council Tax Base

In accordance with Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, the Council was required to set a tax base for both Sefton Council and for each Parish Area for 2024/25 before 31 January 2024.

Introducing a premium on dwellings left empty for 1 year or more

The Council already applied a 100% premium on properties left empty for 2 years or more. Extending this premium to dwellings left empty for 1 year or more would encourage owners of these homes to bring them back into use. Any additional income raised from the premium would help support the provision of Council services.

Introducing a premium on dwellings that are occupied periodically

Introducing a premium on dwellings that were occupied periodically (second homes) would encourage owners of these homes to make these available for sale or rent which would increase the amount of housing available to local residents. Any additional income raised from the premium would help support the provision of Council services.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

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Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council might decide to leave the Council Tax Reduction Scheme unchanged for 2024/25. Without a change to the scheme, households in employment moving from legacy state-benefits to Universal Credit were likely to face frequent changes to their entitlement, with the knock-on effect being frequently changing Council Tax bills and payment-plans, as well as an expected additional administrative burden for the Council.

Introducing a premium on dwellings left empty for 1 year or more

The Council could choose not to introduce the premium. However, this would not provide any additional incentive for owners of these long-term empty homes to bring them back into use. Alternatively, the Council could choose to introduce a lower premium percentage (25%, 50%, or 75%). However, this would provide a lower level of incentive and reduce the amount of additional council tax income available to support local services.

Introducing a premium on dwellings that are occupied periodically

The Council could choose not to introduce the premium. However, this would not provide any additional incentive for owners of these properties to make them available for occupation by local residents. Alternatively, the Council could choose to introduce a lower premium percentage (25%, 50%, or 75%). However, this would provide a lower level of incentive and reduce the amount of additional council tax income available to support local services.

108. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2023/24 TO 2026/27 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2023/24 – JANUARY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services informing the Cabinet of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2023/24.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of November 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.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26.

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Decision Made:

That

Revenue Budget

- (1) the current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget be noted;
- (2) the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position be noted;
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2023/24 revenue budget be recognised and the fact that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved, be acknowledged;

Capital Programme

- (4) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme, as set out at paragraph 7.1 of the report, be noted;
- (5) the latest capital expenditure position as at 30 November 2023 of £21.514m, as set out at paragraph 7.5 of the report; and the latest full year forecast is £55.117m, as set out at paragraph 7.6 of the report be noted;
- (6) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.534m for the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant provided by the Department of Education, as set out at paragraph 7.4. of the report, be approved; and
- (7) it be noted that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as set out at paragraphs 7.9-7.11 of the report.

Reasons for the Decision:

To ensure the Cabinet was informed of the current position in relation to the 2023/24 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 2023/24 and agreed allocations for future years.

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

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

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

109. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To comply with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, notice had been published regarding the intention to consider the following matter in private for the reason set out below.

Decision Made:

That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

110. SEFTON NEW DIRECTIONS - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Cabinet considered exempt information provided by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health in relation to Sefton New Directions (Minute No. 112 below refers).

Decision Made:

That the exempt information be considered as part of the report in relation to Sefton New Directions (Minute No. 112 below refers).

Reasons for the Decision:

The exempt information was required to be considered with the information in the public domain in order that an informed decision might be made.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

111. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

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Decision Made:

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

112. SEFTON NEW DIRECTIONS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health on the initial outcome of the services review of Sefton New Directions which was a wholly owned Council company.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Executive summary of the review.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) it be noted that the Sefton New Directions services review has been completed within a shorter time period than originally agreed and planned, in order to meet the Council budget setting time framework and as a result actions and proposals being recommended from the services review will need to be delivered during a future twelve-month change and that the review programme will commence in January 2024;
- (2) it be noted that in order for Sefton New Directions services to be affordable, viable, sustainable and provide quality services, a significant transformation programme of work will be required across both health and social care partners, with a stronger focus on the role of community partners within the review of services, which will be delivered in the design of 18 new service specifications;
- (3) that decisions on the transformation programme and any associated recommendations and decisions arising from the outcome of the programme be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care; and
- (4) it be noted that further reports will be submitted to the Cabinet to provide updates on the transformation work and implemented decisions.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To report on the initial outcome of the review of Sefton New Directions and to outline the next steps relating to the required transformation work.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

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There were no alternative options to be considered, given that it was previously agreed that the findings of the review would be reported back to the Cabinet and that the outcomes of the review resulted in recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet.

113. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - RESIGNATION

Councillor Ian Maher announced his intention to step down as the Leader of the Council and expressed his thanks to Cabinet Members and officers who had supported him throughout his tenure as Leader.

Agenda Item 4

Report to:	Cabinet	Date Meeting:	of 1 February 2024
Subject:	Adoption of the Extra Care Allocations Policy		
Report of:	Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Communities and Housing		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt Confidential Report:	/ No		

Summary:

Extra care housing is specialist housing provision that combines accommodation with care and support services designed to offer safe, private, and secure accommodation whilst allowing service users to retain the independence of having their own home.

Our needs indicate that we will require 1306 units of accommodation (approximately 15 schemes) across the borough by 2036.

The aim of the Extra Care Allocations Policy as per **Appendix A** is required to underpin and support our requirement. The policy will also promote independence and well-being; facilitate a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs which will play a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals and contribute to our preventative agenda.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy details the eligibility, process, and system for applying for Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

The policy will be the main mechanism to support our plans in relation to Extra Care Housing in Sefton and ensure that the residents of Sefton have a clear and robust system and process for accessing the accommodation.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Notes the content of the report, Consultation Responses and Equality Impact Assessment.
- 2) Approve the adoption of the Extra Care Allocations Policy
- 3) Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health in conjunction with Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to make minor

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amendments to the Extra Care Allocations Policy as needed due to either regulation/legislation.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

- (1) The strategic priority to deliver Extra Care Housing is included in several of our key strategies including our: -
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019).
 - Sefton 2030 Vision (2016).
 - ASC – Market Position Statement (2021 -2026).
 - Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020 – 2025).
 - Sefton Older Peoples Strategy (2019-2024).
 - Sefton Housing Strategy (2022-2027).

- (2) Extra Care Housing provides an alternative housing option to our residents and will help to reduce our reliance on alternative more restrictive options such as residential care.

- (3) Without a robust allocations policy, system and process the outcomes we are looking to achieve would be difficult to meet.

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

1. Do nothing – Continue to use current extra care housing provision without any formal policy, system, or process to support.

Risks would include: -
 - a) Sefton residents not being prioritised and unable to access Extra Care Housing Provision within the borough.
 - b) ASC revenue budgets required to support the delivery of Extra Care Housing not meeting intended outcomes.
 - c) Housing Providers reverting to their own waiting lists due to inadequate nominations received from the council.

2. Introduce local letting policies for each individual scheme: -

Risks: -
 - a) Sefton residents not being prioritised and unable to access Extra Care Housing Provision within the borough with multiple systems processes across the borough.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Revenue costs to be met within existing ASC budgets.

(B) Capital Costs

Not applicable.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

The allocation process will be built within the Adult Social Care management system Liquid Logic, this IT system has the facility to incorporate the system.

Staffing resources to support applicants and manage the application process including nominations will need to be met within ASC resources.

Legal Implications:

Care Act 2014 – “The Care Act replaces the specific statutory duty to provide accommodation with a general duty to 'meet the needs' of a person who needs care and support. It is arguable that this will make it harder to obtain housing for people with eligible care needs.”

Nominations agreements between the council and all Housing Providers who provide the Extra Care Schemes will need to be put in place.

Equality Implications:

No equalities implications identified. The proposed scheme will enable residents with care and support needs to access accommodation within the borough that is currently unavailable.

An Equality Impact Assessment can be seen as per **Appendix B**

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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:

Those who require care and support in Sefton are among the most vulnerable in society and a policy which prioritises residents needs who meet the eligibility for Extra Care Housing across the borough is needed.

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<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities:</p> <p>The extra care model of service supports and promotes independence, including ensuring that people who need care and support remain as part of, and can continue to access their local community.</p> <p>Through this policy the Council and its partners can help to support extra care as an alternative housing option and help reduce reliance on other services.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services:</p> <p>As part of the wider objectives in delivering extra care housing schemes commissioning and delivery of care and support services will be required to ensure the residents who are nominated as part of the policy their care and support needs can be met.</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer:</p> <p>Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health is responsible for integrated commissioning and this development meets the strategic vision for Adult Social Care and Health in relation to promoting choice and control and ensuring that there are local services available for those in need.</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform:</p> <p>Extra Care Housing is one mechanism that will help support our strategic needs in reducing reliance on alternative more restrictive housing options for older residents.</p> <p>Working in an integrated manor to commission and ensure outcomes are focused on health needs will also reduce GP contacts and hospital admissions.</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</p> <p>The policy will enable residents to live their best lives, gain meaningful outcomes which will enable them to prosper.</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment: N/A</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener: N/A</p>

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultation

The Executive Director Corporate Resources & Customer Services (FD7450/23) and the Chief Legal & Democratic Officer (LD5550/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

A public consultation process in conjunction with other key stakeholders was conducted from Friday 10th February 2023 for a period of two months to Tuesday 11th April 2023.

Internal engagement to progress the concept of the policy and information relating to the consultation was distributed via a range of following channels including the Intranet and targeted communications.

(B) External partners

External engagement with residents, partners and key stakeholder has been ongoing over the past year with a focus on the policy: -

- Social Media – Twitter and Facebook
- Sefton Council website
- Your Sefton, Your Say website.
- Meetings with strategic partners
- Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens meeting
- Healthwatch meeting
- Residents' meetings (Parkhaven and James Horrigan Court extra care schemes)
- E mails

A public engagement and consultation report can be found as per **Appendix C**.

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

Contact Officer:	Steven Metcalf
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Appendices:

Appendix A Extra Care Allocations Policy

Appendix B Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix C Public Engagement and Consultation Report

Background Papers:

Sefton Public Engagement and Consultation Panel: -

Proposal to undertake Public Engagement and Consultation Activity – Extra Care Allocations Policy for Sefton Nov 2022.

<https://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/documents/s112995/Item%206%20-%20Extra%20Care%20Allocations%20Policy%20Consultation.pdf>

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1. Background

- 1.1 Sefton Council has not previously produced a policy to support Extra Care Housing.
- 1.2 The Extra Care Allocations Policy has been developed to support our strategic vision on delivering 1306 units of Extra Care Housing across the borough by 2036.
- 1.3 The aim of the policy is to ensure appropriate nominations for Sefton residents who meet the criteria, promote independence and well-being; facilitate a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs whilst playing a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals admissions.
- 1.4 The Policy provides clarity by which people applying for accommodation in Extra Care Housing in Sefton are assessed for housing and if eligible, allocated appropriate available accommodation with care and support.
- 1.5 To ensure efficient and appropriate allocation of vacant units in all types of Extra Care schemes, the allocation process is proposed to be built within the core Care Management System of the Social Worker Provider (Liquid Logic). The Council is committed to working effectively and at pace to allocate tenancies to identified people with an assessed, eligible need.
- 1.6 Sefton council will also establish an Extra Care Housing Panel which will meet regularly to ensure oversight of allocations, policy and other such matters relating to Extra Care Housing.

2. Consultation and Engagement

2.

- 2.1 The public consultation and engagement process was conducted from Friday 10th February 2023 for a period of two months to Tuesday 11th April 2023.
- 2.2 The following consultation methods were used:
 - Public consultation online survey, using the “Your Sefton, Your Say” Platform.
 - Attendance and presentation at various meetings
 - Distribution of the policy and questionnaire
 - Documents for the consultation were produced in easy read, including the survey.

Information relating to the consultation was distributed internally widely.

External: -

- Social Media – Twitter and Facebook
- Sefton Council website
- Your Sefton, Your Say website.

- Meetings with strategic partners
- Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens meeting
- Healthwatch meeting
- Residents' meetings (Parkhaven and James Horrigan Court extra care schemes)
- E mails

2.3 The survey consisted of five questions and comment sections for each and a generic comments section (also including twelve optional equality monitoring questions).

The focus of the consultation and engagement was: -

- 1) Extra Care Eligibility
 - a. Local Connection
 - b. Age Threshold
 - c. Support needs
- 2) Allocations Process
- 3) Nominations Process

3. Summary of the Consultation Results

3.1 Responses received included fifty-two from individuals and two stakeholder groups one of which included ten participants at Parkhaven Extra Care Housing Scheme reference ANON-CSW6-EU5G-S.

3.2 A summary of respondent's responses is as follows: -

- 89% agree with the proposed criteria of local connection.
- 92% agree with the proposed age criteria of 55+.
- 87% of response agreed with the proposed criteria to also consider people under the age of 55.
- 96% agree with the proposed criteria to also consider people with support needs.

3.3 In addition to the responses above comments were welcomed on each individual question and through a generic question around the policy. This led to a total of sixty-seven comments in total.

3.4 A summary comment received, is as follows: -

- Eighteen comments were received in relation to the proposed criteria of local connection.
 - Although 89% agreed, comments around allowing applicants with close family and carer connections to the borough was highlighted.

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Agreed to monitor these applications but no change to policy as this could lead to current residents not being able to access extra care housing. This would also leave us open to challenge and would be difficult to manage and apply.

- Nine comments were received in relation to the proposed age criteria of 55+.
 - Some minor mixed comments re upping and lowering the age limit and ensuring careful consideration is given. Overall positive and no changes to the criteria.
- Fifteen comments were received in relation to the proposed criteria to also consider people under the age of 55.
 - Some positive comments and views. Agreed to reviewing the wording of 3.3 of the policy and an action to follow up with Housing Providers re succession rights of tenants.
- Eight comments were received in relation to the proposed criteria to also consider people with support needs.
 - 96% in agreeance but some comments and amendment to 3.3 and actions around the care and support specification agreed.
- Seventeen additional comments were received through the generic question around the policy.
 - Some positive comments and overall, no action required. Minor amendment to 3.2 and well put comment re siblings and which will amend 3.3 to reflect.

4. Feedback on consultation

4.1 A final draft policy has been produced and is attached for consideration.

4.2 The policy will also be published on the “Your Sefton, Your Say” platform.

4.4 Findings from the consultation will be circulated to respondents via E-mail (if provided), and other communication channels as necessary.

4.5 Final policy will also be presented at Sefton partnership for older citizens and Healthwatch forum.

5. Future Engagement

5.1 The policy will be monitored regularly through the allocation panel and measured against adult social care needs to ensure outcomes are being delivered.

5.2 The policy will be reviewed in 2028 to ensure that it is having the desired impact and outcomes are being achieved.

Conclusion

Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendations and adopt the Extra Care Allocations Policy. Implementation of the policy, system and process will then begin during 2024.

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Sefton Council.

Extra Care Allocations Policy.

2024-2029.

Approval: Cabinet member/s and Cabinet.

Date formally approved: TBC.

Document Author: Steven Metcalf Strategic Manager Extra Care
Housing.

Review date: 2028.

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1. Introduction.

Extra care housing is specialist housing provision that combines accommodation with care and support services designed to offer safe, private, and secure accommodation whilst allowing service users to retain the independence of having their own home.

Extra care housing combines accommodation with care and support services. There are many diverse types and sizes of extra care housing.

Sefton has a population that is living longer, and people tell us that their preference is to be able to remain in their own home, with the ability to access care and support if needed at some stage. For those who already have support needs, or whose health is declining and indicates that they may need more help in the coming years, extra care housing offers the option to meet these needs. Sefton wants to develop extra care accommodation that is innovative and can be used further as hubs of the local community, for residents and non-residents alike and to be focal points for inter-generational community activity.

Our needs indicate that we will require 1306 units of accommodation (approximately fifteen schemes) across the borough to further enable us to reach our ambition of the national best quartile for residential care home admissions.

The aim of the policy is to promote independence and well-being; facilitate a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs within the setting of extra care housing which will play a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals and contribute to our preventative agenda.

This policy covers all Extra Care Housing within Sefton. Additional Extra Care allocation guidelines for specific and individual Extra Care schemes may also be introduced, to ensure that the housing needs of people are most appropriately met under this policy.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy details the eligibility, process, and system for applying for Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

2. Context.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy is being developed in part to help us to deliver some of our key strategies including:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019).
- Sefton 2030 Vision (2016).
- ASC – Market Position Statement (2021 -2026).
- Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020 – 2025).
- Sefton Older Peoples Strategy (2019-2024).
- Sefton Housing Strategy (2022-2027).
- Sefton Extra Care Housing Prospectus (2021).
- Sefton Homelessness Strategy

The allocations policy will set out a clear pathway that is open and transparent and available to Sefton residents. It will ensure those in need are prioritised fairly and objectively whilst also keeping a balanced community that can thrive.

3. Extra Care Eligibility.

To be considered for Extra Care housing applicants must meet the following criteria:

3.1. Local Connection.

To access affordable rented Extra Care Housing within Sefton the applicant must demonstrate a local connection. To demonstrate a local connection, an applicant must have been living in the borough continuously for the previous 24 months.

3.2. Age.

55+ will be the initial qualifying criteria, however, someone below this age with for example a long-term disability, considerable care needs, would otherwise be admitted to residential care and older carers of adults with disabilities will be considered.

Couples are eligible to apply where one or both meet the criteria.

3.3. **Support Needs.**

One applicant must meet at least one of the following criteria: -

- Have a support and / or care needs as identified through a Care Act Assessment.
- Have a support and / or care needs due to unsuitable housing as identified through a Care Act Assessment.
- Currently living in a residential home and or nursing care setting.
- Have care and support needs due to a range of difficulties, degenerative condition/s and or disability as identified by an Adult Social Care assessment; or
- Be a carer of a partner, son/daughter, sibling or dependent with a learning/ physical/ or mental health disability who requires care and support.
- currently living in Sefton (commissioned) homeless temporary accommodation and deemed ready to move on into independent living so long as support needs are met.

3.4. **Homeowners/Income/Financial Assessments.**

The Government believes that authorities should avoid allocating social housing to people who already own their own homes unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Council does not intend to restrict access to the Extra Care based on financial means. However, some Landlords, depending on their status (e.g., charitable) may take the financial circumstances of applicants into account and refuse to allocate a property if they consider that the applicant has the financial means to secure their own accommodation.

In deciding whether someone has sufficient financial resources to meet their own housing needs, landlords may look at income, savings, equity and investments and the price of buying or privately renting a suitable home in the locality according to their published policies.

Applicants or joint applicants who have equity in their home will be considered as financial resources available to them, unless there is good reason it should not. Landlords may make use of their powers to offer a fixed term tenancy which can be terminated if housed applicants are not actively marketing their property for sale. Landlords should have published tenancy policies regarding this.

Applicants or joint applicants who own a property will be required to provide evidence that their current home is for sale, in addition the applicant or joint applicants who are owners are not permitted to sub-let their home and be allocated a tenancy.

Applicants must agree to be financially assessed by Adult Social Care to determine if they should make a contribute towards the 24-hour support that is available. The 24-hour support is not negotiable as it is a fundamental part of Extra Care housing.

4. Care Needs Assessment and Registered Provider of Housing Assessments.

For successful applications, following notification to the applicant, the Care Provider and Registered Housing Provider of the specific scheme requested may complete their relevant assessments (this will be dependent on occupancy levels and current waiting list).

The Care Provider will undertake a Care Needs Assessment to determine the level of care required for the scheme and the Housing Provider will complete their standard allocation checks which may include for example affordability and reference check. These assessments will be completed jointly for the Extra Care Scheme the applicant has chosen as first preference.

The Housing Provider will have the right to refuse applicants where sufficient evidence gained by the applicants current / previous landlord that the conduct of the tenancy was not satisfactory and / or applicant has breached any terms of the tenancy agreement, for example Anti-Social Behaviour / rent arrears.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the Housing Providers decision not to allocate a place in the Extra Care Scheme the applicant must initiate the Housing Providers internal appeals process.

The Housing Provider must inform the panel of any such decisions not to allocate an applicant into the Extra Care Scheme and rationale for the decision.

4.1. Balanced Care Profile.

Extra Care housing is designed to provide high quality housing, support and care services which enable, support, and encourage people to live independently for as long as they wish to do so. Extra Care housing provides a positive approach to the health and

wellbeing of those who live within such schemes. It is therefore crucial to undertake allocations which aim to promote a balanced community within each Extra Care Scheme.

4.2. **Age Threshold.**

A threshold of approximately 80% of residents aged over fifty-five should always be maintained. The only exception to this will be in any bespoke and or smaller schemes specifically commissioned which would have a higher percentage of younger adults with mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and or autism.

4.3. **Care Need Banding.**

To ensure we achieve the aims of Extra Care Schemes we will create a community where there is a balanced mix of residents with differing levels of care need, across the low to high care need range. The three levels of care needs are determined by the number of care hours an applicant has been assessed as requiring and can be seen in the table below:

Care Need Banding	Assessed number of care need hours per week
Low	0 – 7 hours
Medium	7.25 – 13.75 hours
High	14+ hours

4.4. **Managing the Balanced Care Profile.**

The Extra Care Panel will be responsible for maintaining the Balanced Care Profile. This will ensure that any vacant properties discussed are allocated to applicants which enable the balance of community to be maintained. The balance of community is shown below:

- 30% of residents with Low.
- 40% of residents with Medium.
- 30% of residents who High.

5. Application Process.

To ensure efficient and appropriate allocation of vacant units in all types of Extra Care schemes, the allocation process will be built within the Adult Social Care management system Liquid Logic.

The Extra Care Application Form will need to be completed before considered for Extra Care housing. Applicants will be asked to provide current information in relation to their care and support needs alongside other additional information inclusive of any housing needs before the application can be checked and assessed.

6. Nominations Process/Agreement.

Sefton Council will have 100% nomination rights on the first let of a property and 100% of subsequent re-letting of void properties in the borough's Extra Care schemes. This is to ensure that Sefton Council can promote a balanced community within each Extra Care Scheme and ensure the objectives of the Extra Care Allocations Policy are achieved by applying the allocations criteria contained in the policy.

This will be secured through a nomination's agreement signed by Sefton Council and the registered Housing Provider.

6.1. Allocations into Individual Schemes.

Sefton Council will be able to make nominations for all Extra Care Housing schemes to our Registered Provider partners who manage the individual schemes as per Appendix 2.

Housing Providers are to notify of vacancies within their schemes via the brokerage portal within 5 days of the property becoming available. (Day 1 of the process).

The council will send the matched Extra Care Housing application over to the Housing Provider via the portal, which will be a formal nomination. (Target to achieve this within a further five working days).

The Housing Provider is to contact the individual, invite them to view the property and conduct further checks prior to making an offer (Target to achieve this within ten further working days).

The Housing Provider is to notify the council via the brokerage portal of the outcome of the viewing, which will be confirmation of tenancy being offered or offer declined with refusal reasons provided. Target to achieve this no more than fifteen working days after initial nomination.

If a tenancy is offered the council will update the care management system by closing the Extra Care application and completing a support plan to record the Extra Care provision.

If Sefton Council is unable to make a nomination within 28 days to the Housing Provider, the Housing Provider may exercise its right to make a potential nomination to the panel, the Housing Provider must inform the panel of the eligibility criteria met and the details of the potential nomination.

6.2. Offers.

The number of offers an applicant can refuse is limited to two. Applicants who refuse two offers of accommodation for reasons found to be unrelated to their housing, support and care needs will need to apply again and join from the date of their new application.

Reasonable grounds for refusal will include:

- Applicant is in hospital or awaiting imminent hospital treatment.
- Applicant has recently suffered bereavement.
- Other reasons which will be considered on an individual case basis.
- Unreasonable grounds will include:

Refusing a specific property because it is not on an applicant's floor of choice when they do not have a need for a specific floor.

Refusing a specific property because it does not have patio doors into the garden when they do not have a need for this specific requirement.

Refusing a scheme, they have identified as their preference because an applicant wishes to wait for a period for a potential property becoming available in another scheme which is their first choice.

Other reasons which will be considered on an individual case basis.

7. Extra Care Housing Panel

The Extra Care Housing Panel will be responsible for maintaining a waiting list of successful applications ready for potential vacancies within Extra Care Schemes in Sefton. The Panel will also be responsible for assessing applications from individuals with complex needs and applicants where a risk assessment for other residents has been completed.

The Panel will be responsible for keeping a watching brief on the Balanced Care Profile to ensure balanced communities within the individual schemes. It is the responsibility of the Care Providers to monitor the balance of care within their individual schemes and to provide regular updates to the panel.

8. Review of Decisions

Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision made by Adult Social Care on decisions not to nominate into Extra Care Housing schemes. Reviews of decisions must be regarding the decision rather than the process. All reviews for decisions not to allocate a place within the Extra Care Scheme must be initiated via [Sefton Councils complaints procedure](#).

8.1. Complaints

A request for review is in effect an appeal against a decision not to allocate a place within one of the Extra Care Schemes which the applicant does not agree with. A complaint is different – it is an expression of dissatisfaction with the level of service received, or the way it was provided.

If an applicant disagrees with the handling of any aspect of their application, level of service or decision on the applicant's application for Extra Care, they can issue a complaint directly to [Sefton Council's through the complaint's procedure](#).

8.2. Landlord Refusal

All requests for a review of a decision concerning any aspect of the selection process for a particular property or a refusal to allocate a particular property within Extra Care will be dealt with by the respective Landlord.

These reviews will be dealt with under that landlord's complaints procedure. Details of how to make a complaint can be found on the web site of each organisation.

9. Roles and responsibilities

The Council will be responsible for:

- Co-ordinating/managing the Extra care process within the care management system.
- Completion of the assessment and review of eligibility for extra care accommodation and level of care need.
- Completion of the Extra Care Housing Application
- Matching vacancies to people on the waiting list
- Responding to any appeals made by applicants about the assessment, waiting list or allocation.
- Confirmation letters in appropriate formats being sent to successful applicants.
- Sending Letters with advice in appropriate formats to unsuccessful applicants.
- Ensuring the care management system is updated with correct service provision for Extra Care.
- Where information is shared with an external organisation, ensure there is a data sharing agreement in place which meets with GDPR.
- The costs of Extra Care and ensuring the care provider has the relevant information on tenant's care needs.

The Housing Provider is responsible for

- Communicating with relevant care provider on level of care capacity when informing of a vacancy.
- Notifying the council of the vacancy within the agreed period via the brokerage portal.
- Confirming the outcome of the nomination via the portal.
- Completing all housing related documentation. The tenancy agreement must include a relevant clause that secures agreement to making a full financial contribution to the core care support which is provided on site 24 hours per day 7 days a week.
- Investigate and where appropriate and resolve or make recommendations regarding any lettings/ void issues.
- Responding to any appeals made by the applicant in relation to an unsuccessful offer of accommodation in line with their own policies and procedures.

10. Nomination Process for Extra Care – Shared Ownership.

All expressions of interest in relation to shared ownership will be managed by the relevant Registered Housing Provider of the scheme. If shared ownership or outright sale information is sought, then it is the responsibility of the Registered Housing Provider to contact the interested person to discuss the matter.

11. Equal Opportunities.

The Council is committed to providing housing services to the whole community and will not discriminate against any applicant based on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

12. General Data Protection Regulation.

The information an applicant provides relating to their Extra Care housing application will be treated as confidential in accordance with guidelines on handling personal data. These guidelines relate to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018 that covers both electronic and manual records and governs what can be done with the data, including collection, retention, sharing, storage, usage, and disposal of it.

APPENDIX 1 - Extra Care Panel Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Panel

The purpose of the Extra Care Panel will be to maintain a waiting list of successful applications ready for potential vacancies within Extra Care Schemes in Sefton. The Panel will be responsible for discussing and assessing applications from individuals with complex needs and applicants where a risk assessment for other residents has been completed.

The Panel will be responsible for keeping a watching brief on the Balanced Care Profile to ensure balanced communities within the individual schemes. It is the responsibility of the Care Providers to monitor the balance of care within their individual schemes and the housing provide to provide regular updates at the Panel meetings on scheme issues.

The Panel meeting is held as part of the nomination process and to ensure the most appropriate use of resources before the Registered Provider agrees a tenancy to an individual wishing to access Extra Care Housing.

2. What does the panel do?

The Panel will discuss and assess applications from individuals with complex needs and those where a risk assessment has been completed. For all other applications, the Chair of the Panel will complete the assessment.

The Panel will notify all decisions made to applicants and or advocate in appropriate formats.

The Panel will review and monitor the waiting list for each Extra Care Scheme.

The Panel will use the waiting lists to nominate individuals to vacancies whilst taking the Balanced Care Profile into consideration.

3. Panel Process

For those applications which are referred to the panel for assessment, the Panel will assess each against the eligibility criteria and process as detailed in the main Extra Care Allocations Policy.

The Panel is also responsible for ensuring, whenever possible, that there are assessed individuals on the waiting list for the various schemes across the borough. If the Panel is not able to provide a nomination, then the housing provider will go to their own waiting list.

4. Membership of the Panel

The Panel will consist of:

- A member of the complex care brokerage team
- At least one representative from Housing
- At least one representative from Adult Social Care.
- A representative from the Care and Support Provider for the scheme being considered.
- A representative from the Registered Provider for the scheme being considered.

The panel Chair will ensure that all relevant officers are invited to attend the meeting.

Where officers are unable to attend the meeting, they will arrange for a suitable deputy to attend.

5. Meetings

The Extra Care Panel will meet every 4 weeks (more often depending on the number of referrals) and meetings will be chaired by a Sefton Council Officer.

The meetings shall be convened by SEFTON by giving the members not less than 5 working days' notice of a meeting unless the business to be considered is urgent.

Members will be required to take an active part and should be able to decide whether individual referrals can fit into the balanced needs of the scheme and will also highlight any risks as part of an individual referral.

6. Access to the Panel

Complex care brokerage team will function as the first point of assessment and refer to the chair of the panel any referrals that are complex and or risk assessments required.

7. Availability of Extra Care Accommodation

Void notification form is to be completed by the registered housing provider and sent to Sefton Council via the brokerage system at the earliest point of notification.

The Panel recognises that the final decision as to who is made a formal offer of accommodation is made by the individual Registered Provider. All verification and background checking regarding the referral will be completed by the Registered Provider with input from the care provider / care manager, as necessary.

8. Reporting

The panel will receive report's periodically via the Liquid Logic system on the numbers of nominations and subsequent allocations, the number of available voids and progress of the development of the schemes to relevant bodies.

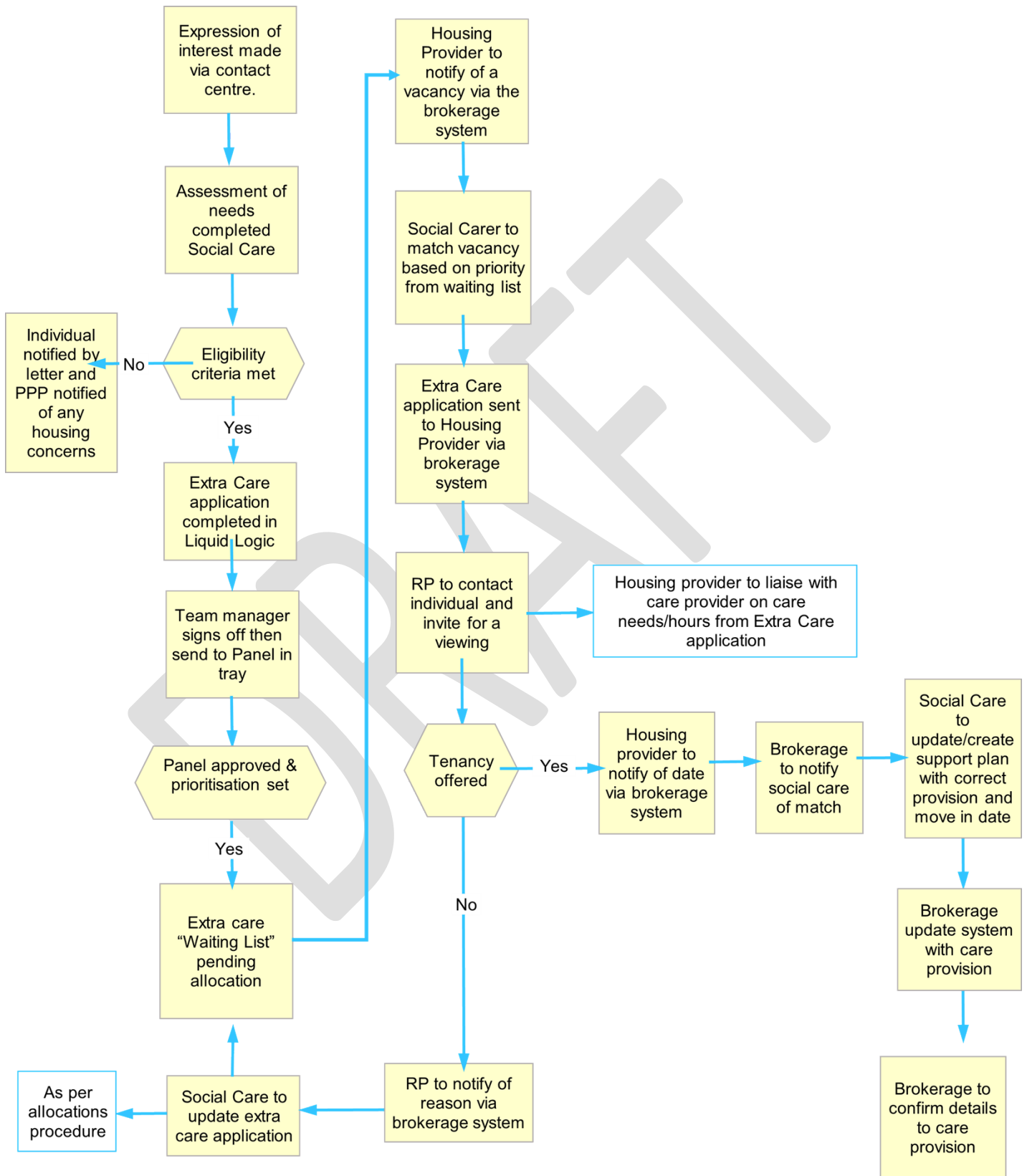
Monitor: -

- Number of residents who otherwise would have been placed in institutionalised services such as residential and or nursing care.
- Supported living.
- Reductions in care needs.
- Demand for extra care housing.
- Nominations refused.
- Nominations accepted.

9. New Extra Care Schemes

For new Extra Care Schemes, separate Extra Care Panels will be held for all initial nominations into the schemes. These panels will be subject to the above principles surround the Extra Care Panel and the new schemes will be subject to the overarching Extra Care Allocations Policy.

APPENDIX 2 - Extra Care Allocations Process Map.



Draft - Equality Impact Assessment.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) stems from the general duty placed on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and is required to ensure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery. The purpose of this EIA is to analyse the likely impact of a service, policy, or proposals on different community groups, and how the needs of such groups have been taken in to account in developing those proposals.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

1. Name of Policy or Service.

Extra Care Allocations Policy

2. Responsible Officer.

Steven Metcalf

3. Date EIA Completed.

October 2022, Review Date to be confirmed.

Amended May 2023 following formal consultation.

Reviewed November 2023 for cabinet report.

4. Description and aims of policy / service / practice.

Sefton has a population that is living longer, and people tell us that a

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preference is to be able to remain in their own home, with the ability to access care and support if needed at some stage. For those who already have support needs, or whose health is declining and indicates that they may need more help in the coming years, extra care housing offers the option to meet these needs.

Extra care housing is a specialist housing provision that combines accommodation with care and support services designed to offer safe, private, and secure accommodation.

The aim of the policy is to ensure a clear and robust process is available to Sefton residents to enable us to promote independence and well-being; facilitate a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs within the setting of extra care housing which will play a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals and contribute to our preventative agenda.

This policy will cover all Extra Care Housing within Sefton. Additional Extra Care allocation guidelines for specific and individual Extra Care schemes may also be introduced, to ensure that the housing needs of people are most appropriately met under this policy.

The draft Extra Care Allocations Policy details the eligibility, process, and system for applying for Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

To Enable Extra Care Housing to fulfil and meet our needs a robust policy must be approved that ensures residents of Sefton are prioritised and have a clear and open process for applying.

The policy will also help to provide assurances to the Housing Providers of Extra Care accommodation and encourage future developments to further meet our needs.

The Council is at the start of its journey to provide around 1300 units of accommodation by 2036 with key housing partners being the vehicle to support this vision.

Consultation and engagement process will help to inform the outcome of the policy.

Currently there is no formal nomination's policy with either of the two existing extra care housing schemes within Sefton including: -

- Parkhaven, Maghull (24 Units)
- James Horrigan Court, Netherton (71 Units)

A positive outcome will be putting a formal process in place for existing schemes to enable residents to access them.

By putting this policy in place prior to any new schemes opening within our borough should be seen as a positive in that it will assist residents, families, advocates, support agencies and other stakeholders in providing a clear and transparent process into extra care housing.

Continuous monitoring as per the policy will also enable us to ensure that future schemes are based on needs identified and build on good or bad practice either in the development and or allocation to schemes.

5. Could there be any implications for a protected characteristic group (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) in this (or the development of) this policy/practice?

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

Protected Characteristics

Impact and Comments.

Age.

Positive Impact.

Extra care housing is recognised as a key factor in promoting health and wellbeing and supporting independent living. Extra Care Housing will be developed to target older Sefton residents where a need is identified. Extra Care Housing will be allocated based on the criteria and process set within the policy. Extra Care Housing is primarily built for older residents typically 55+ thus impacting positively for this cohort.

18th May 23 – Some minor mixed comments re upping and lowering the age limit and ensuring careful consideration is given to younger residents. Overall positive and no changes to the criteria. 92% of Sefton respondents agreed with this.

3rd Nov 2023 – No update.

Disability.

Positive Impact.

The aim of the accommodation is to promote independence and well-being for older people with physical and learning/metal disabilities. The allocations policy will therefore facilitate the allocation of accommodation to these cohorts and

Agenda Item 4

have a positive impact.

18th May 2023 – Positive comments received through consultation in relation to more appropriate accommodation for residents with disabilities both older and younger.

3rd Nov 2023 – No update.

Gender Reassignment.

Neutral Impact.

No differential impact identified.

18th May 2023 – No update.

3rd Nov 2023 – No update.

Marriage/Civil Partnership.

Positive Impact.

Supports this cohort to remain together as may opposed to other accommodation that segregate couples based on their sexual orientation.

Pregnancy / Maternity.

No differential impact identified.

Race.

No differential impact identified

Religion or Belief.

No differential impact identified.

Sex.

No differential impact identified

Sexual Orientation.

No differential impact identified.

6. What research / data / information have you used to support this process?

Research / data / information used to support the proposal to provide extra care housing includes the Sefton Local Plan, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, ONS data, Census data, Property Pool Plus data and empty property data.

18th May 2023 – Please see link to report approving consultation process and subsequent feedback report.

[Sefton Council Empty Homes Strategy 2013 - 2018](#)

7. Consultation.

The Council is at the start of its proposals to deliver new Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

However, a range of strategies already in place support the delivery of new extra care housing across the borough with significant consultation undertaken for all including: -

- Sefton 2030 Vision and Core Purpose.
- Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2021.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019.
- Sefton Older People's Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025.
- Sefton's Housing Strategy 2016 and 2022.

Consultation has also taken place with Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (PSOC), POC local forums, Health Partners, Parent Carer Forum, Transforming Care Partnership Board, Local Registered Providers of Housing, the Combined Authority and Homes England.

8. What are the potential implications or barriers?

No implications or barriers have been identified at this time.

9. Evidence of addressing barriers and meeting public duties.

As Sefton Council develops its plans, policies, procedures, and services relating to Extra Care Housing, this EIA will be reviewed and updated accordingly. Further EIA's will also be undertaken and introduced when required.

Monitoring of ongoing consultations will also inform the EIA assessment.

10. Outline any changes to be made to policy/practice because of this assessment.

No changes have been made at this stage. As the Council continues with its work to deliver new Extra Care Housing, policies and practices will be developed. As policies and practices are developed, they will undergo Equality Impact Assessments to identify any potential impacts on each protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

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11. Progress update on actions required for the named policy/practice.

An initial EIA has been undertaken and no negative impacts have been identified. The EIA will be updated in 12-months time or sooner if found to be required.

Utilisation of the new system to support the policy will also enable us to monitor and evaluate Key Performance Indicators that we set.

12. Is a Full Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Action Plan required?

No, a full Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Action Plan is not required currently. No negative impacts have been identified. The requirement for an action plan will be reconsidered at the point of review.



EXTRA CARE ALLOCATION
POLICY REPORT PLAIN
ENGLISH
**Report after completion
of Consultation.**

Agenda Item 4

Extra Care Housing Allocations Policy Consultation.

Extra Care housing is specialist housing that joins accommodation with care and support services. This offers safe, private, and secure accommodation and allowing people to retain their independence and stay in their own home.

Sefton has a population that is living longer, and people tell us that a preference is to be able to remain in their own home, with the ability to access care and support if needed at some stage.

For those who already have support needs, or whose health is declining and indicates that they may need more help in the coming years, extra care housing offers the option to meet these needs.

We want to develop 1,300 extra care homes by 2036, this will be in approximately fifteen schemes across Sefton.

We are developing an Extra Care Allocations Policy.

The allocations policy will set out a clear pathway that is open and transparent and available to Sefton residents. It will make sure those in need are prioritised fairly and objectively.

The aim of the policy is to promote independence and well-being, making a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs. This is within the setting of extra care housing which will play a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy provides the criteria by which people applying for accommodation in Extra Care Housing in Sefton are assessed. And, if eligible the process and system for allocating appropriate available accommodation.

This allocations policy will require further work following our consultation before the presentation of the final version to **Cabinet**. Cabinet is a group of Sefton Councillors who take most of the final decisions about what the Council does, it is made up of a leader and nine other members.

Consultation with key stakeholders is vital to ensure that the policy is robust, fair and helps meet housing needs with the Borough.

Why we needed your feedback.

Engagement and consultation are very important in Sefton.

It's vital to the council and our partners that we understand the views of residents and use that information to develop services, products and communications that work for them.

We want to make sure that we support people and our communities to get involved in the public services they receive.

What will we do with your feedback.

We want to make sure what people need are met now and in the future within the policy.

The feedback from the consultation is in this report. **This is just the numbers the comments are in a separate document.**

Key Messages and Survey.

We asked for your views and comments on the draft Extra Care Allocations Policy. We asked people to read the key messages document which is below and complete the short survey.

You can also read the more detailed [Extra Care Allocations Policy](#), or search for 'Extra Care Housing' on Sefton Council's website.

Survey

The survey could also be accessed through scanning a QR code. Scanning the code with a phone camera linked to the online survey.

1. People responded as:

33 Members of the public.

6 Carers.

1 Councillor.

2 Stakeholder Groups.

8 Registered providers.

0 Advocates.

3 not answered.

2. The first part of people's postcode was asked for.

31 people gave their postcodes.

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The information is used in line with the Extra Care Housing Allocations Consultation **Privacy Policy**, which is at the end of this document.

Key Messages.

- This is Sefton's first Extra Care Allocations Policy.
- To be eligible for Extra Care Housing in Sefton you must meet the three criteria in the policy which are:
 - Local Connection.
 - Age.
 - Care or support need.
- If you are nominated by Adult Social Care for a placement within Extra Care Housing, you will have an assessment regarding your finances. This will be completed by the housing provider to determine if you are eligible based on your financial situation.

We asked for views and comments on the proposed Extra Care Allocation Policy. We focussed on the following areas:

Extra Care Eligibility.

To be considered for Extra Care housing applicants must meet the following criteria:

Local Connection.

To access affordable rented Extra Care Housing within Sefton the applicant must show they have a local connection. To show a local connection, an applicant must have been living in the borough continuously for the previous 24 months.

3. We asked - Do you agree with the proposed criteria of Local Connection?

47 Yes.

6 No.

17 comments are in a separate report with responses from Sefton Council.

Age.

55+ will be the initial qualifying age criteria. However, someone below this age with for example a long-term disability, considerable care needs and older carers of adults with disabilities will be considered.

Couples can apply when one or both meet the criteria.

Scenarios of being under 55 and eligible.

Long term disability for example could be a resident aged 50 with either Multiple Sclerosis / Parkinson's Disease / or early on set Dementia who's needs could be met within an Extra Care setting.

Considerable care needs could be a resident aged 48 who requires a significant package of care to assist with daily living and personal care due to their disabilities and health conditions.

Older carers of adults with disabilities could be a couple in their 70's with a son or daughter in their 40's, who has learning disabilities, to who they provide the care and support for.

4. We asked - Do you agree with the proposed age criteria of 55+?

49 Yes.

4 No.

9 comments are in a separate report with responses from Sefton Council.

5. We asked - Do you agree with the proposed criteria to also consider people under the age of 55?

46 Yes.

7 No.

9 comments are in a separate report with responses from Sefton Council.

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Support Needs.

One applicant must meet at least one of the following criteria: -

- Have a support or care needs as identified through a Care Act Assessment. For example, a person who has been assessed by a Social Worker.
- Currently living in a residential home and or nursing care setting.
- Have care and support needs due to a range of difficulties or disabilities as identified by an Adult Social Care assessment; or
- Be an older carer of a partner or with a son/daughter or dependent with a learning/ physical/ or mental health disability who needs care and support.

6. We asked - Do you agree with the proposed criteria to also consider people with support needs?

51 Yes.

2 No.

8 comments are in a separate report with responses from Sefton Council.

7. We asked - Do you have any other comments or ideas?

18 comments are in a separate report with responses from Sefton Council.

Agenda Item 5

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	1 February 2024
Subject:	Existing Extra Care Housing Contract Arrangements		
Report of:	Assistant Director for Life Course Integrated Commissioning	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

Extra care housing is housing with care. The housing is usually provided through a registered social landlord and has 24-hour care and support provider on site. This report is about the care and support contract for Parkhaven Trust which is an extra care housing scheme which supports 24 Sefton residents. This report seeks approval for the direct award of a contract to Parkhaven Trust for a 2-year period for the provision of care and support. During this period new extra care housing schemes to be developed and we will be establishing a framework of providers who will provide care and support into these new schemes. This contract will be aligned to the timeframe for a new Sefton Extra Care Housing Care and Support framework.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Approve the award of a contract utilising the Extra Care Liverpool City Region Flexible Purchasing System (LCRFPS). This route to market allows for a direct award of a contract in exceptional circumstances of which the alignment with future models is one.
- (2) To approve the direct award a 2 year to Parkhaven Trust. Commencing on the 1st of April 2024 to the 31st of March 2026 to facilitate the provision of Care and Support at Parkhaven Court Extra Care Housing Scheme.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

This proposal allows continuity of service within an established Sefton Extra Care facility and will align to the commissioning of services into Extra Care Housing over the next 2 years.

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

Option 1.

The option to procure a longer-term contract was dismissed to align with the wider Extra Care Housing strategy.

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Option 2.

Allow the contract to expire. This was not an option as the service supports people who are eligible for service under the Care Act 2014.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Revenue Costs The contents of this report represent a £271,160 per annum commitment over a 2-year period (please note this may be subject to annual increases) This is currently included in the Adult Social Care budget. There is no additional revenue impact represented by the contents of this report.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
None	
Legal Implications:	
Care Act 2014 Public Contract Procedure Rules 2015 - The Provider completed a competitive tendering exercise for the previous contract.	
Equality Implications: The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated. An EIA has been completed and is attached as Appendix 1 within this report	
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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Extra Care supports some of our most vulnerable residents
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Extra Care Housing is a key asset to supporting care closer to home.
Commission, broker and provide core services: The report relates to a key commissioned service for Adult Social Care

Place – leadership and influencer:
The Extra Care scheme contributes positively to the local area
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 approach has been developed in consultation with Adult Social Care Management and the cabinet member for adult social care.

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7499 /24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5599/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

A consultation and engagement event was held with residents at Parkhaven Court on 16th November 2023.

Implementation of decision

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

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

1. This report follows a previous report to Cabinet on 7th January 2021.

[Parkhaven Court – Cabinet Approval](#)

The following link provides further information on the councils wider Extra Care Programme: [Sefton Extra Care Housing](#)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sefton approved an extra Care Housing strategy in early 2021 and the Council's strategic intention is to develop approximately 600 units of Extra Care Housing throughout the borough within the next five years, therefore, the Council will initiate an extensive commissioning programme relating to the care and support needed for all other Extra Care Schemes with a consistent streamlined approach for care and support contracts by 2026.
- 1.2 Parkhaven Court is an established Extra Care Scheme whereby service users have security of tenure within their own individual apartment and access to a full range of community services, with the additional benefit of a 24-hour care and support provider on site.
- 1.3 The current contract which expires in March 2024 was awarded through via the Liverpool City Region framework for a period of two years in 2022, with an option to extend for one further year, via delegated authority to the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care. This contract will expire on the 31st of March 2024; therefore the report seeks to gain approval for new arrangements.
- 1.3 The Scheme has 24 apartments which are fully occupied (12 one bedroom, 12 two bedroom) and accommodates single people, couples, friends, and siblings enabling people to continue to live together even if only one of them needs care and support. The scheme is predominantly for people living with dementia and is part of a wider portfolio of provision for people living with the condition, this Extra Care provision also provides accommodation for some residents with learning disabilities.
- 1.4 Parkhaven Trust also provide care and support across the whole site and the housing management function for the Extra Care Scheme is under an exclusive housing management arrangement with Your Housing. This provides continuity of care, and the ability to deliver wrap around, or enhanced support across the services, which mitigates the impact of changes facing a person living with dementia and other such conditions.
- 1.5 Parkhaven Court have a CQC overall rating of 'Good' with the last inspection taking place on 3rd January 2019.
- 1.6 The Liverpool City Framework allows direct award of a contract to a provider exceptional circumstance including.
 - If the provider has a genuine existing exclusive arrangement with the landlord of the scheme
 - Where the provider is already providing other services at the premises, and it is impracticable or not commercially feasible for another provider to be appointed to the Individual Contract

2. The Contract

- 2.1 Parkhaven Extra Care scheme currently is home to 14 people receiving 258 hours of support per week, the remaining 10 tenants pay for their own care.

The average level of support is 18.5 hours of care per week, meaning an alternative offer to meet these peoples care and support would realistically be residential care. Currently Extra Care costs the council £348.48 per week and residential care costs an average of £649.70 per week.

The hourly rate for Care and Support delivered in this Extra Care scheme aligns with the Supported Living rate of £18.91per hour. Each resident also pays a proportion of available night support delivered by a minimum of 2 members of staff.

This compares as follows to regional neighbours:

Area	Rate 2023/24
Cheshire West and Chester	£20.50
Sefton	£18.91
Knowsley	£18.70
Wirral	£17.25
Liverpool	£16.65

- 2.2 We do not currently have full nomination rights and as part of the new contract implementation the provider will be expected to align with the new Extra Care allocations policy.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the award of the care of support contract to Parkhaven trust extra care scheme for a period of two years on the provision that; 1) nomination rights align with the Council's nomination policy. 2) that the contract will align with the new framework in 2026. This provides continuity of provision for people living with dementia and learning disabilities in our borough and allows the continuation of the wider strategic approach and development of Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

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Agenda Item 6

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	1 st February 2024
Subject:	A Cultural Strategy for Sefton		
Report of:	Executive Director (People)	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Cllr. Hardy (Communities & Housing)		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

A steering group comprising Council officers, and representatives from the creative and voluntary sector, has been working towards the development of a Cultural Strategy for Sefton.

A draft strategy document has been prepared using the evidence base from consultation and engagement activity.

Further engagement between January to March 2024 is proposed to develop an Action Plan, with objectives for delivery between 2024 and 2030. This will be co-produced between the Council and wider representation from cultural stakeholders.

Once the Action Plan is completed any outstanding elements of the strategy document will be finalised, leading to the publication of a final strategy from which the activities will commence.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cultural Strategy for Sefton be approved.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To utilise the strategy and progress with the Action Plan January to March 2024 that will complete the Cultural Strategy.

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

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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(A) Revenue Costs

N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Legal Implications:	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Impact on Children and Young People: Yes The strategy will have a positive impact on Children & Young People in supporting opportunities for cultural engagement.	
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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: the promotion of positive cultural interventions and their benefits for healthy living will support people at risk of cultural exclusion
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: targeted cultural opportunities will promote social inclusion and celebrate community identity
Commission, broker and provide core services: not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: the proposals will promote cultural opportunity as an influential element in the development of Regenerated Places

Drivers of change and reform: not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: not applicable
Greater income for social investment: not applicable
Cleaner Greener: not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7500/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5600/24.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

To date, the development of the strategy has included the following consultation & engagement activity:

An online public survey via the *Your Sefton Your Say* portal – 444 responses. It should be noted that over half of the responses came from the north of Sefton and there would be value to continuing further engagement in the south of the borough.

Interviews with key stakeholders – 32 interviews including Council representation, higher education, public sector representatives, culture sector governance, funding bodies, and local cultural organisations.

Culture and community sector workshops – 50 participants from local community and cultural organisations. This cohort would provide the basis for developing a recommended Cultural Partnership, ensuring that Sefton artists and cultural groups are engaged in our development activity towards Borough of Culture and beyond.

Children & Young People engagement – engagement took place with Sefton’s Young Advisors, and other youth groups such as the Atkinson’s Young Curators, MYA SPACE and YKids. Ongoing engagement with young people is recommended to ensure their voice is included in our cultural planning.

Minority Voices – responses were received from MENCAP, Sefton Access for Everyone (SAFE), Southport African Caribbean Heritage Association (SACHA) and the Sefton Partnership for Older People. It is proposed that further discussions are held to gain wider participation in ongoing planning.

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

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Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

- 1) Draft Culture Strategy document

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

Sefton Council with Sefton Culture Steering Group are developing a new cultural strategy for the Borough. The strategy will be aligned to wider Sefton partnerships and articulate the positive ways in which cultural engagement can help the Borough achieve its Vision for Year 2030. The strategy will reflect the cultural context for Sefton and will respond to wider local needs. The strategy will be a key step in Sefton's planning towards LCR Borough of Culture celebration in 2025.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Develop a shared vision for culture in Sefton.
- Support development of the local infrastructure for culture and creative engagement.
- Strengthen relationships between Sefton and the wider professional sector for culture and creativity.
- Reveal, celebrate and promote opportunities for cultural and creative participation across the Borough.
- Provide a strategic context in support of stakeholder bids for external funding.

Support for the strategy development has been externally funded via Shared Prosperity Fund. A full procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint consultant support, with Counterculture LLP the successful candidate. They are an Arts Council approved Consultant for Change.

The steering group provided a wide range of information and mapping as significant background material for Counterculture's analysis. The consultants' research features analysis of Sefton's economic profile including culture and creative sector, audience profiling, asset mapping and policy context.

Strategy

The Strategy document reflects the findings from the consultation activity and outlines the current cultural 'ecology' of Sefton. and

It also offers a SWOT assessment to highlight areas of opportunity e.g. neighbourhood programming, regeneration projects, developing a talent channel for young people who want to pursue career opportunities in the cultural sector

Identified themes which will inform the development of the action plan

Culture Leads - Aim: Sefton is ready to seize current opportunities for culture-led change, and generate new ones.

Creativity Everywhere - Aim: Everyone in Sefton can take part in a rich and varied cultural life, whatever their age, whatever their means and wherever they live

Creativity Thrives - Aim: Creative People and organisations achieve their full artistic potential

Dynamic Landscape - Aim: Sefton's outstanding landscapes and green spaces engage local people and visitors in a new model of culture, climate action and wellbeing

Children & Young People - Aim: From early years to creative careers opportunities for Children and Young People run through Sefton's cultural life "like Rock".

Overview and Scrutiny

The strategy was considered by Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) on Tuesday 16th January 2024 and welcomed progress on the development of the strategy and noted that the Action Plan to accompany the strategy would be brought forward in the next few months.

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SEFTON CULTURAL STRATEGY

CONTENTS

FOREWORDS – Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and Steering Group – to follow

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – to follow

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1.3 Why Do We Need A Cultural Strategy?

1.4 Why now?

1.5 Research and Consultation

2.0 FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

2.1 Place and Time

2.2 Spaces and Places

2.3 Creative People and Organisations

2.4 Taking Part in Culture

2.5 Cultural Ecology

2.6 Cultural Funding

2.7 SWOT Analysis

3.0 STRATEGY

3.1 Aims and action areas:

- Culture Leads
- Creativity Everywhere
- Creativity Thrives
- Dynamic Landscape
- Children and Young People

3.2 Roles

- Council
- Cultural Partnership

3.3 Next Steps [to follow] :-

- Continued Consultation;
- Cultural Partnership
- Visioning
- Action and Investment Plan;
- Borough of Culture

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – to follow

- Names of Steering Group
- Other important info/people etc

1.1 Introduction

In 2021, as Sefton began to emerge from the Covid19 pandemic, Sefton's Elected Members were invited to share examples of creative and cultural activity happening in their wards. Each conversation leading to another, revealed Sefton's lively - but largely hidden - creative life.

Self-organised, place-focussed, imaginative cultural activity is being made in community hubs, by groups of neighbours, gardeners, cultural groups, visual artists, theatre-makers, composers, performers, authors, crafters and organisers. All are responding creatively and making things happen in their neighbourhoods in different ways. A snapshot includes:

- an outstanding symphonic wind orchestra in Maghull
- RHS award-winning community horticulture in Bootle
- craft groups decorating Formby's alleyways
- passionate local heritage research in every township
- innovative inter-generational performing arts, led by young people
- community rock choirs and guitar groups
- an outdoor arts Viking Festival
- online clowning and puppetry with Japanese artists and older participants from across Sefton based in Ainsdale
- a contemporary circus and visual arts studio in Bootle Strand

A Cultural Strategy Steering Group, comprising council, creative and voluntary sector representatives, was formed with the purpose of shaping a new Sefton Cultural Strategy that would nurture this groundswell of diverse creative activity and bring together this community-led culture with the major regeneration opportunities.

1.2 What is culture?

Culture and creativity, of course, mean different things to different people.

For the purposes of the consultation the terms culture and creativity were defined as:

- the arts - art & crafts, music, drama, film, dance, literature, digital media
- heritage, built environment and natural environment
- sport in terms of its role in events, social identity and heritage

1.3 Why do we need a cultural strategy?

In the public survey, residents were asked to describe culture in Sefton in 3 words.

Replies suggested many positive concepts, including the diversity and variety of Sefton's community-led offer, and the natural landscape.

Green, vibrant, varied
Variety, inspiring, entertaining
Unique, eclectic, stimulating
Diverse, enjoyable, historic
Varied, artistic, welcoming
Great natural areas
Coastal, community, varied
Attractive, interesting, stimulating
Community-driven offer
Healthy, happy living

Other responses highlighted issues around awareness, ambition and focus.

No cohesive advertising
Needs more oomph
Hard to find
Under the radar
Aims too low
All about Southport
Low cost, low priority, badly advertised
Lacking, disappointing, uninspiring
Hidden, parochial, limited
Underfunded, narrow, unfocused
Limited, narrow, unambitious
Dance is invisible
Not enough music
More arts please
Not inclusive enough

This suggests the challenges in participation in cultural life for local residents, cultural audiences and creative people around cohesion, ambition, inclusion and communication.

A cultural strategy is needed to provide a shared vision and a clear plan for everyone engaged in the cultural life of Sefton, that will address these and other challenges.

1.4 Why now?

Sefton's **Vision for 2030** consists of 8 shared aspirations that will create a confident and connected Borough in which culture and creativity has a clear and vital role to play.

Key within this is the aspiration for Sefton to be “known for its cultural scene”, a vital part of making this a desirable place to live. With 46% participation - lowest third in UK; lack of visibility for local creatives, and little available for young people (including older young people) there are few “scenes” to tap and much development needed to achieve this goal. In terms of “something for everyone” there is a wide gap between large-scale events and small group activities (at both of which Sefton excels) in engaging our community in culture. The role of culture in Sefton is also underutilised in relation to sustainability, community cohesion and wellbeing.

A Cultural Strategy is needed to harness this potential and make clear progress against a timeline set out by this vision. Evaluation of Sefton's Borough of Culture in 2020 highlighted the need for a place-based strategy and clear governance, for more effective delivery and enhanced place-making.

Since then, Sefton has secured investment for major regeneration projects with cultural delivery and opportunity at their core: once-in-a-lifetime investments that will have huge long term impact and enable unparalleled change.

There is an opportunity to create richer cultural lives for all of Sefton's communities. Sefton's Year as Borough of Culture in 2025 will provide the ideal catalyst.

1.5 Research and Consultation

Sefton Council appointed CounterCulture PLC in June 2023 to conduct research and consultation to build on this informal knowledge and bring together an Evidence Base to which a Cultural Strategy could respond.

This included:

- Desk Review of key local and national policy, strategy and cultural trends
- 32 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders including Council officers and elected members, HE, public sector representatives, funding bodies, cultural and community organisations.
- 3 Culture and Community Sector Workshops, involving a total of 50 participants
- Children & Young People's consultation including a short online survey and conversations with Children & YP groups.
- A short survey aimed at key inclusion organisations and groups

In addition, an online public survey was distributed via the *Your Sefton Your Say* portal, with 444 responses. Together with community intelligence, local knowledge and stakeholder opinion, this forms a robust Evidence Base of research and consultation data on which to base a strategic response [Appendix].

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However, the Steering Group felt the Children and Young People’s consultation did not achieve the level of engagement or quality of data necessary for the strategy to fully reflect the wants and needs of local young people under this key area of action. Children and Young People’s voice must be at the centre of the next stages of development and delivery of the Strategy.

For Findings and Insights **go to page 7**

For Strategy **go to page 27**

For next steps **go to p 32 [to follow]**

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2.0 FINDINGS/INSIGHTS

Findings and insights drawn from the data are organised under six headings:

- Place and Time: which sets out the immediate local context
- Cultural Assets: places, spaces, collections and archives
- Creative People: the people who make culture
- Taking Part In Culture: audiences
- Cultural Ecology: the relationships between these elements
- A concluding SWOT analysis draws together the key findings in summary

2.1 Place and time

2.1.1 Many Places

95% of Sefton's 276k residents live in urban and suburban locations:

- Bootle, Seaforth & Litherland and Netherton in the South;
- Crosby, Hightown and Formby in the centre;
- Aintree and Maghull to the East
- the Victorian resort town of Southport and its surrounding suburbs in the North.
- Villages like Lunt and Sefton pepper outlying semi-rural areas.

Each place has its own distinct character and neighbourhood culture, with very different histories, identities, demographics, spaces, geography and amenities coming into play. Many townships sit on a linear route that hugs the coastline, but connectivity between places, especially between the East and North, and to and from rural areas, is difficult, and these parts of the borough do not share this sense of coastal identity.

The “many-centred-ness” or “polycentricity” strongly influences what is available for local people to take part in. This isn't unique to Sefton, but it is very striking, especially in determining what people identify as their community, which tends to be hyperlocal, rather than “Sefton”.

In a place made up of many places, that is distinguished by lots of people doing small things, there is opportunity to develop high quality neighbourhood cultural offers. However, what is on offer can become diffuse and difficult to navigate. The challenge is to create shared focus, and a mechanism for collaboration, to bring this together as more than the sum of its parts.

2.1.2 Sefton is a Borough of Contrasts

Sefton is a Borough of Contrasts not only in landscape and character.

Significant inequalities pervade. In some areas, clustered in the South of the Borough and in Southport, people face challenges around income, employment, housing, education and quality of life. Some neighbourhoods are in the 1-10% most deprived in the UK. In 2019, Sefton ranked 89 out of 317 for the most deprived English local authorities (1 being most deprived).

[ONS Indices of Deprivation 2019]

The widest gap in life expectancy in any local authority in the North West is found between the most and least affluent communities in Sefton. (14.1 years males / 12.3 years females)

In 2020/21 almost one in six Sefton children lived in relative poverty: 1 in 6 nursery and primary school age pupils; 1 in 5 secondary schools age pupils and almost half of pupils attending special educational needs schools were receiving free school meals. In our lowest-income communities there is a significant education attainment gap, which begins in early years but most evident at Key Stage 4 (lowest 1/3 local authorities).

[The Education Policy Institute, 2020, *Child Poverty Strategy*]

There is a significant role for Culture in the work needed to address these inequalities by improving life chances, quality of life and health and wellbeing. This is well documented and clearly recognised by the voluntary sector. There is opportunity to bolster good work, increase its impact and develop new initiatives through joined-up working, and by more effectively embedding culture into key council strategies.

2.1.3 Orbit of Liverpool

Sefton borders Liverpool at Bank Hall/Bootle, with Aintree to the east merging into Liverpool suburbs. The vibrancy of the city - and ease of reaching it by train for leisure or work - is part of what makes Sefton an attractive place to live.

At the same time, local cultural life can be overshadowed by the sheer combined heft of Liverpool's arts institutions. Talent and energy can be consumed by the bigger cultural players. Local work, outside of institutions, can be seen as lower quality or status. Things that happen in Sefton are often perceived to belong to the city.

The challenge is to turn this proximity to Sefton's advantage by:

- working in equitable partnership with leading cultural organisations to widen opportunities for Sefton communities and creatives
- taking a seat at the table with city region partners
- taking the lead where Sefton is best placed to do so

2.1.4 Changing cultural ecology

Significant new capital infrastructure is being developed that will create a huge shift in cultural capacity in terms of space and scale.

The **Southport Town Plan** will radically develop Southport's cultural and digital infrastructure. The centrepiece is the new Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC) which includes the 'Light Fantastic' water, light and sound show in the adjacent Marine Lake, unique in the region:

- £37.5 million Town Deal Funding
- £19.7 million Council Investment
- projected 500,000 visitors to the local area
- £18 million to the local economy annually

In Bootle:

- £20 million Levelling Up Funding secured to progress the transformation of Bootle town centre
- Area Action Plan to realise long-term vision for town
- Public consultation is underway to embed creativity and education in the redevelopment of the Strand
- Salt & Tar events space on Bootle canal-side piloted its first comedy and music weekenders. A diverse music offer drew local, regional and international audiences. 6,000 tickets sold for the music festival produced in partnership with Sound City
- Investment in the venue is supporting collaboration with Bootle community and cultural organisations

Pipeline development:

- A coalitional approach developed to create change in the Poet's Streets neighbourhood, led by Housing Associations
- Growing out of its creative enterprise hub, SAFE Regeneration's scheme for mixed-use development adjacent to the canal has creative community at its core

These are major shifts in the cultural capacity of our biggest towns Southport and Bootle. There will be significant opportunity, and perhaps also challenge, to use these spaces to:

- welcome local people, who may have low incomes
- utilise co-production in programming
- create opportunity for local artists and creative organisations
- support the talent/employment pathway for local young people
- ensure that all Sefton's people benefit
- create new opportunities for the future role of the Atkinson

2.2 Spaces and Places for Culture

2.2.1 Cultural Buildings

Sefton has a number of eminent cultural buildings and spaces including both civic and community-owned spaces, with two major new assets in development. Events and participatory activities happen in community-owned spaces including music in pubs, bars and school and church venues.

But dedicated buildings and spaces for creative activity are limited and unevenly spread. This is a major factor affecting local cultural capacity in key areas:

- There is limited range of regular, visible cultural offers for local audiences
- Some places lack a space that offers civic or cultural focus
- Individual artists can become isolated due to lack of workspace: proximity to other creatives generates opportunity, collaboration and capacity
- Creatives and groups have difficulties in finding spaces to both make and present work
- Spaces that are available can present issues with location, accessibility, infrastructure, technical support and cost
- Pop up and ‘meanwhile’ spaces create vibrancy but lack longevity - talent and audiences nurtured need to be retained, and mobilising spaces is resource intensive
- Significant gaps include rehearsal and performance spaces, production facilities, artists studios and making spaces
- A gap exists for a midscale music venue

2.2.2 Heritage

Local heritage and history are popular hooks for many of the audiences living in Sefton. This is reflected in the public survey as one of the areas where people wanted to see more and better future cultural delivery.

“Let’s celebrate our local cultural history and how it translates into the present.”

Sefton’s 585 listed buildings, 13 scheduled monuments and 5 registered historic parks inspire people to participate in heritage walks, talks, digital research and exhibitions.

Extraordinary Heritage Buildings include:

- Bootle Town Hall (Grade II listed)
- Southport Pier
- Southport Town Hall (circa 1850)
- Lord Street (early 19th Century)
- Plaza Cinema (1938)
- Old ChristChurch Waterloo (Grade II listed)
- Linacre Mission (late 19th Century)

The local history archive at Crosby Library contains thousands of maps, photos, books, microfiche and cine film, and is under constant request for research access. These assets are a key source for revealing untold histories, inspiring creative responses to Sefton’s distinct and sometimes unconventional stories.

Work is needed to:

- develop the archive as a more public facing facility linked to participatory projects and volunteering
- explore difficult, unusual and hidden histories
- work with groups who do not usually engage with heritage
- create digitally and innovatively

2.2.3 Landscape and outdoor spaces

Sefton’s extraordinary coastline and green spaces are perhaps its strongest - and definitive - cultural asset:

- Coastline - significant and rare habitat, rich in human as well as natural history: neolithic footprint, Viking invasions, Victorian botany, tragic shipwrecks and sea rescue, civil aviation, world war stories
- Canal system through South and East of Borough, green lung in urban spaces and link to industrial past
- Parks, gardens and community green spaces are key sites for grassroots engagement and community stewardship

Landscape and green spaces are both site for cultural engagement and subject matter for creative practice and have hosted:

- Public Art of national significance Antony Gormley’s *Another Place* at Crosby Beach
- Community music festivals and outdoor theatre
- Major Events - Southport Flower Show, British Musical Fireworks Championship, Food & Drink Festivals

There is significant local appetite for more outdoor cultural activity and opportunity but access and programming must be designed around the need to safeguard and preserve the delicate ecosystem of the coast in particular.

The coastal context, too, makes visible the impact of climate change and drives home the necessity to ensure all local cultural programming is as “green” as it can be.

National context: Key local landowners National Trust and Canal & Rivers Trust are major partners or direct commissioners of cultural activity in other areas. Nationally, strategic agreements have been made to develop role of culture and natural environment (eg MOUs between Arts Council England and Forestry England/AONBs)

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There is opportunity to develop a distinctive model of cultural programming that brings together culture, environment and wellbeing. This would:

- promote responsible use of the fragile environment
- enhance visitor experience out of season and lead footfall away from areas at risk
- increase young people's engagement, volunteering and "nature on prescription"
- enrich engagement through ambitious creative commissioning in response to the urgent themes the coast makes visible - migration, seasonal change and the climate emergency
- create a model of best practice to embed environmentally responsible event/festival production and creative programming across all sectors

2.3 Creative People and Organisations

2.3.1 Professional Artists and Freelancers:

Creatives and cultural producers living and working in Sefton include theatre-makers, visual artists, authors, poets, dancers, singers, classical and contemporary musicians, cultural educators, digital artists, film makers, heritage professionals, curators, directors, producers and technicians and other freelancers.

They are made up of:

- established creatives achieving international acclaim based in the Borough all their lives
- relocating or returning to the Borough
- employed full-time or part-time freelance, often with portfolio careers
- young creatives living at home whilst studying creative subjects at: Hugh Baird College (Bootle), Edge Hill (Ormskirk), Southport College, KGV (Southport) Runshaw College (Leyland) or Hope, LJMU and University of Liverpool
- young creatives studying elsewhere in the UK with potential to return to Borough

Unlike the borough's Everyday Creatives, these arts professionals tend to be less visible within local cultural life, often making work for audiences outside Sefton, with creative practices and networks focussed in Liverpool. Only 7 Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grants have been awarded to local artists since 2021 (compared with 80 in Liverpool), which may indicate lack of traction in practices or careers, or insufficient skills/confidence in writing applications.

2.3.2 Creative Industries in Sefton

Main sectors represented from research is based around technically driven digital businesses; film, TV and photography; publishing and architecture.

They are:

- are primarily micro businesses

- 2,500 workforce
- contribute over £90m to the economy annually

As with artists, the growth of activity in the Borough is affected by Liverpool's more established sector, supported incubators/workspaces/hubs/clusters. High Street regeneration projects will develop new alternative local hubs for Creative and Digital Industries (Southport's Enterprise Arcade, Bootle Strand).

2.3.3 Organisations

Sefton's **independent professional cultural organisations** include:

- music companies
- professional theatre companies
- community arts companies and social enterprises
- a community arts hub
- one established studio group
- youth arts organisations
- community-managed heritage buildings
- 2 community-owned independent cinemas

None of these organisations receive core funding. Stop/start resourcing through project grants hinders ambition and creative risk-taking. Economic conditions are currently particularly difficult for the creative sector.

Some arts companies are place-based, but others find more opportunity to produce their work outside the Borough. Few diverse-led organisations.

There is a gap for a larger-scale/funded professional performance producing company – and opportunity to host or incubate new theatre, live/outdoor arts or dance companies.

2.3.4 Sefton Council

The Atkinson is Sefton's principal centre for the arts and is one of the most visited cultural destinations in the region. Its museum celebrates the heritage of Sefton and attracts schools from across the North West to see the Mrs Goodison Egyptology collection. In addition to its outstanding collection of Victorian art, the exhibition programme regularly features work by contemporary artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Chila Burman and Gordon Cheung. Its performing arts programme hosts a comprehensive selection of music, comedy, theatre from both professional companies and local performing groups.

Sefton's six public libraries deliver an annual programme of activities based upon universal library offers for reading, digital inclusion, information, and health & wellbeing. Its programme for children & younger people features story & rhymetime sessions for literacy development and its Summer Reading Challenge continues to achieve some of the best participation levels in the North West. The local history service promotes its physical and digital archives through project work, publications and heritage talks. The At The Library programme is delivered in partnership with Rule of Threes and is now a designated National Portfolio Organisation with the Arts Council.

In addition to its food & beverage offer, Southport Market is steadily becoming a popular venue for cultural entertainment. It hosts live music, comedy, films, family and community activities.

2.3.5 Liverpool-based cultural partners frequently active in Sefton include Collective Encounters and NPOs Open Eye, Writing on The Wall, Liverpool Biennial and Sound City.

2.3.6 Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

Sefton's VCF sector, in all its diversity, is well-positioned to be a key partner in cultural delivery:

- anchor organisations with serious cultural ambitions, working with professional artists, and using arts and creativity to deliver their core social impact work
- small community groups offering creative opportunities in their neighbourhoods
- civic societies and heritage groups

The VCF sector:

- recognises the relevance of arts and heritage activity to delivering social outcomes
- reaches some of the least-engaged and highest-need communities
- brings expertise in co-production bringing lived experience into service design
- is supported and networked through Sefton CVS

Collectively Sefton’s Creative People and Organisations reflected their priorities as:

- a seat at the table
- improved spaces, and support to access them
- co-operative working, sharing of skills and networks
- structured talent development
- shared information platforms: cultural directory/ clash calendar/co-ordinated communications plan
- producing and commissioning opportunities: to be able to make new work
- practical specialist advice: funding, bid-writing, business support, mentorship, contracts
- advocacy - visibility and value of professional creatives, and creative practice

These kinds of organisations are essential to Sefton’s future cultural development and should be properly engaged and supported as equal partners. Building their collective capacity to respond to local need and opportunity; and to develop programmes that meet the appetites of local audiences is a priority.

There is opportunity to:

- support a shift from small project-based activity to collective and sustained cultural programming
- map and join up activity around artforms and audiences to support collective marketing and audience development; fill gaps and increase quality
- support and underpin the sector through continued precarious times
- support and advocate for good practice in fair pay for artists

2.4 Taking Part in Culture

2.4.1 According to the *2019 Taking Part* survey, Sefton’s cultural participation is 46%, within the lowest third of Local Authority areas for cultural engagement. footnote

Reasons for this will be varied and nuanced, but include:

- Survey responses include: Lack of awareness 45% Cost 35% Transport 19%
- Cost of Living impacts - the single biggest barrier across income brackets
- Relevance, quality and consistency of the cultural offer in the Borough
- Perception
- the appeal of public cultural programmes that are available in the Borough
- big calendar fixture events may not be affordable to many local people
- grass-roots activities focussed on specific interests
- Inconsistent “public programme” offer

2.4.2 Audiences

Audience segmentation shows that:

- Sefton households are mainly moderately or low-engaged, with broad tastes and preferences for heritage, mainstream and popular activities
- 35% of overall households' cultural engagement is likely to be driven by family-focussed activities
- the “average” hides the contrasts in cultural access & likelihood of engagement
- households in South Sefton and parts of Southport, where inequalities are severe, are least likely to be taking part
- this needs consideration in building the cultural offer equitably and effectively: low-cost, close-to-home offers will be key.
- pockets of highly-engaged households in other areas, with preferences for classical artforms, theatre and galleries

[Audience Agency, 2023, *Sefton Area Profile Report*]

Consultation showed that residents wanted:

- more outdoor arts and events, festivals, local history and music (“big names” and “cooler bands”)
- more ambitious programming, to raise audience expectations and create demand
- anchor council spaces - the Atkinson and Libraries - to be open for different/longer hours, to meet local need, working families and young people; and contribute to Southport’s weekend vibrancy

“We need a more modern and forward-looking set of programming and projects to be the engine for culture, connection and community.”

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Your Sefton Your Say Culture Strategy survey*]

There is opportunity to:

- build shared audience development strategies, requiring research, and consistent offers
- raise the level of ambition of what is available, utilising Borough of Culture
- increase participation through high quality neighbourhood programming, using assets including Libraries, VCF and independent arts organisations and on high streets (Sefton has one of the highest proportions of residents living near High Streets in the UK)
- use shared audience data to develop better understanding of who is engaged and who is not, borough-wide and hyper-locally

2.4.3 Visitor Economy

Within the Liverpool City Region Sefton is ranked 2nd after Liverpool in terms of visitor numbers. The value of tourism in Sefton is currently estimated at £594 million. In

2022, there were almost 7 million-day visitors to Sefton, with 770,000 visitors staying within the borough. This supported 6,111 Sefton jobs in the tourism sector.

[North West Research STEAM data 2022]

As well as coast and seaside town the visitor offer includes festivals, weekenders, sporting events and shows mostly outdoors. Sefton has a number of nationally and internationally important attractions, including :

- major international sporting events - Aintree Grand National; The 2026 Open Golf hosted at Royal Birkdale Club
- the Southport Flower and Air Shows, British Musical Fireworks at Victoria Park
- Antony Gormley's *Another Place* at Crosby Beach

The tourism strategy will be refreshed in 2025 presenting an opportunity for greater alignment of culture and visitor economy, as will the major regeneration projects in Bootle and Southport. This should lead to the development of a year-round offer with visitors staying longer in the borough.

2.4.4 Volunteering

Volunteering is a significant part of local cultural participation in Sefton and makes an essential contribution to local cultural life.

- there is “a culture of volunteering”, supported by Sefton CVS (SCVS)
- a large, structured programme supporting council provision within The Atkinson, Libraries Service and Green Sefton
- volunteering plays a vital part in sustainability of community cinemas, parks and green spaces, environmental groups and community arts activities.
- over-reliance on volunteering activity can limit the scope and scale of cultural provision, and may not be sustainable in under-resourced communities.

Sefton could build on this strength through collective work to:

- capture the scale and value of cultural volunteering in Sefton
- support volunteering by underrepresented communities
- further develop the role of volunteering in creative ageing
- improve training, progression routes and paid support/co-ordination
- ensure voluntary sector jobs and paid artist employment opportunities are not displaced by volunteering

2.4.5 Everyday Creativity

Distinct from Community Arts or CICs providing participatory activities, “Everyday Creativity” relates to creative activities that people do for their own enjoyment, alone or in self-organised groups. It can be a hobby, or a side-hustle, and can lead to or sit alongside professional creativity.

[Centre for Cultural Value, 2023, *Supporting Everyday Creativity*]

Consultation shows high levels of individual participation, from community opera to bedroom DJs, yarn-bombers to large scale, established amateur theatre and a huge number and variety of creative groups.

Their wants and needs include:

- access to spaces
- modest funding opportunity
- increasing members, especially those willing to be organisers
- skill development

There is opportunity to:

- support the capacity and increase the inclusivity of groups
- develop the role of Everyday Creativity in wellbeing, social prescribing and active ageing

Widening Participation

2.4.6 Children and Young People

Children and young people and their cultural opportunities are universally confirmed as a high priority.

Young people's cultural assets include:

- a dedicated Youth Arts facility co-producing creative work with young people and professionals
- music studios based in schools
- core work in Libraries with Early Years, Children's Literacy and summer activities
- private dance, drama and musical theatre schools and music tuition
- Northern Morris dance groups
- brass bands
- partnership projects led by Curious Minds
- film education at community cinemas
- after-school arts clubs and groups
- VCF projects such as Bootle Children's Literary Festival delivering programming both in and out of school
- Sefton's music service is active across the Borough. Applications to deliver the Music Hub were in consideration at the time of writing
- Cultural and Creative FE and HE courses with links to universities

Young people stated that they value:

- coast and green spaces, festivals and libraries
- the role of culture in supporting their wellbeing and social skills
- sharing creative energy and experiences with others
- expanded horizons - meeting "professionals like writers and directors" and "people with different stories to tell"

and that they want:

- more places to go - creative social spaces
- more face-to-face, offline social interaction
- more evening activities for late teens aged 15-18
- culture to be affordable for young people and families

For aspiring Young Creatives, the talent pipeline goes cold after Further/Higher Education, and they need:

- guidance and support to access employment opportunities in the creative industries.
- apprenticeships, placements and mentoring
- direct access to artists as role models and as sharers of practice

“There are not many places for young people to go which drives them to the streets. We are sometimes asked to leave early if we are not with an adult
“ I wanted to be a dancer / choreographer but when I graduated it just felt too competitive – if I’d had more career guidance or mentoring I may have continued.”

This is a challenging starting point. Years of enforced austerity has whittled down youth provision; schools find it harder to deliver cultural education; families cannot afford the cultural treats that used to be calendar fixtures; young people feel set adrift on leaving FE/HE. Sefton’s educational attainment gap is significant: cultural access and cultural education have been proven to bridge this. Without large cultural venues, to underpin a strategy to support Cultural Education Sefton will need a different new local approach.

opportunities include:

- building on existing cultural apprenticeship programmes, to make it possible for more young people to begin and establish creative careers in Sefton
- new and expanded partnerships with the NHS, Early Years and Voluntary sector
- working with existing cultural spaces increase their relevance and appeal to young people and supporting youth-led activities within them
- enabling young people to take the lead in designing the models of cultural programming that will best meet their needs
- investing in Sefton’s LCEP, which has a wide membership and vision but requires resourcing to be able to achieve its ambition
- supporting joined-up, borough-wide thematic programming to address key focus areas

New strands of work could include:

- targeted programmes to train, develop and sustain local professional artists and creatives in work with young people, and in schools
- working with youth service and voluntary sector partners to create new youth led spaces and commissioning opportunities for artists to work with young people within communities

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Further consultation with children and young people is planned to co-produce the specific action plans related to this area of work.

2.4.7 Creative Ageing

24% of Sefton residents are aged 65+ (ranked 24th out of 309 local authorities).

Cultural engagement can support one of the key priorities for ageing well, which aspires for: Older people will stay active, connected and involved by being part of strong communities in which they are important.

[Sefton Health & Wellbeing Board, 2020, *Sefton Health & Wellbeing Strategy: Living Well in Sefton 2020-25*]

Consultation revealed that for many people post-pandemic re-engagement has not been realised, with prevailing apprehension around leaving the security of the home environment. A significant number of older people are also carers. Many are at risk of social isolation.

Need for:

- clear information about Covid safety
- participants to feel that cultural participation is available to them, including targeted outreach
- physically accessible and dementia-friendly venues and activities
- in some communities free and low-cost activity

Opportunities include:

- Developing and supporting meaningful volunteering programmes
- Opportunities for older artists who may not have pension security to be able to practise and continue to earn a living beyond conventional retirement age

2.4.8 Arts and Health

23% of the Borough's residents identify as having a disability or chronic poor health.

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Health*]

Cultural engagement has a significant role to play in tackling the challenges presented by health inequalities in the Borough. Living Well Sefton works with community and cultural organisations to support and fund small project activity to promote mental wellbeing. A number of creative programmes, such as shared reading across the borough offer light touch early intervention and prevention, and signposting. MerseyCare's Life Rooms in Bootle and Southport runs regular creative courses in support of better mental health.

Social prescribing is supported by initiatives such as Active Sefton, Living Well Sefton, Brighter Living Partnership, May Logan Centre and Netherton Feelgood Factory. Link-workers operate in partnership with GP practices by connecting people to cultural activity in their communities – horticulture, reading groups, arts & crafts. There is a

need to ensure that the organisations, often small, delivering the activities are sustainable, and have capacity to meet increasing demand and expectations.

The new NHS Merseyside and Cheshire Integrated Care Board, creates an opportunity for strategic working with the Place lead for Sefton to integrate the role of culture across co-ordinated services planning.

2.4.8 Underrepresented Communities

Global Majority, sanctuary-seeking, LGBTQI and disabled communities are under-represented as both creatives and audiences in Sefton’s cultural life. Whilst consultation highlighted libraries as safe spaces for learning and participation, perhaps as a consequence of consistent, targeted work, more work is needed to increase representation in mainstream cultural spaces .

22% (61,134) of Sefton residents identify as disabled (19% in the North West and 17% in England).

[Sefton Council, 2023, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Health]

Sefton has a low proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups, with 95% of the population being White British, higher than rates seen across Liverpool City Region 92%, the North West 87% and England 79% (9.8%)

[Sefton Council, 2021, People & Place Profile]

Groups are heavily reliant on volunteers, and as with wider sector need development support. Groups voiced the need to to travel to Liverpool to meet day-to-day their cultural needs. 87% of LGBTQ+ respondents felt there were few places where they can socialise and meet people like themselves.

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: A Borough for Everyone*]

opportunities could include:

- targeted participation, training and skills development opportunities
- interventions to support increased visibility and inclusion in creative spaces and programmes
- developing cultural offers that ensure people from all backgrounds see themselves in programming, year-round
- consistent year-round co-produced representation in programming :not limited to special events for national calendar moments

2.5 Cultural Ecology

“An ecological approach concentrates on relationships and patterns within the overall system, showing how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and fro, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors. Culture is an organism not a mechanism”
John Holden *Ecology of Culture, 2014*

A cultural ecology analysis describes the connections and relationships between different elements of cultural life. John Holden describes four different functions that are needed for culture to thrive in any place.

“**Guardians**” look after heritage assets. In Sefton there is a healthy mix of sectors and organisations; many with established relationships with each other:

- council services – the Atkinson Museum & Collections, Libraries & Archives, Green Sefton
- landowners/stewards of the natural landscape
- local historic and civic societies and community owned/managed Heritage buildings
- community groups safeguarding particular cultural identities, traditions and languages.
- classical music companies
- community heritage projects

The “**Guardians**” role is the most developed and established, reflecting community interest and knowledge in local history, and is a strong underpinning for the ecology.

“**Platforms**” are where present-day culture is seen and shared. They are key to generating a “scene” and drawing audiences across and into places. At Sefton’s present cultural platforms are not as plentiful or well-distributed as either audiences or creatives need and want.

- major new large-scale platforms for Southport and Bootle will significantly increase capacity for performing arts and events
- particular gaps in the East of Borough
- difficulties finding, accessing and affording suitable space
- grassroots spaces would benefit from investment and co-ordination
- festivals are a developing strength
- there is scant visual arts infrastructure, apart from the Atkinson’s galleries
- opportunities in green spaces, libraries, meanwhile and long-term use of empty property in high street regeneration and the church estate

“**Connectors**”, bring people together to make things happen, support talent, create opportunity, gather resources from within and outside a place. Connectors can be organisations or projects; or individuals - artists themselves, curators, promoters, producers, entrepreneurs in any sector and can be paid, freelancers or volunteers.

Sefton’s “Connectors” include:

- Community organisers at a hyperlocal level

- “Performers’ Network” supporting everyday creativity and community arts
- Taking Root in a connector role for community green spaces
- At The Library NPO programme, artist-led, focusing on socially-engaged practice
- Scrapyard Studios, artist-led, focussing on female and non-binary musicians and freelancers
- SAFE Regeneration in its hub and with its festival and events production

In Sefton, without the capacity brought by bigger institutions there is particular need to develop the connecting and producing role:

- at an individual level - local work opportunities for freelancers, so that they become more visible and viable.
- new talent - skills and capacity development via apprenticeships, traineeships, and FE/HE links
- dedicated Connector role/brief at a delivery level within local authority structure
- Cultural Partnership to set a vision, co-ordinate resources and plans at a strategic level

Nomads

“Nomads” are local residents - the creatives and audiences, who generate and participate in the cultural life of a place.

Artists

- there are creatives making work in every art form and discipline
- there are too few opportunities to move around the Borough to make or present work
- few ‘scenes’ to tap into and “Platforms” are not easy to access
- early career creatives need to build a track record of small projects or commissions, and establish peer networks: the foundations of a viable creative career
- the first 2 years out of education is crucial, especially for creatives from low-income backgrounds/communities
- artists need continued support and opportunity through the whole of their career

Audiences and Participants

- low audience engagement is a key indicator that the ecology is not thriving as it might.
- investment in Platforms (spaces and programmes) and Artists will support audience development and opportunities for audiences
- targeted, co-produced approaches to ensure better representation of and by diverse communities

2.6 Cultural Funding

Sefton is a Levelling Up for Culture Area

Levels of cultural grant investment are low:

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Sefton Cultural Strategy – Revised Draft 15/12/2023

- NLHF investment into Sefton is in the bottom third of Local Authorities. (“Heritage Places” Methodology, 2023) footnote
- in the 3 years prior 2020, the ACE funding investment into Sefton was just £2.32 per capita pa. (Priority Place Methodology, 2019).footnote
- from 2021 – 2023, Sefton organisations received only 12 successful Project Grants totalling £289k - 5.37% of ACE’s investment in LCR through this scheme (ACE, Dec 2023), an indicator of levels of cultural capacity.
- there has been recent success in attracting significant capital grants (Towns Fund, Levelling Up) and revenue funding (NPO) and larger NLHF projects.

There are opportunities to improve the investment profile through:

- strategic consortia funding (Place Partnership, Creative People and Places)
- collegiate place-based approaches to corporate and philanthropic giving, building on the Sefton Hive crowdfunding model
- support for local artists, organisations and groups to design their projects with greater ambition, bid-writing and impact evaluation

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2.7 SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Voluntary Sector: reach to most vulnerable; strong VCF engagement in culture; “Culture of volunteering”</p> <p>Outstanding coast and green spaces as community assets, visitor destinations,</p> <p>Established calendar of large-scale outdoor events</p> <p>Signs of emergent creative clusters of creative activity in Bootle, Waterloo and Southport</p> <p>Co-production principles as a Council mode of practice and methodology within wider sectors</p> <p>Everyday Creativity</p> <p>Heritage and local history assets</p> <p>Council: Elected member engaged and supportive Alignment of strategies with what culture can deliver</p> <p>Large civic museum and arts centre</p> <p>Library service with 6 libraries and partnership NPO to deliver creative work to support most vulnerable communities</p>	<p>Inconsistent public arts/cultural offers - most regular activity is group-based and participatory</p> <p>Low levels of cultural engagement across Borough as a whole; likely to be lower in areas still experiencing deprivation</p> <p>Too few dedicated spaces for:</p> <p>Performance or exhibition;</p> <p>Young people to take part in culture;</p> <p>studios/production//rehearsal</p> <p>Limited Library and Atkinson opening hours</p> <p>Lack of opportunity and low profile of professional artists and creatives</p> <p>Commissioning opportunities are rare</p> <p>Lack of consistent cultural opportunities for young people</p> <p>Small organisations:</p> <p>Limited capacity to collaborate beyond immediate locality/issue</p> <p>Stop/start-project based resourcing; inconsistent quality and ambition;</p> <p>Information & Advocacy: visibility and value of the creative role; people don't know what is happening</p> <p>Low levels of cultural investment</p> <p>Capacity to generate or respond to opportunity, or develop pipeline projects</p> <p>Lack of value placed on culture in terms of social impact</p> <p>Lack of value placed on creative and cultural professionals and expertise</p>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Regeneration Projects as catalysts for local cultural growth as well as economic opportunity</p> <p>Borough of Culture 2025 as opportunity to galvanise ambition and partnership working</p> <p>Polycentricity: growing neighbourhood programming - focused responses to local needs, community-led activity</p> <p>Spaces: improving neighbourhood and civic infrastructure for culture; unlocking empty spaces for cultural use</p> <p>Cultural Landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Cultural commissioning • Outdoor Arts • Wellbeing • Climate sustainability as a USP <p>Shared audience development work</p> <p>Young People: pipeline for talent development underpinned by regeneration projects</p> <p>Collaboration and collegiate working Joined up approaches, cohering existing activity and filling gaps</p> <p>Cultural Partnership: to set a vision, co-ordinate resources and plans at a strategic level</p> <p>Liverpool: working with leading cultural partners to increase opportunities for Sefton communities and creatives</p> <p>Engaging strategic partners with a cultural focus including Edge Hill University and the Integrated Care Board</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis a barrier to cultural engagement</p> <p>Places and communities “left behind” due to uneven opportunity for investment</p> <p>Perceived value of cultural activity may remain low with some decision makers and communities</p> <p>Becoming parochial: - need to maintain outward links. Pride in individual places rather than Sefton as a whole Borough</p> <p>Artists and creatives forced to find opportunities elsewhere</p> <p>Capacity and sustainability of small organisations in difficult economic times</p> <p>Young people and creative talent leave</p>

3. Strategy

3.1 Aims and Action Areas

Culture Leads

Aim: Sefton is ready to seize current opportunities for culture-led change, and generate new ones.

Through major regeneration projects, arts programmes, community-led activity and artists' practices, culture and creativity is already changing Sefton's places, spaces and community life. Sefton will build the capacity to grasp these opportunities with vigour and impact.

[Tourism and visitor economy here]

A Cultural Partnership enables strategic collaboration towards collective goals, new channels for investment, ambitious commissioning, strategic audience development and communications. Sefton Council's role in convening, networking and advocating for culture is expanded, bridging directorates. Galvanising all of our creative communities, Sefton's Borough of Culture year in 2025 will build borough-wide ambition and capacity, with long-term legacy.

Creativity Everywhere

Aim: Everyone in Sefton can take part in a rich and varied cultural life, whatever their age, whatever their means and wherever they live

A place made up of many places, Sefton will turn polycentricity to its advantage through diverse and ambitious neighbourhood culture in high streets, parks and community venues. Town Centres and Neighbourhoods have a vibrant and visible cultural life. Confident, consistent cultural programming celebrates different identities and heritage and builds positive new narratives and an authentic sense of place. Local people and organisations can make ambitious things happen in their communities. A constellation of spaces are created, improved or unlocked for creative uses. Regeneration projects build local creative capital and Libraries are cornerstones of delivery. Creative programmes respond to local needs and reach and support the most vulnerable. Borough-wide themes strengthen connections between different spaces, projects and communities.

Creativity Thrives

Aim: Creative People and organisations achieve their full artistic potential

Sefton's creative people find all the opportunities, spaces, resources, networks and development they need in the borough. Artists and creatives are trusted and valued as agents of positive change in their communities. They lead, shape and imagine as well as deliver cultural programmes. Professional artists can make new work, make a living and build audiences for their creative practices throughout their career. Local exhibition, performance and commissioning opportunities provide springboards to national and international success. Cultural entrepreneurs and creative industries build innovative businesses, and form clusters that generate dynamic new activity. Everyday creativity flourishes with bespoke organisational support, communications channels and social prescribing infrastructure that connects local people with groups.

Dynamic Landscape

Aim: Sefton's outstanding landscapes and green spaces engage local people and visitors in a new model of culture, climate action and wellbeing

Sefton develops and embeds exemplar practice in environmentally responsible cultural production and creative programming. Local people are deeply connected with the natural landscape and the exceptional, fragile coastline is better safeguarded, protected and understood. Sefton's coastal and green spaces host and inspire ambitious contemporary commissioning, and bring people together at festivals, outdoor arts programmes, participatory projects and community events. Heritage programming celebrates the "culture of the coast" and supports wellbeing through climate action, volunteering and "nature on prescription".

Children & Young People

Aim: From early years to creative careers opportunities for Children and Young People run through Sefton's cultural life "like Rock".

Creative offers for Early Years and Families are joined up across places and partners to ensure there is access to high quality activities for every family in Sefton. Sefton's LCEP collaborates to strengthen cultural learning opportunity in all Sefton's schools supported by trained and talented artists and creatives. Young people have places to go, feel welcome in all of Sefton's cultural spaces and take the lead in designing relevant and engaging creative things to do. A talent pipeline establishes clear progression routes from education into employment in culture, tourism, or creative practice.

3.3 Roles

Achieving the aspirations outlined here will require - and enable - a more dynamic and collaborative relationship between council and community in relation to culture.

A strengths-based approach is a way of working that Sefton has embraced with the voluntary sector, with good outcomes for local communities. This should now be adopted to cultural and creative work: seeing the potential in what already exists, valuing good practice, supporting local creative capital and organisational growth.

Role of the Council

The current role of the council in relation to culture is multifaceted, encompassing venue management, stewardship, community development, event promotion and production, place leadership and destination marketing.

If Sefton is to respond to its new opportunities with ambition there is a need for the council to build its capacity to increase its “connector” role.

This will include:

- convening and administering the Cultural Partnership
- creating/providing capacity or resource to develop pipeline projects
- facilitating and enabling in relation to spaces including its own cultural venues and empty spaces
- identifying opportunities for culture and cultural opportunity
- championing Sefton’s culture within the Liverpool City region
- consultation and data

“You are doing the right thing in asking, and this should continue as the answers will keep changing, and agility to catch the mood and the desires of your residents will be important”

[Sefton Council, 2023, Your Sefton Your Say Culture Strategy survey]

Strategic Advocacy and Policy

A number of core council strategies are due to be renewed in 2024-5, presenting a chance to ensure the potential of culture to contribute to future strategic direction is fully integrated across different policy areas:

- Identify potential for cultural commissioning within major capital projects
- Directly commission and fund activity within clear policy

Commitment is needed at a sufficiently senior level to take decisions, activate opportunity and bridge and co-ordinate working across People and Place directorates.

Cultural Partnership

Sefton is naturally a collaborative place, and there are strong local precedents of Place-based partnerships focussed on areas of collective strategy.

This principle should now be applied to culture, through the initiation of a Borough-wide, cross-sector Cultural Partnership that will provide collaborative leadership and enable partners and stakeholders to shape, support and deliver the goals of the strategy.

This kind of partnership is vital if Sefton's cultural ecology is to become better connected, be authentically representative and achieve critical mass.

Purpose

The purpose of the Cultural Partnership is to create strategic capacity and connectivity and practical action:

- enable more open and collaborative relationships
- ensure better representation of different sectors and communities
- support greater ambition quality and creative risk
- joint programming and joined up approaches to arts, heritage and culture
- provide advocacy for culture
- provide structure and capacity to respond to and generate pipeline of opportunity
- open up new possibilities for funding and investment

Terms of Reference and Membership

The Cultural Partnership should be independently, rather than Council chaired.

In the first instance it is proposed that the Cultural Partnership Membership builds on the initial Cultural Strategy Steering Group. However, the first task is to review and expand membership to better reflect both the cultural and creative sector and the wider communities of the Borough.

The group should include representation from:

- Senior Council Leadership with representation from decision-makers at both People and Place Directorates
- Health and Education
- Youth representation – via youth organisations, or young people supported to participate
- lead Voluntary Sector Organisations with commitment to culture
- independent Arts, Heritage and Culture organisations
- leaders from diverse and under-represented groups

Membership should include diverse perspectives, different artforms and representation from different areas of the Borough.

Proposals for Membership and Draft Terms of Reference are in preparation

ENDS.

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3.4 Next Steps – to follow

Continued consultation

Cultural Partnership

Visioning/ Action Planning

Borough of Culture 2025

- BOC recommendations
- Catalyst not a pageant
- Key feedback and wants from consults
- Issues with 2020
- Opportunities - investment
- long term step change in what we
- Small grassroots neighbourhood based projects in a year of activity with collective celebration

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Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	Thursday 1 February 2024
Subject:	Financial Management 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2023/24 – February Update		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To inform **Cabinet** of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2023/24.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of December 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.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to:

Revenue Budget

- 1) Note the current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 2) Note the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position.
- 3) Approve the Remedial Action Plan actions to offset the budget pressures being faced in 2023/24.
- 4) Recognise the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2023/24 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 position and financial sustainability can be achieved.

Capital Programme

- 5) Note the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 7.1).

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- 6) Note the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 December 2023 of £24.364m (paragraph 7.3); the latest full year forecast is £50.476m (paragraph 7.4).
- 7) Note that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraphs 7.7-7.9).

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the current position in relation to the 2023/24 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 2023/24 and agreed allocations for future years.

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

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

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

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The report indicates that for 2023/24 following the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report that an overspend position of £0.973m is currently forecast and that further work is being undertaken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position. Further mitigating actions are proposed in this report to ensure the Council returns to a balanced forecast outturn position-if these actions are not available within the approved budget, existing reserves and balances may need to be used.

(B) Capital Costs

The Council's capital budget in 2023/24 is £50.650m. As at the end of December 2023 expenditure of £24.364m has been incurred and a full year outturn of £50.476m is currently forecast.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

Currently an overspend position of £0.973m is currently forecast for 2023/24, pending further work to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies. Further mitigating

actions are proposed in this report to ensure the Council returns to a balanced forecast outturn position. However, it should be noted that significant pressure and risk remains in a number of areas, particularly relating to Children's Social Care. If budgets experience further demand and inflationary pressure during the remainder of the year further corresponding savings or financial contributions will need to be identified and approved by members.

Legal Implications:

None

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

Impact on Children and Young People: Yes

The report highlights the current financial position relating to services provided for Children and Young People.

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

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

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<u>Drivers of change and reform:</u> See comment above
<u>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</u> See comment above
<u>Greater income for social investment:</u> See comment above
<u>Cleaner Greener:</u> See comment above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Customer Services is the author of the report (FD 7515/24)

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD 5615/24).

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

Contact Officer:	Paul Reilly
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Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 2 March 2023, Members approved the Budget for the financial year 2023/24. 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, as reported in the Robustness Report also presented to Budget Council.
- 1.2 This report is the seventh of the Council's monthly budget monitoring reports and updates the revenue forecast outturn position for all services, including the pressures that have materialised since the budget was set.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 The capital section of the report informs Members of the latest estimate of capital expenditure for 2023/24 and forecast expenditure for 2024/25 and 2025/26. The capital budget to date is presented in paragraph 7.1. Paragraphs 7.2 to 7.12 review progress of the capital programme, including additional capital schemes. Finally, paragraphs 7.13 to 7.15 confirm that there are adequate levels of resources available to finance the capital programme.

2. Revenue Budget 2023/24 – Forecast Outturn Position as at the end of December 2023

- 2.1 Members are provided with updates of the Council's forecast financial revenue position each month during the financial year from July. As would be expected as the forecast develop through the year, they become more robust and can inform decision making. The Council adopted this approach by developing its in year remedial budget actions on the back of the mid-year review position and this report builds on that.
- 2.2 As at the end of December 2023, the forecast outturn shows a net overspend on services of **£9.329m**, the majority of which relates to potential additional pressure within Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Education Excellence as well as the impact of the local government pay award. It should be noted that the majority of services are reporting a balanced position or are implementing local remedial actions to return a balanced position at this stage. 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. Actions to meet some of the forecast overspend were approved as part of a previous report in November. These totalled £4.795m so the net overspend position is £4.534m. This report proposes further actions, with a value of £3.561m, to reduce this overspend further (see paragraphs 3.3 – 3.7). The net overspend following these actions being approved will be £0.973m.

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2.3 The table below highlights the variations across services that make up the £4.534m forecast overspend, including approved mitigating actions:

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance to November
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>				
Strategic Management	3.939	4.054	0.115	0.015
Adult Social Care	111.271	113.764	2.493	1.493
Children's Social Care	81.581	87.733	6.152	1.119
Communities	12.068	11.933	-0.135	0.000
Corporate Resources	7.623	7.413	-0.210	0.000
Economic Growth & Housing	6.672	6.672	0.000	0.000
Education Excellence	15.517	17.038	1.521	0.092
Health & Wellbeing	19.645	18.853	-0.792	-0.009
Highways & Public Protection	10.973	10.854	-0.119	-0.017
Operational In-House Services	17.603	17.669	0.066	0.077
Energy Costs	4.200	4.200	0.000	0.000
Additional Pay Award Cost	0.000	1.400	1.400	-0.100
Total Service Net Expenditure	291.092	301.583	10.491	2.516
Mitigating Actions approved in November	0.000	-4.795	-4.795	0.000
Council Wide Budgets	11.918	10.756	-1.162	-0.166
Levies	36.193	36.193	0.000	0.000
General Government Grants	(84.086)	(84.086)	0.000	0.000
Total Net Expenditure	255.117	259.651		
<u>Forecast Year-End Deficit</u>			<u>4.534</u>	<u>2.350</u>

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

- **Adult Social Care** – Initial forecasts assumed that the Adult Social Care budget will break-even during 2023/24. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties that could impact on this position before the year-end. The service has also committed to a number of efficiencies and savings that amount to £5.7m, in order to meet the savings approved as part of the approved 2023/24 budget plus additional savings to meet the additional budgetary pressures arising from the increases in provider fees approved at Cabinet meetings in June 2023. The achievement of these savings will be carefully monitored throughout the year. At this time over £5m of the £5.7m of savings have been delivered.

Like all councils, the Service is experiencing growth pressure with demand for services and are seeking to meet the cost of this within the resources available, including taking account of the additional funding from Central Government that is being made available to councils to meet increases in demand and financial pressure including those that maybe experienced during winter and in respect of discharges. Given the pressures being faced a forecast overspend of £1.000m was reported last month. However, a number of upward pressures within the Service have continued and have resulted in the forecast overspend position increasing by a further £1.5m, despite a number of mitigating actions being identified. Further work will continue to be undertaken to understand the pressures and refine forecasts. Work will also continue to explore options to ensure that any potential overspend is reduced. As would be expected with a budget of this size and volatility, this remains a key risk during the current year.

- **Children's Social Care** – The current forecast for the service shows a potential overspend of £6.152m. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties that could impact on this position before the year-end. Last month's report indicated that a number of upward pressures within the Service had materialised and could result in the forecast overspend position increasing by a further £0.7m. The actual forecast overspend has increased by £1.1m since last month. Further work is being undertaken to understand the pressures and refine forecasts.

Members will be aware that the 2023/24 approved budget included an additional £21m of investment in the service based on the requirement for additional staffing (including temporary funding for additional agency costs whilst more permanent staff are recruited to, including International Social Workers and from staff coming through the social work academy) as well as additional resources to reflect the number of packages at the time, some potential growth as well as resource for inflationary pressures.

The current forecast for staffing is an overspend of £1.184m. This will require robust monitoring through the year. There was a clear set of assumptions originally driving the forecast in terms of when expensive project/court teams will leave the Council as new staff are onboarded from the International Social Worker cohort and the academy. As these assumptions have changed the forecasts have been revised with additional pressure being experienced. At present the forecasts reflect the current position but this is continually being reviewed and is the key risk area for the Council, therefore if this position previously reported to members changes then this will need to come back for further decision. This is also a key aspect of budget setting and medium-term financial planning.

Certain areas of accommodation and support packages are forecast to overspend by £4.299m, partly due to additional packages in the late part of 2022/23 and early part of 2023/24. As mentioned in reports last year, packages initially have been at a higher cost than previously seen. However, recently improvements in practice have resulted in more children being placed in more appropriate settings at a lower cost. This is expected to continue throughout the year. Work is currently being undertaken to review forecasts for all types of care settings based on a number of children being in higher cost settings for shorter periods, which is expected to significantly impact on the forecast. In addition, where numbers and costs of

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Children with Disabilities has increased, specialist work is being undertaken to ensure health are making the appropriate contributions to the cost of care.

This is the key aspect of this financial forecast- the service is stabilising and as this takes place the review of placements will also be undertaken. At present the assumption is that all support, unless known otherwise, will continue for the whole of the financial year and for a number of placements this will not be the case. Senior managers are reviewing these, and the forecast will be updated accordingly.

Members will recall that in the budget reports it was advised that a tolerance of 5% on the budget could be expected based on advice from the DfE commissioner-based on the service budget that would amount to £4m. This current forecast is higher than that at present before the outcome of the additional reviews is to be built in.

In considering this forecast, work will also be undertaken to determine if any of this pressure is temporary or permanent in nature and needs reflecting in future budget setting processes. At present as a lot of this pressure arose from 2022/23 and the start of the financial year it is estimated that the future years impact is modest at this stage, but this will be the subject of further review as the budget setting process continues.

- **Corporate Resources** – The service had previously forecast a balanced position. However, in light of the overall budget position, the Service reviewed budgets further to identify areas where savings could be made. The forecast was therefore revised last month to an underspend of £0.210m. Based on the latest information, functions within the service are therefore forecasting an underspend of £0.834m. However, there is pressure within the ICT budget from inflation on contracts that is in excess of the provision made and a loss of income from School SLAs as a result of a change in the contractual arrangement enforced by the provider for which the Council has no control. These two pressures amount to £0.624m, which is offset by the underspends across the Service. As stated, all services are underspent, and significant cost control will continue to be required between now and the year end to deliver the current forecast position.
- **Economic Growth and Housing** – The service is showing a balanced position. However, based on the latest information, functions within the service are forecasting an overspend of £0.415m, although the service are currently examining forecasts. Additional cost control will be required between now and the year end to deliver that balanced position and this position will be updated in future reports.
- **Education Excellence** – The current forecast shows a potential net overspend of £1.521m, this relates to the provision of additional SEND staff and Home to School Transport. The service is reviewing all forecasts to identify areas that will offset costs of the additional SEND staff. Members will recall that in the budget substantial funding was added to the Home to School Transport budget, but this budget has come under further pressure due to the increase in the number of EHCPs being completed and the resulting pressure in the Service.

- **Additional Pay Award Provision** – The approved Base Budget included a provision for the 2023/234 pay award of around 4.5%. This was line with most other local authorities who had budgeted for similar amounts. The offer from the National Employers for local government services body is for a fixed increase of £1,925, with a minimum of 3.5% (similar to the increase in 2022/23). For Sefton, this equates to an increase in the pay bill of about 6.0% or an additional £1.400m above the amount included in the 2023/24 budget. It should be noted that this offer has now been accepted by trade unions.

3. **Revenue Budget Summary 2023/24**

- 3.1 An overspend of **£4.534m** is currently forecast. However, as mentioned in section 2, this is a forecast based on a number of uncertainties and assumptions, particularly around Adult and Children’s Social Care which remain volatile. Additional work will continue to be undertaken across service areas to refine the forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced budget position. In Children’s Social Care forecasts will be refined to take into account the improvements in practice that have seen children being placed in more appropriate settings, as well as the anticipated reduction in the number of Looked After Children, however the key risk is the staffing budget with the timing of transition between project/court teams and new permanent staff that will support a skilled and stable workforce the key variable that could impact the budget.
- 3.2 As mentioned, the Council must achieve an overall balanced position to ensure its financial sustainability. As an overall forecast overspend remains a remedial action plan to meet the residual balance has been produced and is presented below for members’ approval.

Remedial Action Plan

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

Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 3.4 Officers have undertaken a further 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 a number of smaller reserves totalling **£0.500m** can now be released. In line with the FPR’s these have been approved by the S151 Officer.

Balance Sheet Review

- 3.5 Officers have conducted a thorough review of all other items held on the Council’s Balance Sheet and have identified that **£0.750m** of balances that no longer need to be retained and can be released to support the in-year budget pressure.

Sales, Fees and Charges Income

- 3.6 The 2023/24 Budget Report described how there was a significant impact on income from sales, fees and charges for a range of services during the pandemic. Whilst some income streams had fully recovered, others were expected to remain impacted, particularly for car parking and at leisure centres, and that this could result in a loss of income of up to £1.000m during 2023/24. Resources were included in the budget to cover this loss. Whilst car parking income has remained impacted, income at leisure centres is forecast to be in line with the budget.

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Therefore, **£0.550m** of the resources set aside can now be utilised to support budget pressures.

Business Rates Revaluation Adjustment

- 3.7 As part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, it was identified that additional resources would be available to the Council in 2024/25 to compensate for the impact from the latest Business Rates Revaluation process. This adjustment is also backdated to 2023/24 and will result in the Council receiving **£1.761m** of additional funding in 2023/24.

Proposed Remedial Actions

- 3.8 After the mitigating actions approved by Cabinet in November 2023, and the new mitigating actions identified above, there is still a forecast overspend of **£0.973m**. It is proposed to continue with the adoption of financial principles used in previous years, to enable a balanced forecast outturn position to ensure the Council's financial sustainability. This will include cost control in relation to recruitment, non-essential expenditure and no further growth items / additionality.

Summary 2022/23

- 3.9 An overspend of **£0.973m** is currently forecast. However, 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. As a result of using the options above, there is no flexibility left for the use of existing reserves or general balances- as a result this pressure, and any further pressure, will need to be met from within the existing Council budget and delivery monitored carefully and reported to Cabinet.
- 3.10 Should there still be a residual overspend at year end, this will need to be funded by general balances and as part of the budget process for 2024/25 the Council will need increase these back to the previous level taking into account the risks faced by the Council and the assessment of their adequacy as described in the S151 Officer's Robustness report. As stated, further work will be carried out on the remedial plan and a detailed position will be reported in the next cycle.

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 £160.236m for 2023/24 (including Parish Precepts), which represents 84% of the net Council Tax income of £191.139m.
- 4.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of December 2023 is a surplus of £0.122m. This variation is primarily due to: -
- The surplus on the fund at the end of 2022/23 being higher than estimated (-£0.314m).
 - Gross Council Tax Charges in 2023/24 being higher than estimated (-£0.517m).

- Exemptions and Discounts (including a forecasting adjustment) being higher than estimated (+£0.709m).
- 4.3 Due to Collection Fund regulations, the Council Tax surplus will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2023/24 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.
- 4.4 A forecast surplus of £2.045m was declared on the 17 January 2023 of which Sefton's share is £1.716m (83.9%). This is the amount that will be recovered from the Collection Fund in 2023/24.
- 4.5 A forecast surplus of £1.548m was declared on the 16 January 2024 of which Sefton's share is £1.299m (83.9%). This is the amount that will be recovered from the Collection Fund in 2023/24. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2025/26 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 £62.388m for 2023/24, which represents 99% of the net Business Rates income of £63.018m. 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 December 2023 is a surplus of -£10.842m on Business Rates income. This is due to:
- The surplus on the fund at the end of 2023/24 being higher than estimated (-£9.916m).
 - Reduction in the gross charge on rateable properties (+£0.278m).
 - A number of reliefs announced for 2023/24 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 (-£0.474m).
 - Adjustments relating to prior years (-£0.730m)
- 5.3 When taking into account the lower Section 31 grants due on the additional reliefs, a net surplus of £9.662m is forecast.
- 5.4 Due to Collection Fund regulations, a Business Rates deficit will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2023/24 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.
- 5.5 A forecast surplus of £12.836m was declared in January 2023. Sefton's share of this is £12.708m. This is the amount that will be distributed from the Collection Fund in 2023/24. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2024/25 and future years.

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6. High Needs Budget

- 6.1 Cabinet and Council have agreed to receive quarterly reports from the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education and the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) with 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.
- 6.2 The latest report was presented to Cabinet in July 2023, providing detail on the current monitoring position relating to the High Needs budget. A further report will be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

7. Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2025/26

Capital Budget

- 7.1 The Capital Budget and profile of expenditure for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26 is as follows:

2023/24	£50.650m
2024/25	£62.764m
2025/26	£53.733m

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

- **Childrens Social Care** – £0.070m has been phased to 2024/25 for delivery of a new vehicle for Springbrook Children's Home.
- **Communities** – £0.045m has been added to the budget for Bootle Leisure Centre Roof Replacement project funded by Council resources and approved under delegated authority.
- **Corporate Resources:**
 - £0.371m has been phased to 2024/25 for Corporate Essential Maintenance to align with Phase 2 of the programme (see paragraph 3 below).
 - £0.148m has been added to the programme for ICT Service Developments funded by prudential borrowing following approval by Council in January.
- **Economic Growth & Housing:**
 - £20m has been added to the budget for the Stand Repurposing Programme Phase 1 A-C funded by external grant from DLUHC following approval by Council in January. A previous allocation of £0.633m funded by prudential borrowing has been removed from the budget following confirmation of the new grant funding.
 - £2.223m has been added to the budget for the acquisition of new council housing at Buckley Hill Lane, Netherton to be funded through affordable housing capital receipts, historic right to buy sharing agreement receipts

and Homes England grant funding following approval by Council in January.

- **Education Excellence:**

- £1.256m has been phased to 2024/25 for Sporting Betterments for Schools. This is a ringfenced budget allocation and will be released following further applications from schools for funding.
- £0.534m has been added to the programme for Childcare Expansion Capital Grant externally funded by the Department for Education following approval by Cabinet in December.
- A scheme for internal alterations at Litherland Moss school (£0.450m) has been deprioritised and resources allocated to other priority High Needs Capital Schemes at Formby High, Holy Family High and Waterloo Primary following approval by Cabinet Member for Education under delegated authority.
- The following schemes (£0.380m) have been rephased for delivery in 2024/25:
 - Christchurch Primary - Playground resurface
 - Christchurch Primary - Windows & doors
 - Daleacre - Renew floors/ceiling
 - Daleacre - Roof to kitchen and hall
 - Farnborough Rd Infants - Install canopy
 - Farnborough Rd Infants - Replace corridor roof
 - Farnborough Rd Infants - Repoint brickwork
 - Farnborough Rd Infants - Windows install actuators
 - Hatton Hill - Brickwork re-pointing
 - Hudson Primary - Resurface footpaths & driveways
 - Larkfield Primary - Repointing brickwork
 - Larkfield Primary - Upgrade staff toilets
 - Norwood Primary - Repairs to drainage system

- **Highways and Public Protection** – Following a review of the Highways programme, several schemes have been reprofiled to 2024/25 due to prioritisation of other schemes and extended development time:

- Accessibility £0.390m
- A565 Northern Key Corridor Improvements £0.097m
- A59 Route Management £0.696m
- Healthy Lifestyles £0.206m
- Millers Bridge £0.100m
- Strategic Planning £0.500m
- Urban Traffic Control £0.440m.

Budget Monitoring Position to December 2023

7.3 The current position of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of December 2023 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. The budget to date in the table below reflects the profiles of each individual scheme.

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	Budget to December	Actual Expenditure to December	Variance to December
	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>			
Adult Social Care	3.984	3.626	-0.358
Children's Social Care	0.284	0.380	0.096
Communities	0.516	0.469	-0.047
Corporate Resources	1.777	1.714	-0.063
Economic Growth & Housing	5.542	5.367	-0.175
Education Excellence	3.348	3.350	0.002
Highways & Public Protection	8.996	8.733	-0.263
Operational In-House Services	1.061	0.724	-0.337
<u>Total Programme</u>	25.508	24.364	-1.144

Capital Programme Forecast Outturn 2023/24

7.4 The current forecast of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of 2023/24 and the profile of budgets for future years is shown in the table below:

	Budget 2023/24	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2025/26
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>					
Adult Social Care	7.505	7.423	-0.082	2.675	1.850
Children's Social Care	0.532	0.620	0.088	0.170	-
Communities	2.053	1.972	-0.082	0.405	-
Corporate Resources	2.226	2.153	-0.073	0.541	-
Economic Growth & Housing	10.680	10.791	0.111	31.065	50.568
Education Excellence	7.147	6.994	-0.153	10.395	-
Highways & Public Protection	17.756	17.759	0.003	11.881	0.322
Operational In-House Services	2.751	2.764	0.013	5.631	0.993
<u>Total Programme</u>	50.650	50.476	-0.174	62.764	53.733

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

7.5 The current 2023/24 budgeted spend is £50.650m with a budgeted spend to December of £25.508m. The full year budget includes exceptional items such as £8.584m for Growth and Strategic Investment projects, £1.082m for the Brownfield Housing Development fund, £0.760m for Sustainable Warmth Schemes, £1.300m for the Local Authority Housing Fund, a £1.000m project for Southport Pier Decking, and a scheme to upgrade to LED Street Lighting (£3.606m).

7.6 Typically, on an annual basis the capital programme spends in the region of £25-30m. Given this typical annual level of spend, and although in 2023/24 there are a

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number of exceptional items as described above, it is likely that reprofiling of spend into 2024/25 will occur as the year progresses.

Programme Funding

7.7 The table below shows how the capital programme will be funding in 2023/24:

<u>Source</u>	£m
Grants	39.746
Prudential Borrowing	5.462
Capital Receipts	3.150
Contributions (including Section 106)	2.292
<u>Total Programme Funding</u>	50.650

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

7.9 The Executive Director of 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.

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APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26

<u>Capital Scheme</u>	Budget		
	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Adult Social Care			
Disable Facilities Grants – Core Grants (DFGs)	3,000,000	-	-
Occupational Therapy Support for DFGs	663,774	-	-
ICT Development & Transformation	927,573	307,067	2,708
ICT Connectivity in Care Homes and Support Living	65,000	35,000	-
Fall Prevention Schemes	45,000	-	-
Care Home Improvements	475,449	200,000	-
Changing Places	51,327	-	-
Integrated Health and Wellbeing on the High Street	-	400,000	-
Short Term Assessment Unit	506,846	1,213,154	1,847,000
New Directions Programme	200,038	201,000	-
Technology Enabled Care	329,449	124,184	-
Community Equipment Provision	400,000	-	-
Double to Single Handed Care Equipment Provision	150,000	-	-
Community Equipment – Specialist Projects	232,435	-	-
Community Equipment Stores Improvements	65,000	-	-
Programme Support	122,922	-	-
Digitising Social Care	260,000	195,000	-
Community Based Falls Equipment	10,200	-	-
Children’s Social Care			
Support for Fostering Placements	99,370	100,000	-
Community Equipment Provision	270,000	-	-
ICT Development & Transformation	133,545	-	-
Springbrook Refurbishment	28,923	-	-
Springbrook Vehicle	-	70,000	-
Communities			
Atkinson Arts Centre – Infrastructure & Windows	24,553	170,993	-
Leisure Centres – Essential Works	338,516	103,000	-
Libraries Projects	309,623	131,017	-
Neighbourhoods Projects	80,886	-	-
Local Authority Housing Fund	1,300,000	-	-
Corporate Resources			
Council Wide Essential Maintenance	1,392,189	393,595	-
Sustainable Warmth Schemes	760,092	-	-
ICT Development & Transformation	73,812	147,549	-
Economic Growth & Housing			
Cambridge Road Centre Redevelopment	227,070	-	-
Crosby Lakeside Redevelopment	673,935	33,219	-
Strategic Acquisitions – Ainsdale	350,000	526,303	-
Marine Lake Events Centre	4,863,327	16,770,090	43,205,556
The Strand – Maintenance and Improvements	150,000	-	-
Enterprise Arcade	521,691	1,105,078	-

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	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Transformations de Southport	303,937	1,500,000	696,063
Bootle Canal Side Business Plan	813,867	-	-
The Strand – Repurposing Programme	680,000	6,666,667	6,666,667
Housing Investment	-	33,960	-
Social Housing Allocations Scheme	13,590	-	-
Brownfield Fund for Housing Development	1,082,336	-	-
Council Housing at Buckley Hill Lane	-	2,222,783	-
Southport Pier	1,000,000	2,148,267	-
Town Centre Vacant Sites	-	58,764	-
Education Excellence			
Early Years	-	534,202	-
General Planned Maintenance	365,605	30,249	-
Schools Programme	2,956,810	7,478,925	-
Sporting Betterment of Schools	326,850	1,256,365	-
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	3,497,430	1,095,276	-
Highways and Public Protection			
Accessibility	278,143	390,000	-
Healthy Lifestyles	180,896	206,367	-
Road Safety	157,638	-	-
A565 Route Management and Parking	1,079,216	35,458	-
A565 Northern Key Corridor Improvements	2,738	97,262	
A59 Route Management Strategy	369,463	2,795,963	322,000
Strategic Planning	3,441,090	1,450,000	-
Traffic Management and Parking	67,000	-	-
Highway Maintenance	6,329,191	-	-
Bridges and Structures	375,000	2,000,000	-
Drainage	443,181	-	-
Street Lighting Maintenance	326,823	-	-
LED Street Lighting Upgrade	3,605,580	3,662,630	-
Urban Traffic Control	1,073,249	440,000	-
Completing Schemes and Retentions	26,510	13,490	-
Transport Growth Programme	-	789,813	-
Operational In-House Services			
Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management	1,283,649	1,983,688	898,000
Countryside Stewardship	9,919	1,740	-
Crosby Marine Lake Improvements	10,803	-	-
Parks Schemes	295,484	961,053	-
Tree Planting Programme	222,565	190,764	94,879
Golf Driving Range Developments	-	282,477	-
Ainsdale Coastal Gateway	438,186	427,989	-
Green Sefton – Vehicles, Plant & Machinery	18,335	131,152	-
Refuse Collection & Recycling	-	345,000	-
Vehicle Replacement Programme	472,166	1,307,328	-
<u>Total Programme</u>	50,649,795	62,763,881	53,732,873

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	1 February 2024
Subject:	Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service		
Report of:	Executive Director - People	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	Main report - No Appendix 2 – Yes, the Appendix is NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours the information being treated as exempt		

Summary:

Sefton is seeking to procure a fully Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) from 2024 for a minimum of 3 years. The service will provide holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse, irrespective of protected characteristic or risk level. The service will provide therapeutic counselling to those that require it in order to build resilience and aid recovery from the long-term effects of domestic abuse. The service will address a number of the priorities outlined in the action plan accompanying the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028

Recommendation(s):

(1) That the Assistant Director of People (Communities) be authorised to conduct a procurement exercise for a fully Integrated Domestic Abuse Service with a view to entering a contract for a minimum period of 3 years, plus 2 optional years (1+1)

(2) That the Assistant Director of People (Communities) , in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing, be granted delegated authority to award the Contract(s) resulting from the procurement and to award any extension thereof following a review of the original award.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The IDAS will provide holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse, irrespective of protected characteristic or risk level. The integrated service model will underpin the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028 and will address key priorities outlined within the action plan.

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

The current system is disjointed and based on risk.

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What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Revenue costs will be met from within existing Council and Sefton Place (Cheshire & Merseyside ICB) budgets by way of a pooled budget arrangement.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no Capital costs.

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): The costs for procuring the new service will be fully met from existing revenue budgets.</p>									
<p>Legal Implications: To comply with the provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p>									
<p>Equality Implications: The equality implications have been identified and mitigated against. The Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 1.</p>									
<p>Impact on Children and Young People: Yes The service will provide a positive impact for children and young people. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 determines that children should be viewed as victims in their own right. This service will support children in recovering from domestic abuse.</p>									
<p>Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </table> <p>The procurement of this service will mean residents will be able to access support at a single point of access via telephone removing the need to travel. This in turn will reduce Sefton's carbon footprint.</p>		Have a positive impact	Yes	Have a neutral impact	No	Have a negative impact	No	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
Have a positive impact	Yes								
Have a neutral impact	No								
Have a negative impact	No								
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes								

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The service will provide specialist support to all victims of domestic abuse, their children and families.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities:
Commission, broker and provide core services:
Place – leadership and influencer:

Drivers of change and reform:
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7420/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5620/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Emails, surveys, meetings, focus groups with key stakeholders.

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

Contact Officer:	Steve Martlew
Telephone Number:	07973 988996
Email Address:	Steven.Martlew@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 – Financial & Commercially Sensitive Information

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a statutory responsibility on Local Authorities to provide support services to victims, children and their families living in safe accommodation. Part 4 of the Act includes the duty for Local Authorities to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation. This duty came into effect on 1 October 2021. To support LAs in delivering this duty the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) has allocated Sefton new burdens funding which Council granted delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing to allocate appropriately.
- 1.2 The adoption and children act 2005 refined the definition of significant harm to include 'witnessing or experiencing the harm or ill treatment of others', in short to protect children who live in a house where DA is a feature of their lives. Section 3 of the DA act 22 specifically provides that a child who hears or experiences the effects of DA be regarded as a victim, to whom a service must be provided.
- 1.3 In sefton DA is overwhelmingly our most prevalent source of concern. For context, in this financial year to date we have received 2600 contacts where DA is listed as the prime concern. The next biggest concern is listed as 'Parenting support' , 860 contacts. DA outstrips the next biggest reason we are involved with children by over three times. In reality, this is a minimisation, once we begin to work with families DA often reveals itself as a significant concern that was not the original reason for referral. We know that children who experience parenting within the context of domestically abusive relationship can go on to model these behaviours in their own relationships later in life

2 Current Domestic Abuse Service Provision in Sefton

- 2.1 Current Domestic Abuse (DA) provision in Sefton has evolved historically and has the potential to be disjointed and based on risk. The Council has 4 core funded Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and has accessed some time limited funding to increase this cohort by 4 to a total of 8. The role of Sefton's IDVA's is to support high risk (gold) victims of DA and male victims.
- 2.2 Sefton Women's & Childrens Aid (SWACA) receive funding from the Council and Sefton Place (Cheshire & Merseyside ICB) to deliver their core adults and children's and families support services. These are delivered to medium risk (silver) DA victims.
- 2.3 There is currently no commission for standard risk (bronze) victims of DA. We know through our Domestic Homicide Reviews that many Domestic Homicide victims, are not previously known to services or have previously been determined to be low risk.
- 2.4 It is to be noted that Cheshire and Merseyside ICB have funded the domestic abuse provision and is recommended that future funding be included in this contract. The contract award is within the scheme of delegation of the NHS Place Director for Sefton.

3. Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

3.1 The needs assessment that was commissioned to meet our statutory obligations under the DA Act, tells us we have unmet need around:

- Reporting of DA in more affluent areas of the borough was less than in areas of deprivation.
- Women with complex needs
- Older Victims / Survivors
- Male Victims

3.2 At the time the needs assessment was undertaken there appeared to be low numbers offering DA as a reason for homelessness. We know that over the last 2 years this picture has changed with more households approaching the Council citing DA as the reason for homelessness. These households also need extra support through their homelessness and finding new safe accommodation.

4. Proposal & Scope

4.1 We are proposing to procure a fully integrated Community Domestic Abuse service that operates on a network approach. The following outlines proposed objectives of the new service.

1. Community Workers working at a Locality level allowing victims to access support within their community.
2. An accessible boroughwide Domestic Abuse Helpline for victims, survivors, concerned friends and family and professionals – no matter what the protected characteristic, no matter what the risk level.
3. A range of recovery programmes for individuals, families, or groups together with a range of drop in sessions
4. Training & Volunteer Coordination – a training offer for the partnership, the voluntary sector, Sefton businesses, and the general public – together with coordinating the efforts of those that wish to volunteer in the sector
5. A programme of therapeutic counselling aimed at individuals or families to aid the long-term recovery from DA
6. Links into the Locality – a clear link from the 2 pillars of the place – Education & Acute GP Primary Care Network to offer a clear and seamless pathway into service ensuring victims and survivors identified through schools or GP practices can access support quickly.

4.2 More detail around these 6 key strands of the contract are listed below:

- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at standard risk (bronze) following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at medium risk (silver) following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are identified from other sources within the borough that are not deemed to be at the level of MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment).
- Strong links with education settings & Family Well Being centres in the borough and support the delivery of Operation Encompass (the notification given to

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schools following a domestic abuse incident involving a child). To deliver appropriate healthy relationship sessions to groups when required.

- A domestic abuse helpline that can be contactable for a minimum of 5 days per week between the hours of 8am to 6pm which could be utilised by victims, the families & friends of victims and professionals seeking support and advice around domestic abuse.
- A minimum of once a week drop-in session in each of the localities, based on identified needs to allow residents to seek support around domestic abuse. These need to be flexible and accommodate all residents.
- Domestic abuse recovery-based programmes (e.g., Recovery Toolkit) that aid the long-term recovery of victims and build resilience across the borough developing flexibility to allow open access to all that need this.
- Strong links with Primary Care Networks, Mental Health providers, and Community Link workers, where they exist, and to offer support for victims and families who are within mental health services and in need.
- Offer therapeutic counselling support for victims and families effected by domestic abuse, aiding long term recovery and prevention.
- Strong links with the existing provision delivering domestic abuse support in the borough including the IDVA team, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise provision, and partner agencies.
- Effective communications to raise the profile of Domestic Abuse, and available services, advice and guidance, using a range of communication channels, including digital.
- Training programme for the Council, partner organisations, private sector business community and general public.
- Co-locating the IDVAs into the new service will be explored to ensure there is seamless transition from silver to gold and vice versa.

Community Workers	Boroughwide DA Helpline	Programme, Group & Drop In	Training & Volunteer Coordination	Counselling	Linked into Locality
<p>Working in the North, Central & South Localities.</p> <p>Workers will work with victims assessed at Silver or Bronze risk offering interventions to help prevent further incident</p>	<p>To be available between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday.</p> <p>Offers support to victims, families and friends and also staff around Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>Provides a central point</p>	<p>Community Workers in each locality will also:</p> <p>Offer various victim programmes (e.g., Freedom, Recovery Toolkit)</p> <p>Create and facilitate victim support groups and networks in</p>	<p>Responsible for training Sefton Council in domestic abuse matters.</p> <p>Offers domestic abuse training to other organisations including partnership agencies.</p> <p>Coordinates</p>	<p>Offers Counselling support to victims and families affected by domestic abuse, aiding long term recovery and prevention.</p> <p>Offers both individual and whole family counselling</p>	<p>Links directly with Primary Care Networks around selective enquiry.</p> <p>Links in with education settings around healthy relationship and Operation Encompass</p>

	of contact that can be shared as part of any local domestic abuse campaign promotion.	each locality including a boroughwide experts by experience group. Offers weekly drop-in sessions in each locality. Links to Family Well Being Centres	volunteers to work alongside the contract objectives		Links in with Mental Health link workers.
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5. Funding, Commissioning, Governance and next steps

- 5.1 The cost of the service will be covered by existing commissioning amounts topped up by New Burdens funding. Full details of the financial details can be found in Appendix 2. Responsibility for the commissioning and monitoring of this contract lies within Communities department and therefore sits within the Executive Director for People’s portfolio. The Senior Responsible Officer for this contract is the Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement with support from the wider Council’s commissioning structure.
- 5.2 Sefton Women & Childrens Aid (SWACA) have been appointed on a 1 year contract to test the new concepts involved in this new approach to a DA service in Sefton. The Council will use the shared learning from this 1 year contract to shape the specification before a full open procurement process that will seek to appoint a contractor for a 3 +1 +1 contract.
- 5.3 Whilst the performance outcomes of this contract will feed into the performance dashboard that the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will use to measure the success of the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-28, the board will have no commissioning influence or contract monitoring responsibilities. A joint commissioning group has been established to provide oversight of the procurement with representatives from Children’s Social Care and Cheshire and Merseyside ICB at Place.
- 5.4 The service specification and associated costs are based upon a tried and tested comparable model which is effectively supporting victims of domestic abuse in a nearby Local Authority. The shared learning from the 1 year contract will be used to shape the specification before a full open procurement process that will seek to appoint a contractor for a 3+1+1 contract.
- 5.5 The timescales for the commissioning of this contract are:

Activity	Date	Responsible Person
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Commission 12 month "Proof of Concept Contract"	June 2023	Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement
Cabinet Report to Exec Commissioning Group	Aug 2023	Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement
Report to ELT	Oct 2023	Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement
Forward Plan	November 2023	Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement
Cabinet	February 2024	Locality Service Manager for Domestic Abuse, Community Safety & Engagement
Open Procurement Process	May 2024	Procurement Team
Contract Awarded	June 2024	Executive Director People
Contract Start	September 2024	Service Provider

Equality Impact Assessment – Integrated Domestic Abuse Service 2024-2027

Details of proposal:

Sefton is seeking to procure a fully Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) from 2024 for a minimum of 3 years. The service will provide holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse, irrespective of protected characteristic or risk level. The service will provide therapeutic counselling to those that require it in order to build resilience and aid recovery from the long-term effects of domestic abuse.

Ramifications of Proposal: The service will provide:

- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at standard risk (bronze) of following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at medium risk (silver) of following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are identified from other sources within the borough that are not deemed to be at the level of MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment).
- Strong links with education settings & Family Well Being centres in the borough and support the delivery of Operation Encompass (the notification given to schools following a domestic abuse incident involving a child). To deliver appropriate healthy relationship sessions to groups when required.
- A domestic abuse helpline that can be contactable for a minimum of 5 days per week between the hours of 8am to 6pm which could be utilised by victims, the families & friends of victims and professionals seeking support and advice around domestic abuse.
- A minimum of one a week drop-in session in each of the localities, based on identified needs to allow residents to seek support around domestic abuse. These need to be flexible and accommodate all residents.
- Domestic abuse recovery-based programmes (e.g., Recovery Toolkit) that aid the long-term recovery of victims and build resilience across the borough developing flexibility to allow open access to all that need this.
- Strong links with Primary Care Networks, Mental Health providers, and Community Link workers, where they exist, and to offer support for victims and families who are within mental health services and in need.
- Offer therapeutic counselling support for victims and families effected by domestic abuse, aiding long term recovery and prevention.
- Strong links with the existing provision delivering domestic abuse support in the brough including the IDVA team, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise provision, and partner agencies.
- Effective communications to raise the profile of Domestic Abuse, and available services, advice and guidance, using a range of communication channels, including digital.
- Training programme for the Council, partner organisations, private sector business community and general public.
- Co-locating the IDVAs into the new service will be explored to ensure there is seamless transition from silver to gold and vice versa.

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Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?

It is accepted that Domestic Abuse can affect anyone irrespective of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity. This is an important message to impart. Domestic Abuse does not happen to a certain type of person. Just because someone does not look like a "typical victim" does not mean s/he is not suffering from domestic abuse.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *Gender Reassignment*
- *Marriage and Civil Partnership*
- *Race*
- *Religion or Belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual Orientation*
- *Pregnancy and Maternity*
- *Care Experienced*

Activities to prevent Domestic Abuse, support victims and deal with perpetrators need to be designed to meet the legitimate and particular considerations of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity of those within or having had experience of the care system.

Sex

The IDAS will support men as well as women. There is a risk that victims are portrayed only as women. The activities proposed in the strategy will, wherever possible, cover both genders in terms of victims and perpetrators. The local refuge is only available to females. It has been recognised that there is a lack of services for males in Sefton. This is a concern the service aims to address. There are real differences in how the genders experience Domestic Abuse and this will lead to variation in the approach taken towards men and women. Women do seem to experience the most serious physical and repeated assaults

Female victims accounted for 73% of domestic abuse related crimes recorded by the police 2020/21 and 74% in 2021/22 (Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2021 and November 2022, Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

There were 373 victims of domestic homicide aged 16 and over in England and Wales between March 2019 and March 2021. 72% of these victims (269) were female. (Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2022, Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

Sexual Orientation

The DA Act 2021 applies to same sex relationships in the same way as heterosexual relationships. This strategy also applies to people suffering from domestic abuse in same sex relationships. Training packages and publicity will stress this. The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership may consider it worthwhile to target our LGBT+ community to encourage victims to seek help.

Disability

The Domestic Abuse Partnership recognises the additional problems faced by victims with a disabling condition. The local refuge is accessible for people with mobility problems. The problems faced by disabled people are not seen as different, but over and above those facing people without a disability. Regarding mental health, this is complex. As a rule of thumb, all victims of domestic abuse (and their children) will have a reduced level of mental well-being as a result of the abuse. This needs to be taken into consideration by those offering them services. For someone who is depressed, making major changes can seem too daunting despite the risks of staying in a relationship. The service will provide a range of counselling options for victims and their children. Risk assessments for victims must include the risk of suicide and self-harm. It can also be argued, that the perpetrators of Domestic Abuse have mental health problems expressed by the need to feel power and control. Sometimes this stems from experiencing abuse in the home as a child. This again emphasises why work with children in violent homes is so important as it can help break patterns of abusive behaviour. There is a link between mental health problems and drug and alcohol misuse for both the perpetrators and victims of Domestic Abuse. It is important for substance misuse treatment services to respond to Domestic Abuse and work closely with the service. It is also important to recognise that some disabled people have communication issues which may be a barrier to accessing the service. The IDAS will provide a range of communication options so that the service will be fully accessible to all.

Age

There is no upper age limit to being a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse. Seftons Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment highlighted unmet need for older victims of Domestic Abuse and this service will provide support for all victims of Domestic Abuse irrespective of age. Organisations representing older people will be made aware of the service. Domestic abuse has a detrimental impact on children, as this strategy has emphasised. The strategy aims to deal with concerns about:

- The impact on children in violent homes
- Young people adopting violent/victims patterns in dating relationships or towards other family members.

There will be a focus on work in schools, especially with primary age children.

The service will take part in and lead publicity campaigns and messages, as part of the Safer Sefton Together VAWG Statement aimed at young women regarding dating violence, date rape and sexual assaults.

Race

The service will offer culturally sensitive services for victims from ethnic minorities. Where appropriate the service will engage the smaller "by and for" market in order to provide person centred services, removing cultural or communication barriers to the service. There is concern at the lack of reporting from certain communities. This may mean that current data in relation to offenders and victims does not present an accurate picture of domestic violence within ethnic minority communities. Safer Sefton Together's approach to VAWG also covers so called Honour Based Abuse such as Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This issue has both an age and gender bias as problems are faced most by young people and are most detrimental to young women. However, it will not be overlooked that Forced Marriage affects men. Raising awareness and supporting victims of forced marriage will need to be done sensitively with the aim of working with local

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Pregnancy & Maternity

We know that the risk of domestic abuse increases during pregnancy and therefore the service will ensure that women who are pregnancy will be able to access the help they need as well as their unborn child.

Consultation:

The needs assessment carried out a number of focus group engagement sessions with victims/survivors as well as collection of views through interviews and questionnaires. The views of victims/survivors in Sefton has shaped the DA strategy which has led to the development of this service. We are keen to further develop the victim / survivor voice and it be at the heart of all strategic decisions. This will be regularly reviewed.

The Needs Assessment Consulted in a number of ways

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

- Distributed to key partners for promotion among their service users, and hosted on the Sefton MBC website.
- Covered key areas such as experience of service and barriers to services.
- 29 responses

PRACTITIONER FOCUS GROUPS

- Attended team meetings with SWACA and IDVA services to understand what is working well and the areas that require development in Sefton.

SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS AND GROUPS

- Completed survivor interviews with the assistance of SWACA.
- Gave an understanding of the self-identified need of survivors of domestic abuse and their experiences of services in Sefton

KEY PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

- Completed 1-2-1 interviews with key practitioners to understand services response to domestic abuse in Sefton.
- Captured information on what is working well and areas that need to be Developed.

DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

- Throughout the needs assessment process, we presented findings and draft versions of the needs assessment to the local partnership board, enabling us to develop the assessment.

Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- *Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- *Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
- *Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*

The purpose of the IDAS is to provide Domestic & Sexual Abuse support services for victims of Domestic and Sexual Abuse/Violence no matter what their background, no matter what their risk level. Indeed the service aims to protect and support the most vulnerable in our society to increase their resilience in order to break the cycle of abuse.

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What actions will follow if proposal accepted by cabinet & Council?

Include details of any mitigating action and ongoing monitoring to address any of the equality impacts highlighted above

Next steps will include refining the existing service specification in readiness for a full and open procurement process in April 2024. Returned tenders will be assessed with regards to their approach to Equality and Diversity.

An experts by experience victim / survivor voice group will be developed by December 2023 to seek input into codesigning the service in readiness for procurement activity.

The equality impact assessment will be reviewed annually as part of an annual contract review.