

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 7th November, 2023

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor
Councillor Dowd (Chair)
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Corcoran
Councillor Harvey
Councillor Lloyd-Johnson
Councillor Christine Maher
Councillor McKee
Councillor Catie Page
Councillor Sir Ron Watson
Councillor Webster

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor Killen
Councillor O'Brien
Councillor Halsall
Councillor Waterfield
Councillor Dodd
Councillor Grace
Councillor Richards
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Prendergast
Councillor Anne Thompson

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

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.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(Pages 5 - 14)

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023

4. Bootle Regeneration Strategy - Presentation

To receive a presentation from the Executive Director of Place

5. Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report

(Pages 15 - 40)

Report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)

6. Green Sefton Annual Review 2023

(Pages 41 - 90)

Report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)

7. Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

(Pages 91 - 118)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

8. Cabinet Member Reports - September 2023 to November 2023 (Pages 119 - 136)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Howard (in the Chair)
Councillors Corcoran, Harvey, Lloyd-Johnson,
Christine Maher, McKee, Catie Page,
Sir Ron Watson and Webster

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Hardy

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Councillor Dowd, Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills and Councillor Veidman, Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

11. MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING AND WASTE AUTHORITY – SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24

The Committee received a presentation from Lesley Worswick, Chief Executive of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority on her authority's service delivery plan 2023/24. Ms. Worswick highlighted the following 4 aims of the Corporate Plan:

- Improve the sustainable management of waste and resource. Information was provided on the Recycling Discovery Centre; the Southport Eco-Centre; education resources; the circular economy; food waste collection; campaigns regarding lithium batteries, home composting and recycling; and the community fund in partnership with Veolia.
- Delivery of effective waste services. Information was provided on the Merseyside Energy Recovery Limited, appointed on a 30-year contract in 2013 by MRWA to divert household waste from landfill; and the Waste Management and Recycling contract with Veolia.
- Co-operate to improve working arrangements. Information was provided on food waste collection; and zero waste strategies.

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- Measure and report on climate change impacts and sustainability improvements. Information was provided on sustainable development goals; carbon footprint; biodiversity; overall recycling rates from 2017-18 to 2021-22 for Sefton v the City Region; and contamination rates.

Ms Worswick concluded by detailing what MRWA wanted to achieve and its key priorities.

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

- The more prevalent use of mobile scooters requiring the use of batteries and charging equipment with the resultant risk of combusting in the home and when disposed of; and information was sought on the availability of safer batteries for such purposes.
- In respect of the food waste collection scheme it was suggested that some dwellings such as flats and apartments may not be suitable for the scheme; but that the use of communal bins, in communal areas, may resolve such issues; and whether funding was available for this.

It was also noted that the re-launch of the food waste collection service was included in the contract with Veolia; that details of the scheme were being worked on; and that by December 2023 a clearly scoped set of timelines, activities and high-level costs would be developed.

- The campaign to raise awareness of the disposal of lithium batteries was referred to; and it was acknowledged that other incorrectly disposed of items such as vapes, which also contained lithium batteries, and pressurised whipped cream chargers (being used for psychoactive substance use) also posed dangers of combustion/explosion.
- It was noted that Sefton's overall recycling rates over the last 5 years were consistently above the Liverpool City Region average; but that worryingly, recycling rates were falling across Sefton and the City Region.
- It was noted that the current waste management and recycling contract would shortly need to be re-tendered; and information was sought on business competitiveness in the waste management industry.

RESOLVED:

That Lesley Worswick be thanked for her informative presentation.

12. DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 11 of 28 September 2022 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) that updated on Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse.

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The report indicated that in September 2022 Members were provided with an update on the Domestic Abuse Act (introduced in April 2021), Sefton Council's statutory obligations within the Act, and Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; and that since then, work had continued to refresh Sefton's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and to develop an action plan to take the priorities within this forward.

The report detailed the operation of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; provided information on the Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028 and Action Plan; and because the impact of domestic abuse cut across all agency services, detailed the cross-partnership collaboration with the following organisations:

- Safer Sefton Together partnership on the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda
- the Sefton Safeguarding Adults Board and Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Liverpool city region partnerships such as the Merseyside Strategic Domestic Violence and Abuse Group, the Merseyside Strategic Sexual Violence Group, Community Safety Leads meetings around domestic abuse and suicide prevention, domestic homicide reviews learning workshops and multi-agency domestic abuse perpetrator work

The Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028 and the Domestic Abuse Action Plan 2023-2028 were attached as appendices to the report.

Members asked questions/commented on the following matters:

- The methodology used in the Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy to ensure that victim/survivor voices and experiences were clearly captured, listened to, and enacted upon to ensure Sefton's response to tackling domestic abuse was based on their needs.
- In the Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Action Plan it was considered that it would be helpful if the table could be updated by the completion of the "Progress RAG Rated" column to aid evaluation of key milestones.
- Funding risks across agencies providing valuable services was a concern.
- The provision of wider support opportunities for perpetrators of domestic abuse to sustain positive behaviour change long-term.
- The work undertaken with schools (including academies), as part of the Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Action Plan, to promote preventative interventions and approaches in the curriculum.
- The synergy between the Leadership and Governance, and Prevent and Protect, Repair, and Children and Young People Sub-Groups.

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RESOLVED:

That the report updating on Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse be noted.

13. RIVERSIDE DISPERSED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

Further to Minute No. 5 of 28 June 2022 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that provided an update on activity undertaken relating to the Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Programme (the Programme) since June 2022.

The report indicated that following a strategic review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 it was agreed to introduce a pilot service to provide dispersed temporary accommodation and support services for vulnerable households, particularly for those who struggled to access tenancies; that the pilot project was a Housing First-style approach to preventing homelessness by providing person-centred support for families to help them sustain a tenancy and prevent them from falling into temporary accommodation or shelters; and that the pilot was initially part funded by the Riverside Impact Fund – which aimed to provide opportunities to test outcomes-based commissioning models with its mission being to find a new approach to protect and support some of the most vulnerable families in the borough, whilst reducing council expenditure on costly bed and breakfast and other private rented sector accommodation.

The Programme was evaluated by an independent company, Impact Limited, to assess the impact of the pilot which concluded that without this service, customers' progression to living in independent accommodation would have been much slower with subsequent consequences relating to health, wellbeing, family cohesion, etc; and that of the 37 families involved, only one failed to successfully progress to a regular social housing tenancy with Riverside in Sefton, due to a preference for being housed in a different borough.

The report continued that following the successful completion of the project pilot the Council commissioned the Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Project for a further two years from September 2022; and detailed how families would be supported by the Programme.

The report also advised that Sefton Council won the Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness category at this year's Northern Housing Awards for its Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Service.

The report concluded by providing information on case studies relating to six families supported by a Support Worker through the Programme.

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

- Who funded the evaluation of the pilot, carried out by an independent company, Impact Limited, to assess the impact of the pilot.
- Systems that were in place to liaise with neighbours, and offer support if necessary, in the vicinity of properties to be used to house families in the pilot scheme.
- Future funding/grants for the continuation of the pilot scheme, including the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.
- It was welcome to note that the pilot evaluation concluded that there was a positive return on investment which represented potential public spending costs savings associated with homeless families.
- The positive outcome of the pilot in maintaining family cohesion.
- It was pleasing to note that Sefton Council won the Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness category at this year's Northern Housing Awards for its Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Service.
- The informative case studies of six families supported by the Support Worker through the initiative and which detailed the types of work and support provided.
- The Sefton wide nature of the scheme
- The potential to include other registered social landlords in schemes to provide similar services.
- The challenges facing the Council to widening the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the update on activity undertaken relating to the Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Programme since June 2022 and the continued approach to the Programme be approved.

14. WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) seeking consideration of the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for approval for 2023/24.

The report indicated that the Council provided a Highway Winter Service to the Borough in accordance with the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; that officers monitored the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enacted the plan when weather conditions dictated; that the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) had inserted an additional section 41(1A) to the Highways Act 1980 which placed a duty on the Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, and stated 'In particular, a Highway Authority is under duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'; and that in addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Statutory Network Management Duty on all local traffic authorities in England requiring all authorities to do all that

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was reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting this duty, authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonably practicable. The Council's Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan, which has been approved by the Council, is reviewed each summer to ensure that it remained 'fit for purpose'.

The report advised that as part of the annual review and reassessment consultation was undertaken and that a consultation letter was sent to every Elected Member seeking their views. A copy of the letter was attached as Annex A to the report.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

Members asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Liaison with neighbouring local authorities to ensure a consistency of gritting operations.
- The impact of climate change and the consequential risks of more often and severe flooding incidents; and what measures could be put in place to alleviate such issues.
- Concern was raised that the report indicated that there had been no response from Merseytravel to consultation on the Policy and Operational Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Winter Maintenance Policy and Operational Plan policy document for 2023/24 be endorsed.

15. EXECUTIVE/SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought formal approval of changes to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol (the Protocol) for submission to Cabinet.

The report advised that the draft protocol was approved by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet at their meetings in late 2020; and that at its first meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year, held on 20 June 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the Protocol and suggested two additions in relation to the submission of Plans and Strategies to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Working Group Reviews/Informal Meetings.

For illustrative purposes, an updated version of the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol was attached to the agenda highlighting the changes if ultimately approved by Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet.

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A Member of the Committee commented that it was best practice for Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to not be from the ruling political group; and that legislation was in place to ensure that at Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Chair of the Committee must be from an opposition group.

RESOLVED: That

Cabinet be requested to approve changes to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol in relation to:

- (1) Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fall within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, being requested to seek the views of the Committees on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it is not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committees to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon; and Section 6 of the Protocol relating to pre-scrutiny be amended accordingly; and
- (2) reference being made to informal meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review topics in Section 8 of the Protocol.

16. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the Work Programme for 2023/24; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan; the confirmation of the date for a visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and informal meeting of the Committee; updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; provided information on the breakdown of offences for which penalty charge notices had been issued; and provided information on the reduction in time civil enforcement officers would spend patrolling if the parking and environmental enforcement functions were split.

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

- In respect of the Bootle Regeneration Strategy item contained in the Forward Plan, clarification was sought on whether the report would be open or exempt; and a suggestion was made that the item had a borough wide impact rather than simply affecting Derby and Linacre wards.
- Quoracy problems at meetings of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee were referred to and it was noted that the high quorum threshold was not set by the Combined Authority but was set out in legislation. It was also noted that Councillor Howard, Sefton's Scrutiny Link to the

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Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, had offered Sefton's support to the Combined Authority in their approach to Government to reduce the quorum for meetings.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed;
- (2) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to submit his Southport Market update report to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (3) due to the low number of Members available to attend the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and informal meeting of the Committee on 9 October 2023, the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to arrange a fresh date for the visit and informal meeting in November/early December;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (5) the information on the breakdown of offences for which penalty charge notices had been issued; and information on the reduction in time civil enforcement officers would spend patrolling if the parking and environmental enforcement functions were split be noted; and
- (6) In respect of the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group:
 - (1) bearing in mind the views of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) and the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that it is unlikely that their comments will change on the implementation of such recommendations for the foreseeable future then no further update reports be submitted on this matter; and
 - (2) however, if circumstances do change in due course, then the Assistant Directors be requested to provide updates to the Committee.

17. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JUNE 2023 TO SEPTEMBER 2023

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

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

- The achievement of Library Assistant Lizzie Todd of being named MJ Rising Star of 2023 at this year's Municipal Journal Awards.
- Affordable housing delivery in the borough and the potential impacts on such delivery due to current economic market conditions.
- A concern was raised that a Member wished to ask a question but that due to the Cabinet Member not being present at the meeting they were unable to do so. It was acknowledged that any Member could contact a Cabinet Member about their reports directly, but that this would not provide public scrutiny as the question would not be in the public domain.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (2) the congratulations of the Committee be extended to Lizzie Todd for her achievement of being named MJ Rising Star of 2023 at this year's Municipal Journal Awards;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to arrange for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider the issue of questions submitted to Cabinet Members at Overview and Scrutiny Committees; and
- (4) Councillor Hardy be thanked for her attendance at the Committee.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 7 November 2023
Subject:	Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report		
Report of:	Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary: The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 previously required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions. Following the cessation of this requirement, O&S has requested that an annual Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) review be brought to them.

Recommendation(s): That Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills);

(1) Review the report

(2) That any comments from this committee be referred to the Cabinet Member (Health & Wellbeing) for consideration.

(3) Note the future potential need for additional resources if Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 is implemented.

(4) Review the need for future annual reports as it is no longer a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure the committee's views are considered in the future delivery of the Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management function.

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs. No additional resource implications.

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(B) Capital Costs. Existing projects are being funded from grants from the Environment Agency. Grant aid will be sought for additional projects and schemes as required.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): No additional resource implications to those required to deliver service.	
Legal Implications: There are no legal implications.	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Y/N
Have a neutral impact	Y/N
Have a negative impact	Y/N
The author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y/N
<p>The content of this report sets out the work and project undertaken by the FCERM in managing flood risk. The nature of this work is to manage a climate impact on our communities. The approaches taken by FCERM are to adapt and mitigate the risks posed by climate change, from assessing planning applications to ensure future climate prediction are considered in designs, to designing in sustainable drainages systems within our sites. The schemes undertaken are designed to better understand and address flood risk now and into the future. Though over the short term some of the work, especially any construction can have a negative impact, its long-term goal is to provide improvements. It is therefore considered that the work has a positive effect on climate change.</p>	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The work FCERM does is about informing and educating our communities about flood risk and ensuring they understand their role in managing flood risk.
Commission, broker and provide core services: not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: We actively work in partnership with communities and other risk management organisations and authorities to ensure we can deliver our outcomes that tie into the 2030 vision.
Drivers of change and reform: by having an FCERM strategy in place and performance management systems in place we can ensure we are doing the right thing in the right way.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: not applicable
Cleaner Greener: the assets we manage on the coast and inland as part of the Green Infrastructure service enable people to come and enjoy Sefton's natural beauty. The work we do to manage risk, understand risk, avoid increasing risk, reduce risk and reduce the consequences of flood risk both coastal and inland, directly supports Sefton's economy and people's health and wellbeing.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services has been consulted and comments have been incorporated into the report (FD 7381/23)

The Chief Legal & Democratic Officer has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD 5581/23).

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Michelle Barnes/Paul Wisse
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2958/0151 934 2959
Email Address:	michelle.barnes@sefton.gov.uk / Paul.wisse@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

Background Papers:

The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website:

[Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategy](#)
[Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management business plan](#)
[FCERM Flood Investigation Policy](#)

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1. Introduction

The Annual Review covers a 12-month period from September 2022-2023 and details the following key areas:

- Information on **flooding & erosion incidents** experienced over the last year.
- Work progress relative to our **legislative responsibilities** as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Riparian Owner & Coastal Authority.
- Work progress relative to our own **actions** set out in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2022-2030.
- Overview of annual finances

2. Overview of Flooding & Coastal Change Incidents October 2022 – September 2023

2.1 Inland Surface Water Flood events

The total flood incidents (all types) reported between Oct-2022 and Sep-23 was 68, 4 of which were the combined sewer at Crosby bursting. There were 7 reports of internal flooding (Internal flooding includes into the habitable part of a property, the main business and/or garages or outbuildings that are joined to the main property). The remaining 63 reports occurred on 8 separate dates, with the 23/7/2023 (27 reports) and 26/08/2023 (30 reports) being the most notable events. The large number of flood events occurring during the summer were due to July being one of the wettest on record. In comparison to 2021/22 which had one of the hottest summers on record. For Sefton the amount of rainfall increased by 11% from the previous year.

Out of the 64 flood incidents, 51 were attributed to surface water flooding, 5 to main river flooding, 7 were on the United Utilities systems and one requires further investigation to understand the flooding mechanism. Figure 1a highlights the distribution of flood incidents across the Sefton borough for 2022/23. The highest number of flood reports were received in the Sudell, Park and Molyneux wards (Maghull), as shown in figure 1b. Figure 1c highlights the land use of the areas that are experiencing flooding.

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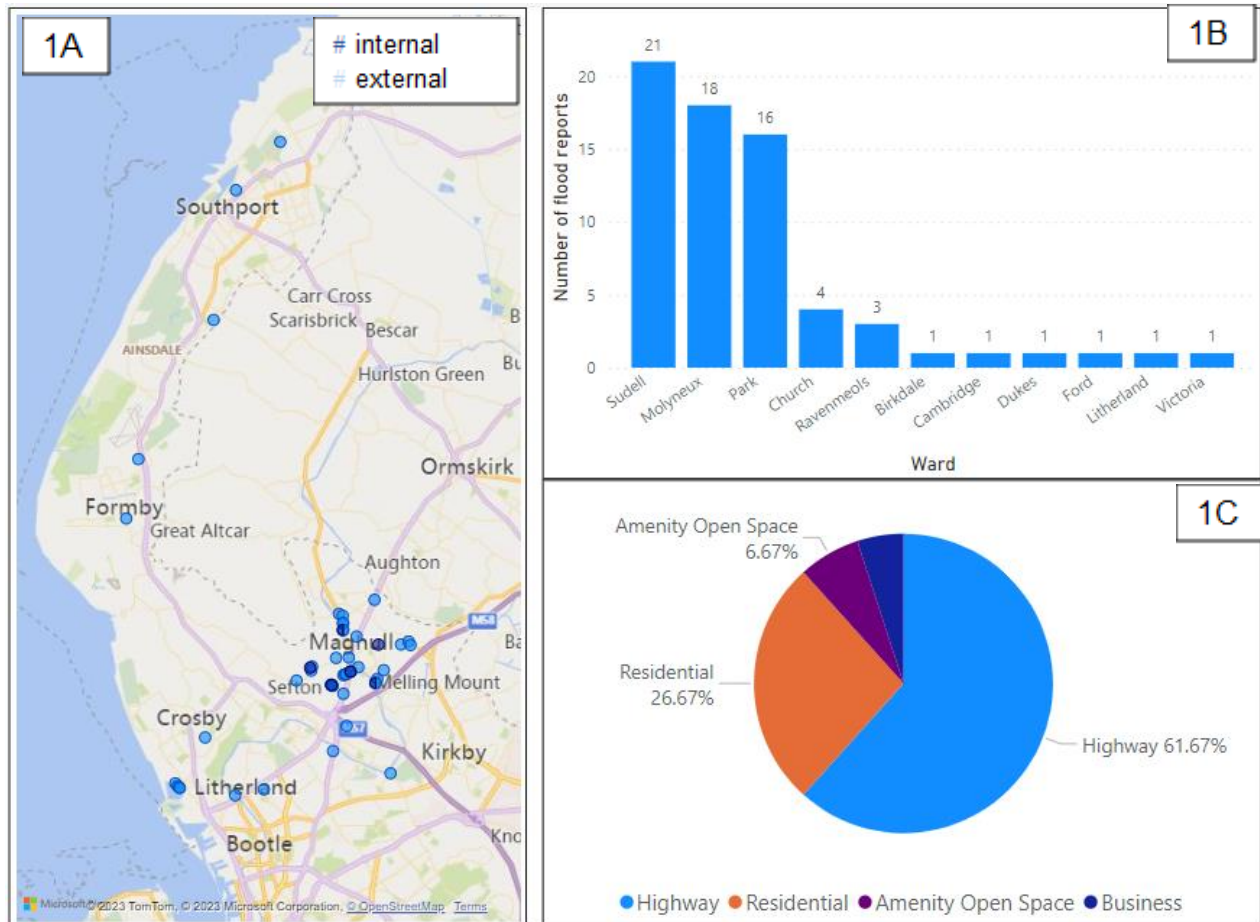


Figure 1a-c: This figure highlights the flood incidents across the Sefton Borough between Oct-22 to Sep-23. a.) Distribution and type of flooding incident - internal or external b.) Flood incidents reported by ward c.) Flood incident reports relating to land use type.

Since the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Plan in 2010 there has been 623 reports of flooding covering 204 events with 175 being reported as internal flood events. Of these events, 69 reports were made due to during Storm Christoph (January 2021), 38 Storm Eva (December 2015) and 41 August thunderstorms 2020 and 30 August thunderstorms 2023. This shows that the large storm events do cause a significant impact and are very hard to predict and manages. Figure 2 shows the distribution of events covering the borough, with 61% of all flood reports from residential properties and 6% from businesses. Figure 3 shows the flood reports by settlement with Maghull reporting the most floods (233) followed by Formby (69) and Southport (65). The reasons why Maghull seems particularly badly affected are not clear and work continues to investigate this. Whilst it has received more rainfall over this last reporting period (table 1) it isn't significantly higher than the other catchment areas. Maghull does have a complex network of watercourses, public sewers and highway drains, but so does Formby and Southport. It has a relationship with water levels in the main rivers that flow out via the River Alt, as does Formby. It also receives similar maintenance to the other areas. There may be higher community awareness in Maghull due to significant flooding in 2012 that may be contributing to the community being more willing to report incidents.

Catchment	Southport	Birkdale	Formby	Crosby	Maghull
Total rainfall mm	892	1026	987	963	1049

Table 1: Total catchment rainfall (mm) 1/10/2022-4/09/2023 derived from radar.

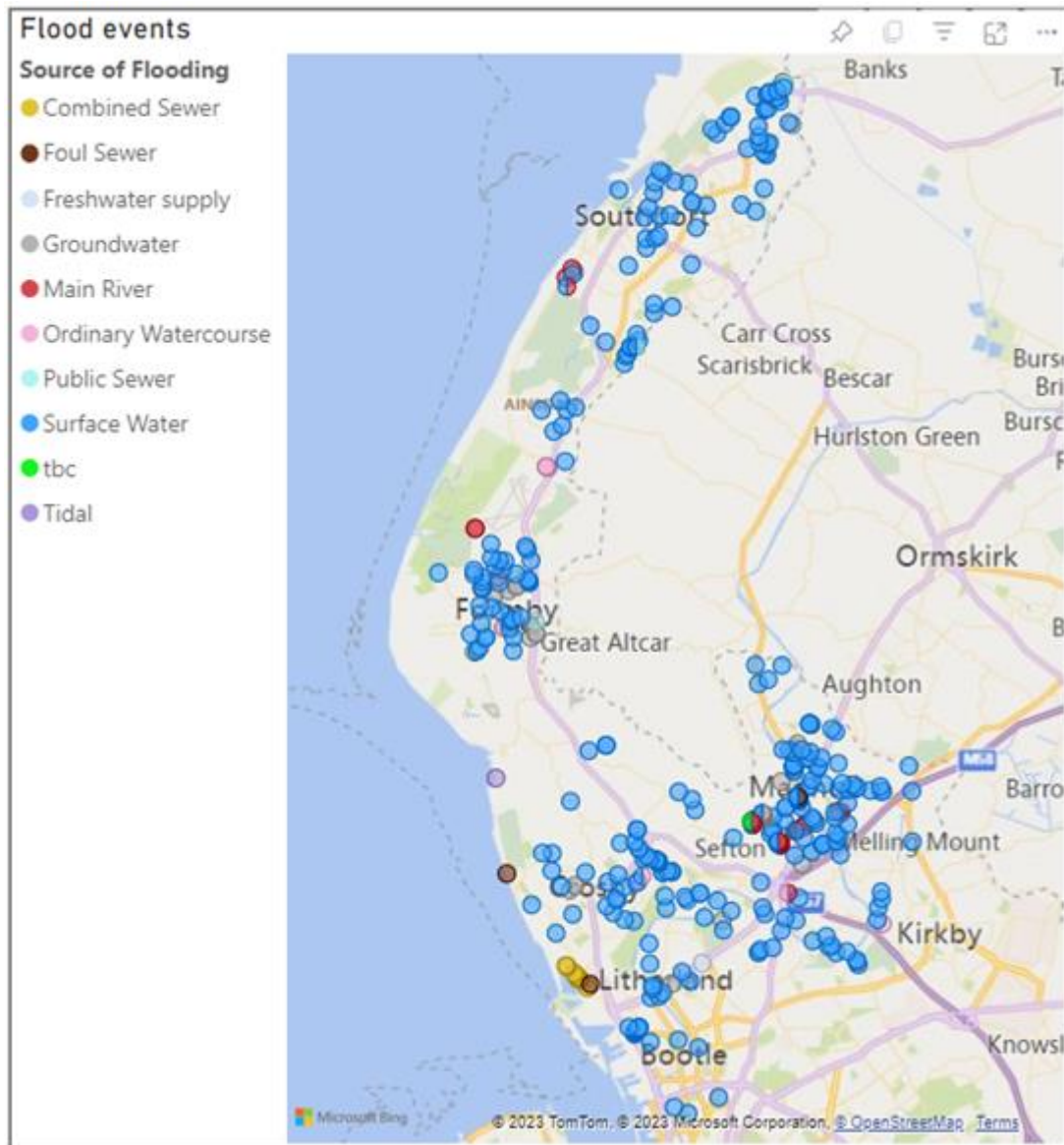


Figure 2. Sefton flood reports by source 01/04/2010 to 18/09/2023

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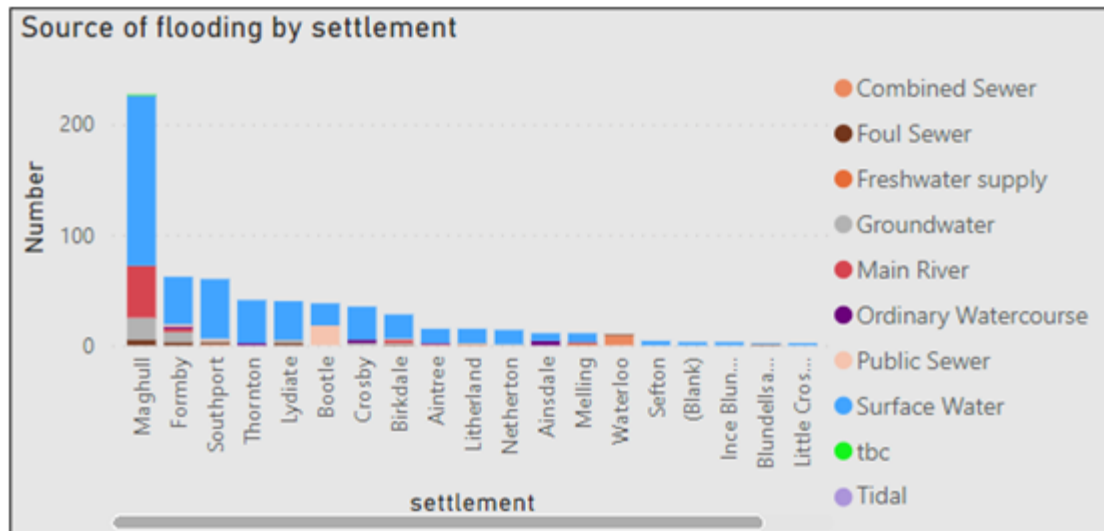


Figure 3. Source of flooding by settlement 1/4/2010-18/09/2023

2.2. Coastal Flooding & Change

During the 2022/2023 period there were no significant flooding or erosion events along the coast.

3. Legislative Responsibilities

Sefton's statutory duties and legislative responsibilities have been integrated into the actions of the FCERM business plan which is reported in section 4. However, it is useful to separate these actions out here for clarity to demonstrate how they are being delivered.

3.1. Delivery of Duties Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)

The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 established Sefton Council as a LLFA making it responsible for the management of 'local flood risk'. 'Local Flood Risk' refers to flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses (ditches, stream and smaller rivers). **As an LLFA, Sefton Council has several responsibilities (a-f).** The delivery of these responsibilities is outlined beneath each subtitle:

a. Prepare and maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which manages surface water runoff, groundwater & ordinary watercourses.

Under Section 9 of the FWMA, an LLFA has a duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. In January 2022, Sefton Council adopted its new [Local Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy 2022-2030](#) (see background papers to this report) which aligns with Sefton Council's 2030 Vision and takes into consideration the National FCERM strategy.

The local strategy provides information on who the risk management authorities are in Sefton, their relevant functions and how our approach to flood risk management is

coordinated. It offers information on how wider environmental objectives will be achieved in Sefton and provides timescales of when our approach will be reviewed.

The strategy is supported by a [Business Plan](#) which outlines Sefton’s future actions for managing flood and coastal erosion risk and provides detail on the process, timescales, benefits and costs associated with any proposed actions. This strategy provides local communities and stakeholders with clarity on flood risk management in Sefton.

b. Co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities (RMA) and work closely to ensure local and national plans are linked.

Over the past year Sefton Council has continued to work in partnership with other RMAs to reduce flood risk across the borough on a national-, regional- and project-scale. Sefton Council’s interests have been represented at the working groups displayed in Table 2 (both virtual and in-person, where suitable).

The attendance of these meetings has allowed RMAs to share examples of best practice, exchange data & information and examine more efficient & prioritised ways of achieving our actions in collaboration with our RMA partners.

Table 2: Meetings & Working Groups attended during the past 12-month period.

Meeting	Scale	RMAs Attending	Frequency	Outcomes
The Merseyside Flood Risk Partnership: Operational, Tactical and Strategic	Regional	EA, UU, Merseyside LLFAs	Quarterly	Worked in partnership to resolve local flood issues. Administered quick win funding
The NW Regional Flood & Coastal Committee	Regional	EA, UU, Regional Strategic Partnerships	Quarterly	New business plan approved. Increased quick win funding to £100k per partnership.
The Liverpool Bay Coastal Sub-Group	Regional	EA, maritime authorities	Biannually	Supported PhD studying coastal sediment dynamics from Great Orme to Formby Point
Northern Coastal Sub-Group	Regional	EA, maritime authorities	Quarterly	Supported and provided feedback to the coastal monitoring programme
The North West and North Wales Coastal Group	Regional	EA, UU, maritime authorities	Quarterly	Advancement of SMP action plan, funding secured for Eco buffers project.
Alt Crossens catchment Partnership	Regional	EA, UU	Quarterly	Coordination of project activity across catchment inc. several bids for watercourse improvements, studies on Alt and Melling Brook
National Network of Regional	National	EA, national regional	Quarterly	Exchange of knowledge across network – defining

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Coastal Monitoring Programme Steering Group		monitoring programmes		specification for survey work
Flood Resilience Strategic Working Group	Sefton	EA, UU	Bimonthly	Reviewed options for Maghull and Lunt Meadows
The Maghull Operational Officer Group	Local	EA, UU	Monthly	Catchment based flood map, programme of works

c. Establish and maintain a register of structures or features which have a significant effect on flood risk.

Currently, we have a standard, excel-based asset register, however, this year we have been investigating new ways of cataloguing and maintaining our assets. The use of new software will allow an overhaul of our asset register, making it easier to record new asset locations and update records in real-time. The software will provide a collaborative and inclusive system that can be used across the team for inspecting and maintaining our assets. We aim to get the software running in 2022/23, making data available across the team and, where suitable, to the public. This move to an updated system will provide clarity to our record keeping and improve our ability to organise and manage future inspection/maintenance timetables.

d. Undertake the role of a statutory consultee to Sefton planning authorities by providing technical advice on surface water drainage.

Sefton Council, in its role as LLFA, is a statutory consultee and, therefore, provides technical advice on surface water drainage for major planning applications (≥ 10 dwellings/ ≥ 0.5 Ha). Figure 5 shows the number of different types of applications that were received.

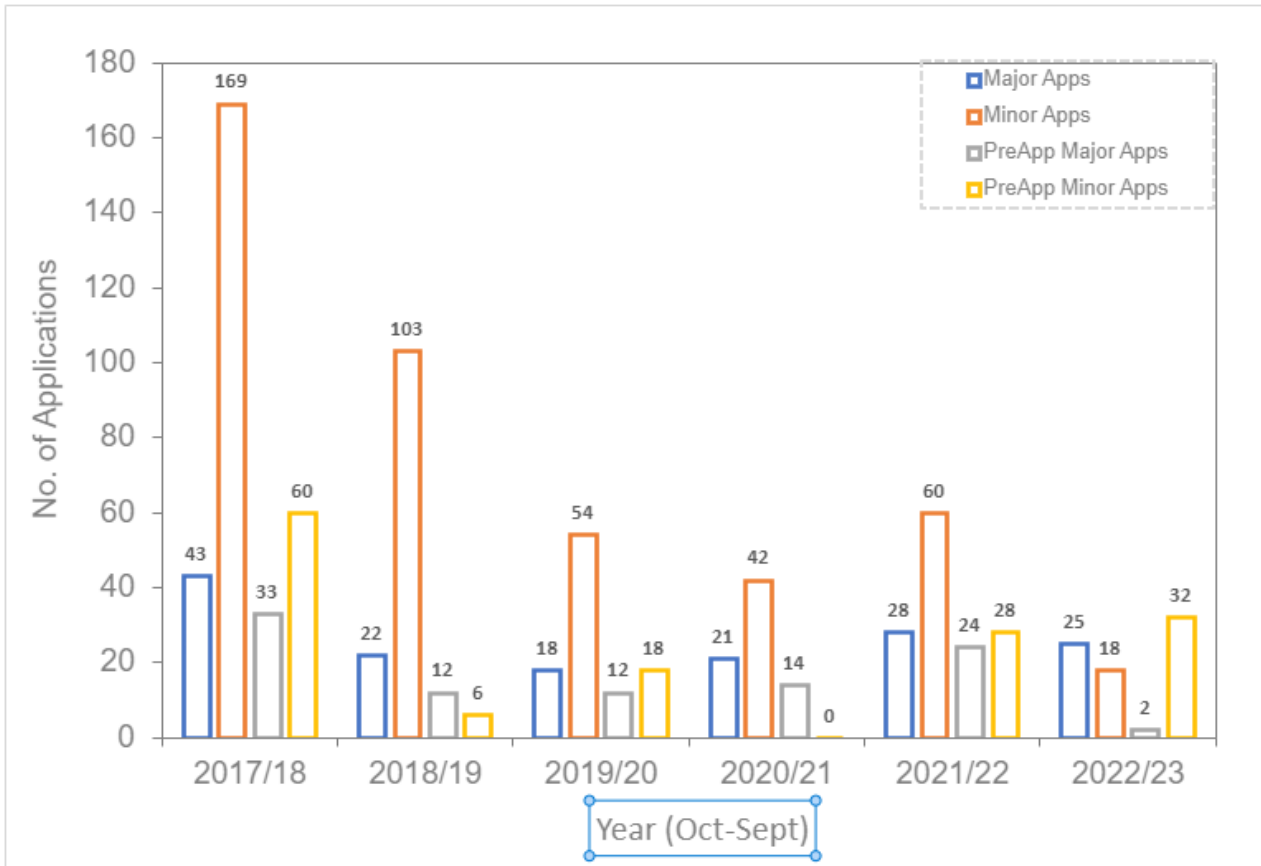


Figure 5: The annual (Sep-Sep) number of planning applications (Major, Minor, Major Pre. App, Minor Pre. App) received by the FCERM team from 2017-2023.

As reported in 2022 we were beginning to again receive an increasing number of minor planning applications which are outside the consultation duties of a LLFA. Discussions were undertaken with the planning Department to reiterate the use of standard conditions on all minor applications. This has resulted in a decrease in the numbers of minor applications being received.

To streamline response times, a SuDs (Sustainable Drainage) Pro-forma was developed in 2018/2019 and made a mandatory part of the checklist expected from applicants which should not be validated by planning until all documents requested in the checklist are submitted. The Pro-forma helps the Planning Department to ensure any major planning application has the required information before being passed to the LLFA for consultation. The Proforma has been revised and updated in Summer 2023 and includes an increased allowance for climate change from 40% to 45% and updated text to reflect the changes to the National Planning Policy.

We continue to face challenges with meeting the statutory deadlines, mainly due to discussions with developers taking an extended period. We have looked at options for bringing in additional resource to speed up our responses but have been unable to secure funding for this.

e. Investigate and publish reports on significant flooding in Sefton

Sefton Council has a duty to publish flood investigation reports under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The FCERM Flood Investigation Policy defines what is considered to be a 'significant flood event' and the criteria for triggering a Section

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19 report. Section 19 reports provide an overview of the circumstances of the event for public record with the objectives of the report being to:

- Identify and explain the probable cause of flooding
- Identify which authorities, communities and individuals have relevant flood risk management powers and responsibilities
- Provide recommendations for each of those authorities, communities, and individuals
- Outline whether those authorities, communities or individuals have or will exercise their powers or responsibilities in response to the flooding incident.

The report does not include analysis of flood mechanisms or hydraulic modelling as it is not intended to provide solutions or mitigation options in relation to the event.

The LLFA cannot:

- Resolve the flooding issues or provide designed solutions
- Force authorities to undertake any of the recommended actions.

f. ***Regulate ordinary watercourses through consent and enforcement powers to ensure riparian owners are undertaking their duties***

The Land Drainage Act 1991 and amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires anyone wishing to alter an ordinary watercourse to obtain consent from the Council prior to undertaking the work. Failure to do so can result in the enforcement action being taken by Sefton Council to ensure the capacity and condition of the watercourse are not compromised.

Where the flow of an Ordinary Watercourse is impeded, Sefton Council also has permissive powers to undertake enforcement action which are set out in the Land Drainage Act 1991 in three key sections:

- Section 21: Enforcement of obligations to repair watercourses, bridges, etc.
- Section 23 & 24: Prohibition on obstructions etc. in watercourses.
- Section 25: Powers to require works for maintaining flow of watercourse

Enforcement action will be considered within available resources, by serving notice, where it is in overriding public interest and efforts of negotiation have failed to resolve. Sefton Council will prioritise enforcement action as set out in table 2:

Priority	Likely consequence of flooding
1	Internal flooding to a dwelling or business premises
2	Flooding to highways defined as part of Sefton's Key Route Network or critical infrastructure*
3	Flooding to highways defined as classified roads or local distributor roads.
4	Flooding to outbuildings, gardens, open space and farmland that is not on part of the functional floodplain

Table 3: Flood risk prioritisation

*Critical infrastructure refers to:

- Railway lines and stations.
- Police, ambulance and fire stations and command centres.
- Hospitals.
- Universities, colleges and schools.
- Local authority main offices.
- Residential institutions supporting vulnerable people.

Whilst there haven't been any formal enforcement action, we are undertaking negotiated actions with a number of Riparian owners.

3.2 Delivery of Duties as a Riparian Owner (Land Drainage Act, 1991)

Under the Land Drainage Act (1991), riparian landowners have a legal responsibility to maintain the free passage of water through the section of watercourse that flows across their land. A riparian owner possesses land which has a watercourse running next to, underneath or through it. As a landowner, and a riparian owner, Sefton Council has a legal obligation to actively maintain watercourses across its land. Figure 6 shows the proportion of spend as a Riparian owner and on Critical ordinary watercourses

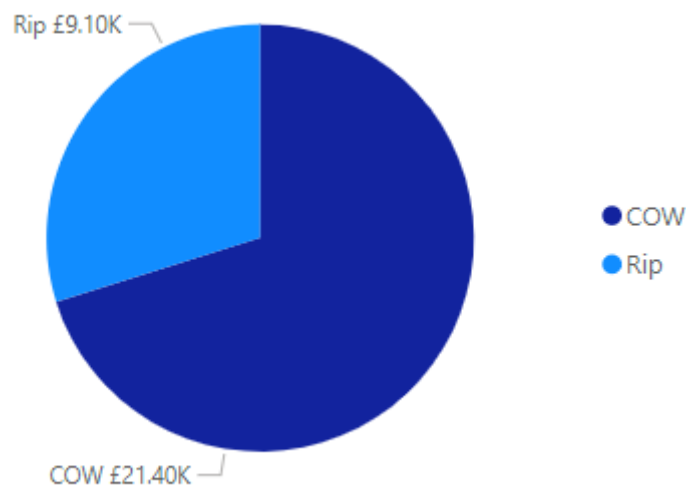


Figure 6: Revenue spend on watercourses as a riparian owner, on a critical watercourse or investigation.

3.3. Delivery of Duties under the Coast Protection Act (1949)

Under the Coast Protection Act (1949) Sefton Council was designated as a Coastal Protection Authority and as such has powers to protect and maintain the Sefton coast.

To ensure we are fulfilling our obligations the following maintenance has been undertaken:

- Crosby Seawall

Repairs are underway to the railings and promenade, both of which are ongoing issues. Railings are regularly damaged during storm events.

- Crosby Navigation Markers

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The Trinity House inspection flagged the need to replace a navigation marker on the Alt training bank, this has been commissioned along with painting of a marker on Far Moss Pool outfall, Hightown.

- Coastal Defence Inspection.

Both hard and soft defences have been inspected.

4. Delivery of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) Actions (2022-2030)

In 2021/22, the FCERM produced and adopted a new LFRMS and Business Plan. To ensure we are deliver on our actions our progress will be measured relative to the actions set out in the LFRMS Business Plan which were based on the Sefton 2030 Vision themes (Figure 7). The table below provides an update on the actions.



Figure 7: Themes of the Sefton Council’s Vision 2030

Together a Stronger Community
<p>Develop a FCERM communications plan to support the Local Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy</p> <p>What we said we would do 2022/23: The 2022/23 Communications Plan is completed and will be in effect from September 2022. This year there is a greater emphasis on partnering with the Flood Hub Campaigns and releasing seasonally relevant information to the public to inform them of flooding and erosion in Sefton.</p> <p>What we have done 2022/23: The various monthly Flood hub monthly campaigns were supported through the Councils media sites.</p> <p>What we will do 2023/24: Continue to promote and support the regional Flood Hub campaigns and seek to add local issues to make more relevant to residents, if resources allow.</p>
<p>Engage with riparian owners about their responsibilities (Highways Maintenance</p>

to work with FCERM on this)

What we said we would do 2022/23: Following the inspection of riparian-owner ordinary watercourses, letters containing recommended actions will be sent to owners of poorly maintained watercourses to ensure the watercourse is able to receive water and discharge water across their land. This will be done on a risk-based priority.

What we have done 2022/23: Two area were targeted with advice about maintaining watercourses in private property with 64 letters being sent out.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to engage with residents and provide advice when necessary with some targeted activity around the Pool Watercourse if the planned project goes ahead there.

Exchange knowledge and best practice with wider partners to ensure improvements, efficiencies and effective ways of working

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to attend partnership meetings and seek to co-develop, co-fund and co-deliver projects. Work with colleagues from Highways and Emergency Planning to review emergency response plans for flooding.

What we have done 2022/23: Over the past year Sefton Council has continued to work in partnership with other RMAs to reduce flood risk across the borough on a national-, regional- and project-scale. Sefton Council's interests has been represented at the working groups displayed in Table 1 in Section 3.1b. An officer from Sefton Council now chairs the Liverpool Bay Coastal Group. Officers contributed information to the Council's weather emergency plan.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to attend existing meetings and further develop partnerships, with the Crosby and Pool Schemes being a key co developed project with the EA and UU that will begin to be delivered this year is approved.

Work with other Risk Management Authorities to identify viable options for Maghull

What we said we would do 2022/23: Seek to co-develop, co-fund and co-deliver projects with partners based on the outcomes of investigations and feasibility studies.

What we have done 2022/23: Quick win funding was secured to install flood doors on a number of businesses in Maghull and improvements were made to the local drainage system and a flow pathway was reestablished. In addition, works have been undertaken to improve highway drainage that was leading to property flooding. Options for Fouracres have been assessed and reviewed by United Utilities and further modelling and option assessment is underway.

What we will do 2023/24: Complete works to improve highway drainage network. Complete optioneering and modelling for Fouracres and seek funding to implement preferred solution. Review options for joint operational response plans with other RMA. Seek property level mitigation measures for Fouracres alongside options for a temporary or permanent pump with UU.

Ensure council-delivered SuDs schemes achieve multiple benefits

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What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to seek opportunities to incorporate SuDs schemes in projects being delivered by Green Sefton and Sefton Council.

What we have done 2022/23: The SuDS scheme in the Bootle Golf Course has operated as designed. Whilst no schemes have been delivered this year discussions have broadened to include highways and opportunities of using highway verges etc.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to seek opportunities to deliver SuDs to support council assets and seek planning and funding approval to deliver the 'Making space for water scheme in Churchtown and Crossens' which will be constructed on Sefton owned green spaces. Review the SuDS opportunity mapping report by Atkins for Formby and Maghull to see what measures are feasible to be implemented.

Engage with communities about the broader issues of FCERM, climate change and flood risk awareness (Highways Maintenance to work with FCERM on this).

What we said we would do 2022/23: Engage with wider teams across the Council to create a Council communications plan that covers, climate, weather related hazards and emergency response.

What we have done 2022/23: Begun engagement with communities in Churchtown and Crossens about flood risk through a public consultations exercise. Writing case studies for the Flood Hub website.

What we will do 2023/24: Re engage with Emergency planning and highways to review emergency response plans and share with wider partners. Begin consultation with the communities of Crosby and Hightown with proposed coastal erosion mitigation measures.

Engage with communities where FCERM projects will be undertaken

What we said we would do 2022/23:

- **Crosby:** Communication with users and residents of the cycle path north of the coast guard station at Hall Road where some interim works to sure up the coastline should take place this year.
- **Maghull:** Liverpool Road North and Sefton Lane depending on the outcome of investigations and options development.
- **Churchtown:** Depending on the outcome of feasibility and funding confirmation for the Pool Project engagement with the community will be needed.

What we have done 2022/23:

- **Crosby:** communications are planned for Autumn 2023 to align with proposed works.
- **Maghull:** residents were advised of the work to the area to manage the flood risk.
- **Churchtown:** consultation live – running from September 23 to November 23.

What we will do 2023/24: Engage with communities at the appropriate times through the consultation process and planning consent to keep communities up to date with progress and gather their thoughts. Consultation response reports will be produced following any consultation or engagement campaigns.

Work collaboratively with wider partners to identify opportunities to deliver multiple benefits and ensure Sefton's interests are considered

What we said we would do 2022/23:

The 'Merseyside Partnership Quick Win' (MPQW) money has recently doubled in value to £100k per year, consequently, Sefton Council has recommended several projects to be used by partners across Merseyside. Projects that have previously not qualified for 'Grant in Aid' funding can request funds from the MPQW which would be allocated based on discussions and need as a partnership. Projects that would be beneficial to Sefton for this year would be the contribution to a pump at Fouracres and increased water level monitoring across the region. We will therefore seek to secure this funding and deliver projects this year.

Working with Mersey Rivers Trust and the Alt Crossens partnership to identify opportunities to improve the water quality of our watercourses and tap into alternative funding sources that whilst primarily are there to fund improvement to water quality they have multiple benefits, including flood risk alleviation.

What we have done 2023/23: A quick win bid was secured for flood doors. Bid for Fouracres wasn't made as solution wasn't approved by United Utilities. Assess the need for QW funding to deliver SuDS options in Maghull and Formby.

Grant In Aid Funded programme:

Every year in early Summer, Sefton Council can submit new schemes into the grant-in-aid funded programme managed by the Environment Agency. This is the opportunity for the Local Authority to indicate what potential investment they will be seeking over the next 6 to 20 years. Sefton Council still must develop and have approved business cases to secure and draw down the funding. The schemes submitted in 2023/24 are:

Scheme	2023/24 Allocation
Hightown Coastal Protection Investigation	£80,000
Merseyside Strategic Groundwater Flood Risk Pilot Strategy	£0
Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	£100,000

Schemes with funding already available and built in to the council's budget are:

Scheme	2023/24 Allocation
North West Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme	£1,058,000
Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	£14,563
The Pool, Southport	£57,163

Local Levy Funding:

Scheme	2023/24 Allocation
Shoreline management plan regional officer (hosted by Sefton)	£50,000

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Highway Funding:

Scheme	2023/24 Allocation
Liverpool road North Maghull drainage improvements	£150,000

What we will do 2023/24:

Look for further opportunities to use quickwin funding to support our communities most at risk.

Deliver capital schemes and seek multiple benefits during delivery.

Support Mersey rivers Trust with funding applications.

Strengthen links with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on managing flood risk.

Work with land managers and NW coastal group on the delivery of the Our Future Coast (Eco buffers) project at Formby Point

What we said we would do 2022/23: Set up a workshop with partners to scope the outcomes and actions for the project at Formby and commence actions.

What we have done 2022/23: Partner meeting taken place and scope agreed. Research questions identified and work underway. Site surveys started.

What we will do 2023/24: Deliver project to programme, focussing on research and evidence collection.

A Borough for Everyone

Seek funding to deliver the Crosby Flood & Coastal Defence Scheme

What we said we would do 2022/23: Deliver interim works, continue to monitor bird life, review costs and seek funding contributions to deliver the whole scheme with enhancements in later years.

What we have done 2022/23: Consultants appointed to take forward interim emergency work and main scheme review and enhancements. Bird surveys undertaken in-house by Green Sefton

What we will do 2023/24: Deliver emergency protection works Summer 2024
Complete review of main scheme to identify funding gaps and opportunities.

Assess deliverability and seek funding to deliver the Pool Scheme (Making Space for Water in Churchtown/Crossens)

What we said we would do 2022/23: Finalise design and develop business case for submission and approval.

What we have done 2022/23: Ecological surveys and Biodiversity Net gain assessments completed. Technical design and landscape design completed for consultation.

What we will do 2023/24: Review plans following public consultation, submit planning application and business case, if all approved commence works on site Spring 2024.

Support the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to develop work streams to deliver actions set out in the Climate Emergency Plan.

What we have done 2022/23:

Climate Emergency: Green Sefton sits on the working group and has helped develop

the strategy and action plan. Within the action plan, three key actions have implications to flooding and/or coastal erosion that we will either be leading on or actively involved with as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: actions within the corporate climate emergency that have implications relating to flood and coastal erosion risk management.

Local Action	Impact	Phase
Improve knowledge and understanding of how the Council is affected by extreme weather events in terms of providing its services and financial impacts.	High	Phase 1 - 3
Complete a full risk assessment of Climate Change impacts, identifying threats and how they can be managed as well as realising the opportunities (such as offsetting emissions and assessing carbon capture).	High	Phase 1
Work with the Planning Authority on developing guidance for development, that includes climate benefits, for the built and natural environment.	Medium	Phase 1

The FCERM team has had the coastal erosion predictions updated and begun sharing this information within the Council, in order for it to be brought into Council plans, strategies, and policies.

The FCERM team has established a Green Sefton Climate Emergency working group and has been working with team members from across the service to ensure climate risk is considered and embedded in all ways of working. An assessment of the various climate changes and the impact that may have has been undertaken across operational activities for the service. Progress has slowed in 2022/23 due to resource demands.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to develop work streams to deliver actions set out in the Climate Emergency Plan.

Review FCERM policies & develop new policies where necessary.

What we said we would do 2022/23:

National Flood Risk Management Plans: Review policies against the FRMP when published to identify any requirements to update our local policies.

What we have done 2022/23: Considered the introduction of a floodsac/sandbag policy, but it has been difficult to align this with resources. The review against the national FRMP hasn't taken place due to workload prioritisation.

What we will do 2023/24: Review all existing FCERM policies and identify the need of any new ones.

Inspect Council-owned assets (Highways Maintenance to review highway drainage asset).

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue with inspections, improve planning of inland inspection. Seek additional software to improve data collection in the field

What we have done 2022/23: The annual coastal defence asset inspections were completed in summer 2023. The inland asset inspections have a more structured approach but there are still a number of reactive inspections. ArcGIS software has been trialled by Green Sefton and has allowed improved data access and collection. Corporately, an alternative product has been purchased, though it has yet to be

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distributed to teams for implementation.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue with planned programme of inspections.

Living, working & having fun

Reactive inspection of private-owned assets following reports of flooding.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Inspection assets as and when flooding issues arise.

What we have done 2022/23: Inspections and maintenance work has been undertaken on a watercourse in Maghull where flooding to properties was occurring on Willow Hey. Undertaken inspections and advised landowners on Westbourne Road Birkdale with a watercourse that runs through back gardens.

What we will do 2023/24: Seek to inspect assets following reports of flooding as resources allow.

Explore opportunities to manage water differently by working with wider partners in order to support the work of Green Sefton

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to work with Mersey Rivers Trust. Seek opportunities within Sefton Council to manage water differently.

What we have done 2022/23: We have continued to support the Mersey Rivers Trust with their programme and are awaiting outcomes of their funding bids. Progressed the Making space for water project Churchtown and Crossens. Commissioned Atkins to undertake a SuDS opportunity mapping report for Formby and Maghull.

What we will do 2023/24: Implementation of the Pool Project and other proposals that the MRT have in relation to the Alt and its tributaries and seek to implement SuDS opportunities in Formby and Maghull.

Clean, green, beautiful borough

Undertake consenting with Riparian owners as required

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to assess applications as and when they are received.

What we have done 2022/23: There was only one application received during this period.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to assess applications as and when they are received.

Undertake enforcement with Riparian owners as required (Highways Maintenance to undertake this where it impacts on the highway drainage)

What we said we would do 2022/23: Undertake negotiation and enforcement action as required to ensure systems are operating as required, as resources allow.

What we have done 2022/23: we have engaged with a number of riparian owners in areas of Southport and Maghull and have sought to negotiate with them rather than move to formal enforcement.

What we will do 2023/24: Undertake negotiation and enforcement action as required to ensure systems are operating as required, as resources allow.

On the move

Ensure flood and coastal erosion risk is considered in all council-led projects.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to engage at various meeting and raise the profile of flood risk management and sustainable drainage in all projects.

What we have done 2022/23: Green Sefton is represented on Strategic Land Use group, Climate emergency group and the biodiversity Net Gain working group regularly meetings with highways colleagues have been established and to seek opportunities for joint projects to reduce flood risk as well as achieve other benefits. The largest current project with multiple benefits is the Making Space for Water project at Crossens/Churchtown that will see climate and biodiversity net gain benefits.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to engage at various meeting and raise the profile of flood risk management and sustainable drainage in all projects.

Ready for the Future

Review up-to-date climate change projections and consider how these may impact Sefton

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to undertake assessments on service delivery. Communicate internally these impacts and develop adaptation and mitigation approaches for them. Seek to have these recognised in updates to service plans etc.

What we have done 2022/23: We have shared Surface Water Flood Maps with partner agencies to improve their understanding of the risk. We continue to review risks to service delivery and adaptation opportunities and have shared this with the climate emergency working group, and this was raised as a business continuity challenge. The review of the Green Sefton strategy is underway with climate emergency being one of the key drivers.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to undertake assessments on service delivery. Communicate internally these impacts and develop adaptation and mitigation approaches for them. Publish and have adopted the new service strategy.

Deliver actions set out in Shoreline Management Plan

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue working with regional monitoring programme to deliver actions. Seek to take forward work at Crosby and Hightown, subject to funding.

What we have done 2022/23: We have further improved the relationship with the regional monitoring programme to support the SMP delivery. We have reviewed Sefton's actions and updated the plan accordingly.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue working with the North West and North Wales Coastal group to deliver actions. Seek to take forward work at Crosby and Hightown, subject to funding.

Undertake an annual review of resources to ensure Sefton Council (as LLFA) continue to deliver the actions set out in the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Plan

What we said we would do 2022/23: Await publication of the updated FRMP and confirmation of measures to cross reference against actions set out in the FCERM Business plan, identify any gaps and assess resource requirements.

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What we have done 2022/23: Actions from both Sefton Council's flood risk strategy and the Environment Agency's Flood risk management Plan have been reviewed and programmed. The resource allocation needed to deliver is still being assessed.

What we will do 2023/24: Complete resource assessment and identify any resource needs and seek funding to provide additional resource.

Complete Surface Water Management Plan Level 2 and seek funding to deliver options

What we said we would do 2022/23: Finalise reporting and seek funding to take forward any options identified.

What we have done 2022/23: Report finalised but failed to identify any viable options. Additional analysis undertaken for SuDS opportunities and a workshop was held to review these. Potential sites undergoing technical assessments for suitability.

What we will do 2023/24: Complete option assessments and seek funding to deliver any viable options.

Deliver the North West Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme

What we said we would do 2022/23: Tender for vertical aerial photography of the North West coast. Develop web presence to improve community engagement and knowledge sharing. Quality check and share coastal process reports when received from consultant.

What we have done 2022/23: Trialled new software to improve web mapping capability and published new information on the coastal group website. Aerial photography tender was completed and only partial data capture was undertaken due to poor flying conditions. Tendering for new Remote sensing framework has been slow and delayed due to resource availability.

What we will do 2023/24: Complete aerial photography capture. Tender for bathymetric surveys. Tender for remote sensing work. Continue to improve information sharing with partners and communities.

Establish plan and triggers for works to Hightown Coastline

What we said we would do 2022/23: Secure grant in aid funding to enable a consultant to be commissioned to develop a detailed plan for intervention works.

What we have done 2022/23: Commissioned WSP consultants to undertake a review of both Crosby and Hightown.

What we will do 2023/24: Establish if it is beneficial for Hightown and Crosby to combined into one scheme, secure funding and undertake detailed designs.

Ensure we support the Planning Service in undertaking its duty as a Local Planning Authority through our role as a statutory consultee on major developments, and as an advisory consultee on significant minor developments.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to comment on planning applications as required. Continue to work with planning colleagues to improve the process.

What we have done 2022/23: As reported in section 3.1.d

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to comment on planning applications as required. Continue to work with planning colleagues to improve the process.

Ensure we support the Planning Service in the preparation of evidence, other

documents and draft policies to support the review of the Local Plan (e.g. new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Coastal Change) and any other development plan documents and supplementary guidance.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to engage with planning colleagues and seek opportunities to support and influence content.

What we have done 2022/23: We have raised awareness of the potential implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 that would see the creation of a Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) that would make the decision about the suitability of the drainage plans of a new development, taking it away from the Local Planning Authority.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to engage with planning colleagues and seek opportunities to support and influence content. Prepare for the implementation of the SAB when guidance is issued.

Deliver improvements to the surface water outfalls along the Ainsdale/Birkdale coastline.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Inspect the watercourse and undertake maintenance as required.

What we have done 2022/23: Inspected the watercourse and planned maintenance to support the establishment of the new watercourses.

What we will do 2023/24: Inspect the watercourse and undertake maintenance as required.

Coordinate the delivery of groundwater monitoring across the Merseyside Authorities.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Further engage with partners to install monitors

What we have done 2022/23: Raised the project at Merseyside Tactical and Strategic groups and sent out options for partners to consider.

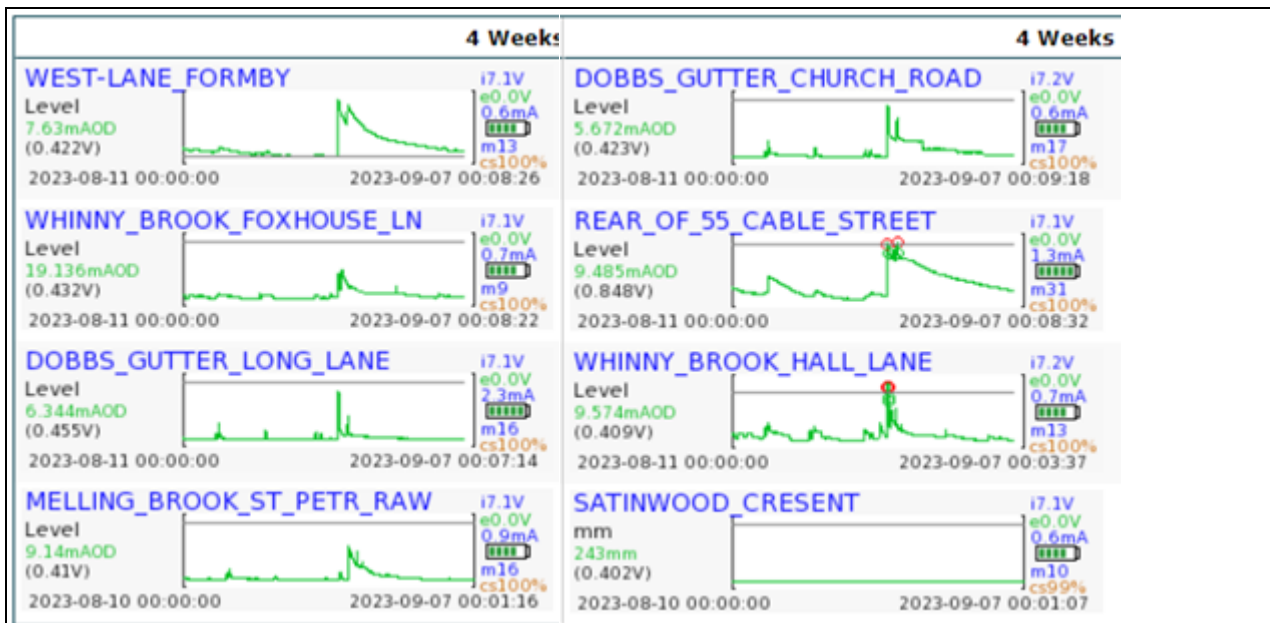
What we will do 2023/24: Make a decision on the future direction of the project.

Pilot smart water level monitoring at key locations in Sefton.

What we said we would do 2022/23: Install monitoring equipment at key locations Autumn 2022.

What we have done 2022/2023 Systems were installed at eight sites (4 Formby, 3 Maghull, 1 Melling) across the borough and have been recording data since October 2022.

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What we will do 2023/24: Install final station on Dover's Brook and seek funding to install another potential monitor on Rufford Road, Southport. Analyse data to identify key levels relating to flooding.

Undertake a programme of inspection for coastal assets

What we said we would do 2022/23: Undertake annual inspection for coastal defences in Autumn 2023. Continue Another Place statue inspections.

What we have done 2022/23: Annual coastal defence survey carried out Summer 2023.

Antony Gormley's Another Place, visual inspections have been undertaken each month and a full inspection in October 2022.

Southport sea front Obelisks, inspection undertaken in October 2022.

What we will do 2023/24: Continue with monthly and annual inspection programmes

Undertake a programme of inspections for Inland assets

What we said we would do 2022/23: Undertake inspections as per programme.

What we have done 2022/23: Undertaken a number of inspections, both visual and cctv as detailed in section 3.2

What we will do 2023/24: Continue with planned programme and reactive when required.

Undertake programmed and reactive maintenance for highways assets

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to flag blockages and flooding on the highway that affects properties and work with partners at an operational level to manage the risk to the highway.

What we have done 2022/23 Quarterly meetings held with all RMAs to discuss issues and several joint site visits undertaken, eg Willowhey

What we will do 2023/24 Work with highways to review Brooms Cross highway suds drainage maintenance programme

Develop asset management systems and a risk-based approach to maintenance

for the highway drainage asset - to be undertaken by Highways Maintenance and co-ordinated with FCERM

What we said we would do 2022/23: Continue to work collaboratively with the Highway team and share knowledge and expertise to support a risk-based approach to highway drainage maintenance.

What we have done 2022/23: Supported highways on asset management systems. Highways tendered for the work but costs were greater than the budget

What we will do 2023/24: Continue to support Highways and seek a more cost effective way or to take a phased approach to develop an asset management system.

5. Finance

The current revenue budget is £78,000, with an additional £3,000 for the maintenance and repairs of the navigation markers. The budget is split as detailed in Table 5. We have a planned and prioritised programme of works for both coastal and inland and have established a reactive/emergency works budget to try to better understand the demand for the service.

Repair & Maintenance of Land & Buildings – coastal assets	10,000.00
Reactive/Emergency Call Out	12,000.00
Land Drainage Works – inland assets	56,000.00

Table 5: FCERM maintenance budget

In addition, approximately £4,000 of this budget has to be used to cover software licence subscriptions.

6. Upcoming Policy or legislative changes

6.1 Biodiversity Net Gain

The Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for new developments as part of the planning approval process comes into force in January 2024. Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It is making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.

Developers must try to avoid loss of habitat to a piece of land they plan to do development work on. If they cannot do this, they must create habitat either on-site or off-site.

Developer can buy credits for off-site biodiversity net gain sites and will need to contribute 30yrs maintenance. Sefton Council has been identifying sites where opportunities exist for biodiversity net gain and will offer these to developers.

There are opportunities to overlap flood management works with biodiversity net gain, such as the Making Space for Water in Crossens and Churchtown Scheme, which may increase the workload demand on the FCERM team.

6.2 Proposed enactment of Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

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In January 2023, the government announced its decision to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England to better control flooding and wastewater discharges.

The schedule is expected to be implemented in 2024 and will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of sustainable drainage systems to decrease the volume and/or rate of water flowing into sewers and storm overflow discharges. The core purpose of [Schedule 3](#) is to make the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into new developments mandatory.

The introduction of a SuDS Approval Body (SAB), based within the Unitary Authority, will make the decision whether to approve a drainage plan for a development. This discussion currently sits with the Local Planning Authority. Critically, developers must ensure drainage approval is sought from the SAB before construction begins.

One of the most notable proposals is for the SAB to adopt new drainage systems, on the basis that they meet certain conditions, and be responsible for the ongoing maintenance.

To hit the criteria, developers must ensure they do the following:

- Build the drainage system in line with an [approved drainage plan](#) that complies with national standards
- Certify that the drainage system functions in line with the approved plan or non-performance bond if a certificate has been issued
- Ensure the system is a sustainable drainage system as defined by the Secretary's regulations

There are exclusions to this duty though; sections 18 and 19 of Schedule 3 state that the SAB's adoption duty does not apply to a drainage system which has been designed for a single property or publicly maintained roads.

Currently, no further guidance on funding arrangements, dates of enactment etc has been published. This will require additional resource within the Council to undertake the various aspects of this role, though it is unclear what level is required and where funding will come from to support this.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 7 November 2023
Subject:	Green Sefton Annual Review 2023		
Report of:	Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report provides an update on the progress of Green Sefton's operational delivery over the last year, and sets the strategic work programme, in line with the new Service Vision 2030, and updated Service Plan for the next year.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Review the report, and make comment on the issues raised, and the workload planning proposed over the next year.
- (2) That any comments from this committee be referred to the Cabinet Member (Health and Well Being) and the Cabinet Member (Locality Services) for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To provide an annual update on Green Sefton, as good practise and in response to the previous O+S Working Group recommendations.

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

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Details of the revenue budget for the service are included within the report.

(B) Capital Costs

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Details of the capital programme for the service are included within the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>The report outlines the need to re-consider the ongoing resources allocated to Green Sefton, and notes that these continue to fail to meet expectations of the community, visitors, and councillors.</p>								
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>There are no legal implications with this report.</p>								
<p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>There are no equality implications directly with this report, but Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken for formal Cabinet Member and Committee decisions relating to the service, with resulting actions undertaken accordingly</p>								
<p>Impact on Children and Young People: No</p>								
<p>Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Have a positive impact</td><td>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 content of this report sets out the work and projects undertaken by Green Sefton to manage the landscapes within Sefton.</p> <p>Landscape can largely contribute to the climate emergency in terms of mitigation and adaptation:</p> <p>Climate change mitigation broadly refers to limiting the amount and pace of future climate change, by reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere i.e. by planting more trees, shrubs, wildflowers etc, and by proactively changing the way in which we undertake activities and provide our facilities and services.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation refers broadly to the measures needed to adapt our society to the climate changes that we won't be able to avoid, even with perfect mitigation. These include increases in temperature, more severe weather events, and associated risks to infrastructure, human health, and natural ecosystems – as has been seen in the last year (including flooding, and obvious effects to the landscape such as trees seeing 'false autumn', and summer bough drop during the extended dry periods).</p> <p>The priority works contained within this report set out a structured approach to the</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							

climate emergency: from the strategic audit of land across the borough to identify new opportunities for projects and initiatives (both that which is managed by the Council and land owned by partners), through to smaller changes to sites managed directly and that by volunteers, and other initiatives such as the 'managed for nature' scheme and the new business supporter scheme which was introduced in 2022.

It is therefore considered that the work of Green Sefton has a positive effect on climate change.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:
N/A

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:
Much of the work of the service assists in developing communities' use and engagement with their landscape, its facilities and features, and its ongoing management and maintenance. This includes various models of self-management by groups, and new social investment proposals. All of this contributes to significant health and wellbeing benefits to all.

Commission, broker and provide core services:
The report outlines efforts to explore new ways to deliver services, including relationships with many voluntary and community groups, businesses and other organisations.

Place – leadership and influencer:
The service manages the landscape of the borough, and this report sets out proposals for developing the delivery, management, maintenance of this, including community use, in new ways for the future.

Drivers of change and reform:
The report sets out a new strategic approach for land management which will reform the way in which the landscape is managed in the long term.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
The report sets out a new strategic approach for land management, and the service is transforming its financial model over time – both reducing the reliance on core budgets, as well as providing new opportunities for community and voluntary groups, businesses and other organisations to deliver their outcomes too (such as the new food and drink concessions being developed on the coast, in parks and on sports facilities etc too).

Fundamentally, it has been widely demonstrated that a good quality landscape contributes massively to people choosing to live, visit and work in an area.

Greater income for social investment:
The service is engaged with the social finance action plan, and in Friends of Groups promoting the Sefton Crowd initiative.

Cleaner Greener:

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The service manages the landscape of the borough which contributes significantly to the Cleaner, Greener agenda, together with Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergencies too.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7388/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5588/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Mark Shaw, Service Manager – Green Sefton
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2421
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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A – Green Sefton Annual Review 2023

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 This report is to update the committee on the performance and development of Green Sefton, identifies areas for improvement and looks forward to informing the service plan and work programme for 2024/25, and in response to the refreshed Green Sefton Service Vision to 2030 (adopted in April 2023).
- 1.2 The full Annual Review is attached as appendix 1 and includes other background information including the newly adopted Service Vision, and Service Plan updates for the three service areas.
- 1.3 This has all been summarised by the following tables, which provides a summary of progress against the Service Plan actions, and the headline actions / priorities as agreed in 2022 with a summary of progress in 2023 and outlines actions planned for 2024 for each of these, together with new actions added to the end.
- 1.4 These are inevitably just some of the headline actions though, with many other issues progressing day to day (for which, regular Cabinet Member papers are presented monthly).
- 1.5 Finally, the headlines detailed in the following table have been populated in an 'importance / urgency' matrix in order to inform the work programme of officers in the coming year.
- 1.6 The workload priority matrix contained in this report will continue to be regularly reported to the Cabinet Member over the next year, as a way to try and formalise and agree the priorities of the service, and avoid distractions from the items which are seen as key to drive us forwards. Although an operational service, and so frequent 'reactive' issues will always arise, it is the larger, proactive areas that will have a more substantial and positive impact in the future and in order to deliver on those, and achieve the Vision set out for 2030, and we must focus our efforts accordingly.
- 1.7 This report is supported by a PowerPoint presentation which will be presented at the meeting. As previous years, a narrated version of this presentation will then be published afterwards, subsequently publicised and promoted via social media etc.

2.0 Summary:

- 2.1 There are many success stories over the last year;
 - overall, and fundamentally, we have delivered landscapes and facilities to hundreds of thousands of residents, and visitors, have enjoyed (to the benefit of their health and wellbeing), whilst protecting these places to the benefit of nature, and for generations to come
 - we have kept visitors, and our staff, as safe as possible by ensuring agreed control measures were implemented, and provided additional facilities and

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services as part of our Visitor Action Plan, which was formalised with an ongoing growth in budget agreed at Full Council on 3rd March 2022

- we have thought strategically, and have continued to develop our 'Place Based' approach, with the launch of our 'Managed for Nature' campaign

- we have undertaken major consultations including that for a new major developmental project for Botanic Gardens (with over 1,100 respondents), and for an updated Allotment Strategy

- we have gained pro-procurement approval for the replacement of our aging fleet and machinery, as approved by Cabinet on 27th July 2023, and are currently drafting the tender document which will hopefully see a new supplier in place early in 2024

- we have worked in partnership with many volunteer groups, and external agencies and statutory bodies, including updating and launching the new Volunteer Handbook to further improve the way in which we work with our volunteers

- we have continued to develop innovative new ideas and schemes, all of which have contributed to our 2030 vision; such as the new food and drink concessions returning at Crosby Coastal Park and Ainsdale beach

- we have continued to develop a range of capital, infrastructure and other projects to improve the infrastructure of the landscapes we manage – such as the adoption of the masterplan for Orrell Mount Park in Litherland, the Hesketh Park Legacy project in Southport, and the improvements to Poets Park and the newly named Seaforth Green sites in Bootle

- we have continued to develop innovative funding for facilities, such as Business Case led Driving Range at Bootle Golf Course (which opened Spring 2022)

- we have sought other means of funding such as matching section 106 monies with external grants for Runnells Lane Park, the pre-development bid for a new major scheme at Botanic Gardens, sport related improvements such as the bids to the Football Foundation, and nature based funding such as the Countryside Stewardship funding for the coast

- we have reacted to issues, such as storms affecting flooding and tree management, and heat wave/ drought periods affecting landscape management and some tree issues

- we have led on and co-ordinated the delivery and promotion of the new Coast and Visitor areas Public Space Protection Order that was adopted in July 2022. This is now assisting all land owners on the coast in better managing visitor behaviour on our sensitive landscapes, and will run for three years initially.

- 2.2 However, despite these and other successes, it has been clear that the service has continued to struggle to meet public, councillor and other expectations at times. This is at least in part due to the additional demands being placed on the service, at the same time as resources have never been lower (with ongoing staff absences, aging fleet and machinery etc), but is overall also due to the staffing levels and other operational resources assigned to the service. As such, there have been times when our sites have not looked as we would like, as maintenance activities were re-prioritised accordingly. This all indicates that despite some growth in specific areas in 2022 (play maintenance, and the Coast Visitor Action Plan), reduced budgets overall, and less staffing availability leaves little resilience, and is seeing service standards and infrastructure continuing to decline over time.
- 2.3 Overall, there is much to celebrate though, with 10 formal compliments received (an increase of 9 compared to 2022, and on top of many more informal) and a sense that by and large, the public, residents and visitors really do appreciate the wonderful landscape assets in Sefton like never before. There has been an increase in complaints as some visitors are disappointed with the standards of maintenance being provided however, but this demonstrates visitors passion for our landscapes, and a desire to see improved standards. There have been 183 Stage 1 formal complaints in the last year (compared to 157 in the previous year), with 8 escalating to Stage 2 (compared to 13 the previous year). At the height of summer at times an average of over one complaint per working day were being received (with 27 formal complaints received in June, a similar level to 2022 when 28 were received in July at its peak). These demand a high level of officer support and administration, as few complaints are 'simple' to respond to and resolve. None of these however have then been raised with the Ombudsman in 2023, compared to 1 in the previous year.
- 2.4 Discussions are ongoing to reconsider the staffing, budgetary and other resources available for specific service areas, and it is hoped that these efforts will assist to address any shortcomings, and assist the service to both meet expectations, and develop, moving forwards (although it must be noted that even with some increases in resources being allocated, there are still competing and often contradictory agendas which must be resolved, and the inevitability of the climate and biodiversity emergencies require different approaches to be considered as well). For example, discussions and reviews are ongoing for the management of weeds boroughwide, the coastwide Visitor Action Plan, the grounds maintenance and grave digging in cemeteries and crematoria and more.
- 2.5 In addition, further efforts are being made to provide non-revenue funded resources also, such as the successful 'Binrastructure' bid in 2021, the Countryside Stewardship (Higher Tier) external grant bid (500k over the next 5 years awarded in 2022), the pre-development grant awarded by the Heritage Lottery for Botanic Gardens, and the Levelling Up Fund grant also received in Autumn 2022.

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- 2.6 It is also clear that the resources allocated to Green Sefton can no longer provide the same style of landscape management as in times gone by, and the 'place based' strategy (to develop and deliver the 'managed for nature' principles' amongst other approaches, as discussed previously) needs to be prioritised to redesign landscape management in the borough, address the climate and biodiversity emergencies, and to set and communicate the new standards for the future.
- 2.7 The Service Vision, adopted in 2019, was due for a refresh and this took place bearing in mind the committees comments in Autumn/ Winter 2022, and following staff discussions and team exercises. The new Vision was adopted by Cabinet Member in April 2023, and this led to discussions about developing a new Service Plan which was subsequently adopted by Cabinet Member in October 2023. This is now leading to further work to redraft the Key Performance Indicators that the service holds itself to account to, which again will be presented to Cabinet Member shortly, and will be reported upon within the quarterly Performance Reports moving forwards.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The service has performed well under ongoing challenging circumstances over the last couple of years, as resources available clearly do not allow for service delivery to meet public, councillor, nor our own, expectations. Although there have been challenges at times, there have also been many successes too. Overall, the service (now having completed its 5th year) is now well established and is starting to see the rewards of the PSR project that led to its creation. More work remains yet to be done, and as the report outlines, we must focus on the priority work areas in order to deliver on the Services' own 2030 vision, that ultimately contributes to that of the Council overall. The Service Vision, Service Planning and new KPI's, together with the workload matrix system detailed in the report are all proving a useful tool to manage this, and regular updates will continue to be provided to Cabinet Member throughout the year.

Figure 1 – the new Green Sefton Service Vision, as adopted by Cabinet Member in April 2023:



“Improving the quality of ALL life in Sefton”



Green Sefton – Vision to 2030, updated April 2023

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW		
What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
Delivery and sharing of the service vision 2030 and service plan 2020 – both within, and external to, the service	A narrated version of the power point presentation was made to Cabinet Member, and Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills). It was also presented to all Green Sefton staff, and shared on the intranet, and via a newsletter sent to partner agencies	Develop project management style work programming for key actions in the Service Plan to monitor and manage delivery. Develop and adopt KPI's to hold ourselves to account and track performance over time

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Embedding culture and behaviour change within the team (a focus will need to be supporting the wellbeing of staff in a changing and challenging environment, and to continuing to emphasise the ‘Green Sefton’ approach as opposed to the previous silo mentality)</p>	<p>Regular updates given to team via email</p> <p>Operational team meetings with site-based staff re-introduced (in part stalled due to pandemic).</p> <p>Monthly Microsoft Teams briefings / Q&A sessions with Service Manager have continued</p> <p>Each Service Area conducting own Team meetings.</p> <p>Establishment of several cross-theme working groups to develop key strands of work. E.g. climate working group, information and intelligence, buildings, Health and safety, Golf management ...</p> <p>The pandemic demonstrated people’s willingness to work outside of their own areas which has continued</p>	<p>Continue with efforts to maintain communication flow</p> <p>More effort on developing a single service culture</p> <p>(this also links to getting the place-based strategy agreed and adopted, as this can set what the Green Sefton approach is)</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Look to increase capacity within the team – by apprenticeships, fixed term posts (funded via income generation, external grants etc), and a review of our approach to seasonal support (gardeners inland, and rangers on the coast)</p>	<p>A review of the recruitment to appointing seasonal posts led to an open advert approach across Autumn/ Winter 2022. Although some lessons learned need to be taken into account, this helped with the interview and recruitment process which will be further developed into 2024</p> <p>Some external monies have been joined with the seasonal budget for 5 coastal rangers – creating 5 full time, but fixed term posts. This has created more attractive posts to applicants, and provided continuity and surety for all involved</p> <p>New projects are seeking additional staffing/ other support, such as the pre-development grant for the major project at Botanic Gardens, the Hesketh Park legacy scheme, the partnership approach with United Utilities for the Crosby Coastal Defence scheme, and more</p> <p>Ranger Boot Camp successfully engaged 5 staff in 2020, but was stalled in 2021 due to the pandemic</p>	<p>Reconsider allocation of funds and numbers of Seasonal Rangers, together with the approach to their recruitment (ideally creating further full time (but fixed term) posts which may be more attractive to applicants</p> <p>Resurrect the ‘Ranger Boot Camp’ as appropriate</p> <p>Continue to explore projects and initiatives to further increase staffing capacity e.g. Love my Beach officer bid with Keep Britain Tidy, and exploring the Kickstart government programme into ‘green’ jobs, that which comes from the Recreation Mitigation Strategy/ elements from the Planning process too</p> <p>FCERM looking at funding resources to support succession planning</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Look to reduce existing demands on team where appropriate – by examining the work programme, and amending what we manage and how (for example sand clearance on Crosby Promenade, Botanic Gardens aviary etc), and by looking at a ‘Place-Based’ approach to strategically managing sites</p>	<p>Working group set up for Place-Based strategy (stalled due to pandemic and increased demands on resources during summer)</p> <p>Partnership agreement developed with Botanic Gardens Community Association for shared funding and management of the aviary, with an ‘Aviary Committee’ now set up</p>	<p>Ongoing Place-Based strategy working group, and development of a pilot area (Victoria Park, Crosby), together with bearing this in mind when considering other projects (such as the delivery of the Levelling Up grant) – a framework strategy is now proposed to direct the thinking on future strategies and developments, and it is planned to develop and adopt this during 2024</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Achieve ‘innovation’ income targets</p>	<p>Good progress in many areas incl. Council approval of £679k for development of driving ranges, £352k for development of Ainsdale gateway, market testing of empty buildings leading to several new leases, contracts won for new commercial works, and expansion of Natural Alternatives in progress with a new base developed at Botanic Gardens</p> <p>Many areas slowed / stalled due to pandemic, and so some targets have not been achieved (in particular, those associated with the golf courses, and Natural Alternatives expansion). The Bootle Golf course driving range is completed and opened in Spring 2022, Southport Golf Course future development has been approved by Cabinet for tendering in 2022 (albeit staff capacity has meant this has stalled), and conversations are ongoing with colleagues from Adult Social Care regarding Natural Alternatives.</p> <p>Acknowledging some of the challenges with the ‘innovation’ approach, through the budget setting process, all unachievable income targets were removed from the Green Sefton budgets in March 2023. This has allowed a balanced budget to be presented in 2023/24, and a refocus of our energies, as outlined in the updated Service Vision detailed elsewhere</p>	<p>As resources allow, continue to concentrate on the delivery of existing budget proposals, i.e. to focus on achieving those already in place/ in train such as the Bootle Golf Course driving range business case</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Develop site-based changes to make best use of available resources and increase wider benefits of sites (e.g. ‘greening up’ agenda, changes to style of management to some sites and features etc)</p>	<p>A new ‘Landscape Development’ Cabinet Member Reference Group has been established to consider future funding for our landscapes, strategic projects, and future management and maintenance arrangements incl specific subjects such as climate change, the biodiversity crisis, and for example encouraging pollinators in landscape management</p> <p>This group is also overseeing the development of the Councils approach to Biodiversity Net Gain, with several pilot sites being surveyed and assessed for potential improvements for nature and to become ‘receptor sites’ for these new monies (which include both capital to make changes and also >30 years of maintenance and management monies too</p>	<p>Continue to explore ways in which to promote the ‘urban greening concept’, and creation of some demonstration areas. (Initial conversations taken place with Highways colleagues regarding alternative land management of highways verges and roundabouts, introduction of green walls and barrier planting etc, with MEAS commissioned to lead on assisting with this work)</p> <p>Support the Landscape Development CMRG in the creation and delivery of and action plan</p>
	<p>Adopt and deliver FCERM strategy, Football Development Plan / contribute to the corporate Playing Pitch Strategy</p>	<p>Adopt and deliver the Allotment Strategy, and Tree Management Strategy</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW		
What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
Page 56	<p>Delivered year 1 works from the external Defra funding (Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier) funding as ‘meanwhile funding for management of the coastal areas (£660k, over the next 5 years). This is in the absence of revenue funding availability, and whilst awaiting the release of the national Environmental Land Management (ELMs).</p> <p>N.B. this funding will not meet the costs of the grazing fencing replacement, which will be needed over the next 3-5yrs at a cost of circa £250k</p>	<p>Deliver the yr 2 projects and targets associated with the CSHT funding</p>
	<p>Consulted on, developing and adopting a vision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Southport Golf course - Botanic Gardens - Hesketh Park <p>and all four coastal gateways, mapping sessions (to discuss/ set out the competing demands of visitor pressure, nature, and how</p>	<p>Tender for development of Southport Golf Course (course, and / or buildings) as approved by Cabinet Spring 2022, as and when capacity allows</p> <p>Adopt the vision for Botanic Gardens, Churchtown, based on and responding to the recently completed public consultation (with over 1,100 respondents), and develop a new major improvement scheme for Botanic Gardens, with a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery bid</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>Page 57</p>	<p>to mitigate this):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crosby, - Formby (managed by National Trust) - Ainsdale - Southport <p>Adopt a vision for the Hesketh Park scheme, and project manage delivery of agreed, funded, priority items</p> <p>Adopt an agreed masterplan vision for Orrell Mount Park, and explore priority projects, and funding opportunities</p> <p>Develop and deliver projects at Poets Park, and the newly renamed Seaforth Green in Bootle, funded by the government Parks Levelling Up funds received Autumn 2022.</p>	<p>to be submitted in 2024 (subject to match funding being available at that time)</p> <p>Deliver improvements to other coastal gateways, such as new toilet block at South Road entrance at Crosby Coastal Park, refurbish toilets at Ainsdale beach entrance, and tender for new food and drink, beach huts and other concessions coast wide</p> <p>Develop new ‘masterplan’ documents for the four gateways, building upon the recent mapping exercises, and development of action plans for delivery of agreed projects</p> <p>Develop on the agreed masterplan vision for Orrell Mount Park, and explore priority projects, and funding opportunities</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 58</p>	<p>In March 2022, Full Council approved a growth in revenue budgets of £300k per year to fund the more successful elements introduced as part of the Visitor Action Plan over the last two years. This enabled the ongoing increase in staffing on the coast in the summer months, the appointment of a new Coast focussed Community Ranger, and other practical elements such as the provision of temporary toilets, improved waste management and cleansing, and the communications plan to encourage responsible visitor behaviour</p> <p>Overall, we have delivered the Coast Visitor Action Plan proposals 2023, providing additional facilities and services to cater for increased visitor pressure coastwide</p>	<p>Continue to meet with the Coast Cabinet Member Reference Group, to oversee the delivery of the Visitor Action Plan, and overall operational delivery on the coast in 2024</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
	<p>Develop funding model for Crosby Flood and Coast Defence Scheme (basic, £23M, works), and secured £600k to undertake project management, and interim works while awaiting the full scheme from 2027 onwards</p> <p>Developed scheme for Making Space for Water in Churchtown and Crossens (along the Pool Watercourse) to relieve flooding in the area. Designed a SuDS scheme to deliver multiple benefits. Begin the public consultation on the scheme.</p>	<p>deliver the interim works, and develop the enhanced scheme proposals.</p> <p>Complete the consultation and secure funding for the scheme and seek to start construction in 2024.</p>
	<p>An aspiration was to develop new processes and systems for recording site inspections and other works – incl new IT systems, and explore the APSE LAMS model, however capacity has meant this has not progressed fully, though some testing of site recording software was undertaken. As such, this will be rolled forward into 2024</p>	<p>Develop new process and systems for asset management, recording site inspections and other works – incl new IT systems, and explore the APSE LAMS model</p> <p>(aspirational item, subject to capacity, and may be postponed until 2025)</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW		
What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
<p>In 2020 the Cemeteries & Crematorium maintenance was insourced to provide an inhouse provision for the 4 of the 5 Cemetery & Crematorium sites. Southport Crem was also passed over but without any maintenance resource. Green Sefton have managed to cover this by utilising resources from the wider maintenance team but this is unsustainable (and having a negative impact on the wider portfolio).</p>	<p>Funding has been provided for 1.5 posts on a 2-year contract until a full review of the service is undertaken;</p> <p>To deliver routine grounds maintenance for Southport Crematorium along with a draft management plan for the future specification and renovation of the site. Commencing in Oct 2021 – Sept 2023</p>	<p>Seek permanent resolution to the resourcing issues, especially as this is now having a negative effect on resourcing needed elsewhere in the portfolio</p>
	<p>In 2021/22 Green Sefton Land Management team commenced an audit of the machinery and equipment (Capital Asset) with a view of profiling the changes in service delivery and to ensure sufficient resource is still available for future service delivery. This culminated in a pre-procurement report being presented and accepted by Cabinet on 27th July 2023 – tender preparations are ongoing at the time of writing</p>	<p>Tender for a new supplier of fleet and machinery, and report back on possible budgetary implications with a view to having new supplier in place early 2024</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
	<p>Training & Development; In 2020 we identified a serious funding issue with essential training and development funding for the Land Management Team (that require regular/ refresher training and certification & licencing for a range of maintenance activities).</p>	<p>The team are ready to forward an application to the corporate funds at the end of the year with a hope to ring fence further funding. The certifications and licencing are essential to underpinning operational Health and Safety requirements.</p>
	<p>Contribute to Southport Town Deal bid; Ainsdale masterplan, Bootle Town Centre masterplan and other wider issues</p>	<p>See other actions above regarding: Botanic Gardens, Hesketh Park, Southport Golf Course, Southport beach, and Ainsdale beach gateway</p>
	<p>In April 2022, the service was asked to lead on the development of a new Coast and Visitor Areas PSPO, in order to allow the council, emergency services and other land owner partners to better manage visitor behaviour when visiting our sites. This was conceived, consulted on, developed and gained Licencing and regulatory Committee approval before Full Council approval in July 2022.</p>	<p>Although the emergency services and some partners can issue Fixed Penalty Notices immediately, based on pre-authorisation, it was agreed by the Cabinet Member Reference Group (and taking on board the emergency services and other land owners concerns too), that enforcement was not appropriate for Council staff nor was there resource to contract in such support. As such, the PSPO now relies upon engagement and education to encourage appropriate visitor behaviour.</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
	<p>In order to better communicate the service standards that are possible within available resources, officers have begun work on defining these with a draft document for future publication in development</p>	<p>Agree, adopt and publish new ‘Service Standards’ document – starting with inland grounds maintenance works, and rolling out to wider areas of the service in time. To be publicised after the fleet and machinery replacement process has completed, and the resulting resources are known accordingly</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 62</p>	<p>In order to better manage the relationship with community groups, and ensure investment of officer time and resources achieves the best outcomes, officers have refreshed the Volunteer Handbook in 2022</p> <p>Publish and share the updated Volunteer Handbook, including explain to groups the resulting expectations to be placed on them in terms of their lines of communication with officers, the policies and procedures we expect them to follow, together with what they can expect from ourselves moving forwards</p>	<p>Continue to work closely with our many community and volunteer groups, bearing in mind and using the themes within the Handbook</p>

GREEN SEFTON – ANNUAL REPORT 2023 HEADLINE ACTIONS OVERVIEW

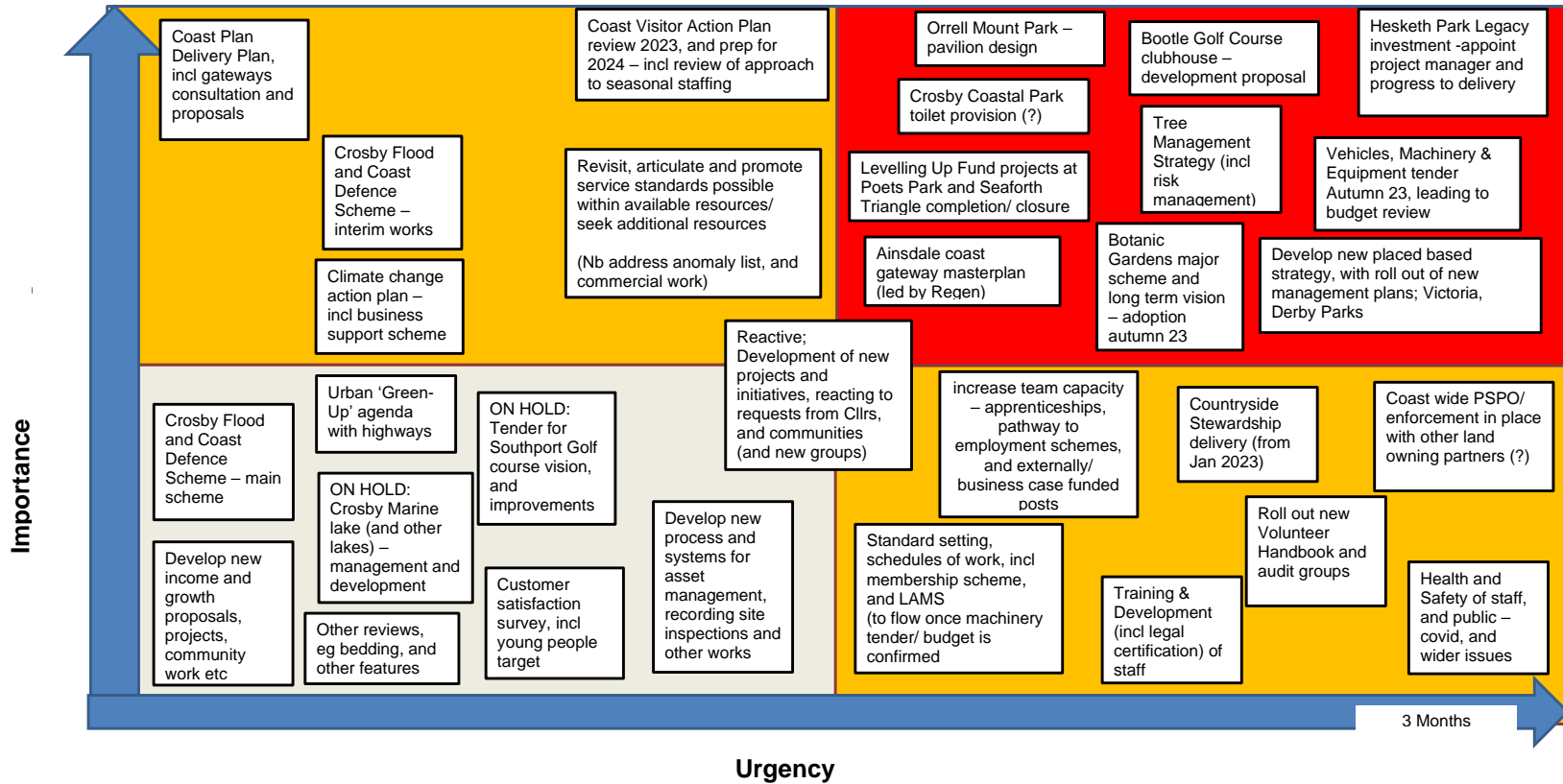
What we said we would do	What have we done in the last year	What are we going to do in the next year
	<p>In March 2022, Full Council approved an increase in the revenue budget for management of play facilities from £45k per year, to £245k. There are 106 such facilities across the borough, and this budget will allow for more frequent inspections to ensure their safety, and quicker response times as and when issues are identified/ when they arise. A priority list has been developed, based on the results of the annual external and independent inspections, for a 7 year plan to strategically address issues. Ward Cllrs have been contacted in relevant areas for the first year of projects, and discussions are ongoing about delivery in Winter 2022. The additional Play Inspector has now been appointed, and joined the team in August 2022</p>	<p>Agree and deliver year 2 priority projects, seeking match funding to maximise the impact of the additional monies and projects possible</p>

Figure 4; GREEN SEFTON STRATEGIC WORKLOAD MATRIX – SEPTEMBER 2023

(to be reported to Cabinet Member on a regular basis, and updated through the year)

GREEN SEFTON STRATEGIC WORKLOAD MATRIX – as presented to O+S Oct/ Nov 22, and updated 25.11.22, 10.2.23, 10.3.23, 25.7.23, 15.9.23

(to be reported to Cabinet Member on a regular basis, and updated through the year)



APPENDIX 1:

GREEN SEFTON

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

1. Background

Green Sefton was formed in 2018, and brings together the former Coast & Countryside, Parks & Greenspaces, Flooding & Coastal Erosion Risk Management services together to ensure a joined-up approach to the vital management, development and oversight of Sefton's coastline, parks and green spaces.

In 2023, after 5 years of operation, officers have reviewed and adopted the Service Vision (following consultation), the Service Plan, and are in the process of updating Key Performance Indicators too.

The service manages circa 6,500ha of the landscape of the borough (32% of the borough, equivalent to 7,800 football pitches!) – its 22 miles of beautiful coast with protected sites, to a range of parks, greenspaces, outdoor sports and recreational sites, street trees etc. The service also insourced the grounds maintenance of the Cemeteries and Crematoria in 2020, which adds additional landscape features to manage.

This landscape defines Sefton, and is treasured by our communities and visitors – as the 2030 vision highlights.

Outcomes

The creation of Green Sefton was part of PSR 7, and its aim was to:

- Improve the way we manage Sefton's natural assets
- Provide a single point of contact and enable more efficient and effective use of resources and offer potential to create new opportunities for income generation
- Enable more community cohesion
- Offer further opportunities for volunteers, residents and other organisations
- Create a more focussed, collaborative approach to the management, development and oversight of our coastline, parks and green spaces.
- Manage all land assets (excluding highways) in one portfolio

As the following sections indicate the service has gone a long way towards addressing these outcomes, and the Service Vision and Service Plan update will direct efforts further moving forwards. This will also include trying to engender a sense of 'pride in place' across the wider council and beyond.

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However, it is clear that after significant budget reductions in recent years (circa 75% and 122 FTE staff, managing at least the same portfolio of land, which has actually increased in some areas), the current resources are struggling to meet public, councillor and other expectations. Although there is much to celebrate about achievements made by the team with the resources available, it is also prudent to consider either increasing those resources or undertaking clear communication to manage expectations of what is currently funded and achievable.

2. Summary:

2.1 There are many success stories over the last year;

- overall, and fundamentally, we have delivered landscapes and facilities to hundreds of thousands of residents, and visitors, have enjoyed (to the benefit of their health and wellbeing), whilst protecting these places to the benefit of nature, and for generations to come
- we have kept visitors, and our staff, as safe as possible by ensuring agreed control measures were implemented, and provided additional facilities and services as part of our Visitor Action Plan, which was formalised with an ongoing growth in budget agreed at Full Council on 3rd March 2022
- we have thought strategically, and have continued to develop our 'Place Based' approach, with the launch of our 'Managed for Nature' campaign
- we have undertaken major consultations including that for a new major developmental project for Botanic Gardens (with over 1,100 respondents), and for an updated Allotment Strategy
- we have gain pro-procurement approval for the replacement of our aging fleet and machinery, as approved by Cabinet on 27th July 2023, and are currently drafting the tender document which will hopefully see a new supplier in place early in 2024
- we have worked in partnership with many volunteer groups, and external agencies and statutory bodies, including updating and launching the new Volunteer Handbook to further improve the way in which we work with our volunteers
- we have continued to develop innovative new ideas and schemes, all of which have contributed to our 2030 vision; such as the new food and drink concessions returning at Crosby Coastal Park and Ainsdale beach
- we have continued to develop a range of capital, infrastructure and other projects to improve the infrastructure of the landscapes we manage – such as the adoption of the masterplan for Orrell Mount Park in Litherland, the

Hesketh Park Legacy project in Southport, and the improvements to Poets Park and the newly named Seaforth Green sites in Bootle

- we have continued to develop innovative funding for facilities, such as Business Case led Driving Range at Bootle Golf Course (which opened Spring 2022)
- we have sought other means of funding such as matching section 106 monies with external grants for Runnells Lane Park, the pre-development bid for a new major scheme at Botanic Gardens, sport related improvements such as the bids to the Football Foundation, and nature based funding such as the Countryside Stewardship funding for the coast
- we have reacted to issues, such as storms affecting flooding and tree management, and heat wave/ drought periods affecting landscape management and some tree issues
- we have led on and co-ordinated the delivery and promotion of the new Coast and Visitor areas Public Space Protection Order that was adopted in July 2022. This is now assisting all land owners on the coast in better managing visitor behaviour on our sensitive landscapes, and will run for three years initially.

2.2 However, despite these and other successes, it has been clear that the service has continued to struggle to meet public, councillor and other expectations at times. This is at least in part due to the additional demands being placed on the service, at the same time as resources have never been lower (with ongoing staff absences, aging fleet and machinery etc), but is overall also due to the staffing levels and other operational resources assigned to the service. As such, there have been times when our sites have not looked as we would like, as maintenance activities were re-prioritised accordingly. This all indicates that despite some growth in specific areas in 2022 (play maintenance, and the Coast Visitor Action Plan), reduced budgets overall, and less staffing availability leaves little resilience, and is seeing service standards and infrastructure continuing to decline over time...

Activities undertaken

What we manage:

- circa 6,500ha of the landscape of the borough (32% of the borough, equivalent to 7,800 football pitches!) – its 22m of beautiful coast with protected sites, to a range of parks, greenspaces, outdoor sports and recreational sites, street trees etc.
- Estimated 12M+ visits per year, including 90,000 car visits to the beach car parks

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- Revenue budget spend circa £6.5m, with income targets of circa £2.0M, with a net budget of circa £4.5M and a capital programme of around £5.6M (with developmental capital projects in the pipeline, in excess of £30M)

Operations

- Over 1 million operations are undertaken each year, grouped into 500 maintenance types (beach management, conservation, horticulture and gardening, watercourse management, sports pitch maintenance, general cleansing, mowing, repairs, enforcement and engagement etc)
- Approximately 26,000 site inspection sheets are completed each year, accounting for 36,000 maintenance activities, which equates to an average of 682 per week, or 97 per day!
- Over 1,000 formal 'incidents' have been reported on the coast, with the main areas of concern being fundamental visitor behaviour

Trees

- Management of 90,000 trees on the highway, in parks and on the coast

Play facilities

- 106 facilities, including Playgrounds, outdoor gyms, skate parks, multi-use games areas etc.

Sport and recreation facilities

- 91 facilities including Golf Courses, Bowling Greens, Sports pitches (football, rugby, baseball etc.), and tennis courts.
- Over 270 teams making use of these facilities during their respective playing seasons

Buildings

- 140 buildings including community centres, sports pavilions, café's, toilets, conservatory and an astronomical observatory

Cemeteries and crematoria

- Grounds maintenance for the borough's cemeteries and crematoria, including maintenance around 50,000 headstones

Community

- Over 40 community and Friends of groups supported, leading to more than 44,000 hours of volunteer time contributed (excluding sports leagues, clubs etc, but including Natural Alternatives clients, conservation volunteering and more)
- 100's of external event applications that all need scrutinising for safety, insurance, risk and often commercial reasons

Flood management

- 15,000 properties are at risk of internal flooding in Sefton and as the Lead Local Flood Authority we must ensure this risk is managed appropriately.
- Undertake duties under the Flood and Water Management Act to support the Councils emergency response to a flood, and have a duty to investigate a significant flood event and publish our findings
- Ensure we enact action from the Shoreline Management Plan as a Coast Protection Authority

3.0 Annual Review in detail

The following sections provide an update on the development of the service since the last O+S update in November 2022 under the following headings:

3.1 Strategy and Service Planning (incl embedded documents)

3.2 Finance

3.3 Staffing

3.4 Risk Management

3.5 Asset Management

3.6 Community Engagement

3.7 Contractual and Commissioning

3.8 Policy and Procedure

3.9 Health and Safety

3.10 ICT Systems

3.11 Communications

3.12 Challenges

3.13 Conclusions

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3.1 Strategy and Service Planning


A Service Vision to 2030 and Service Plan to 2020 were adopted in April 2019, following consultation with Cabinet Member, Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills), (most) ward councillors, senior management and staff. This set the overall vision of what Green Sefton aspires to look like in 2030 and gives the road map of how officers are working to get there. These documents were widely shared with Cllrs, officers, friends of, sports and other volunteer groups, with partners to the service and made widely publicly available

The presentation document for each of the Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020 review for Overview and Scrutiny is here:



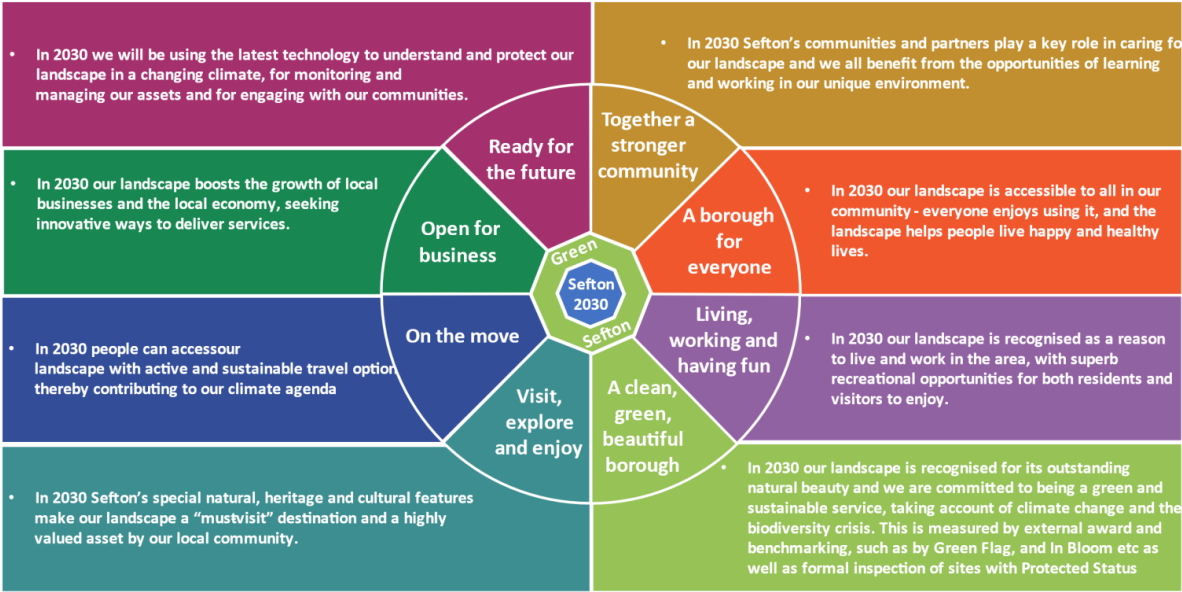
Green Sefton
Service review - O+S

In Spring 2023, Green Sefton had been in place for 5 years, and this seemed an appropriate time to revisit the Vision, check it remains valid, and refresh it accordingly for formal adoption by Cabinet Member – this was adopted in April 2023, and is copied here:



“Improving the quality of ALL life in Sefton”



green Sefton
Sefton Council



The diagram is a circular infographic with a central hexagon labeled 'Green Sefton 2030'. Surrounding it are eight colored segments, each with a title and a bullet point:

- Ready for the future**: In 2030 we will be using the latest technology to understand and protect our landscape in a changing climate, for monitoring and managing our assets and for engaging with our communities.
- Together a stronger community**: In 2030 Sefton's communities and partners play a key role in caring for our landscape and we all benefit from the opportunities of learning and working in our unique environment.
- A borough for everyone**: In 2030 our landscape is accessible to all in our community - everyone enjoys using it, and the landscape helps people live happy and healthy lives.
- Living, working and having fun**: In 2030 our landscape is recognised as a reason to live and work in the area, with superb recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors to enjoy.
- A clean, green, beautiful borough**: In 2030 our landscape is recognised for its outstanding natural beauty and we are committed to being a green and sustainable service, taking account of climate change and the biodiversity crisis. This is measured by external award and benchmarking, such as by Green Flag, and In Bloom etc as well as formal inspection of sites with Protected Status
- Visit, explore and enjoy**: In 2030 Sefton's special natural, heritage and cultural features make our landscape a "mustvisit" destination and a highly valued asset by our local community.
- On the move**: In 2030 people can access our landscape with active and sustainable travel options thereby contributing to our climate agenda
- Open for business**: In 2030 our landscape boosts the growth of local businesses and the local economy, seeking innovative ways to deliver services.

Green Sefton – Vision to 2030, updated April 2023

Sefton Council  

This in turn then informs the Service Plan, and these Annual Reviews undertaken each year too.

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The Service Plan has also been reviewed in 2023, and adopted by Cabinet Member in October 2023, as embedded here:



Green Sefton
Service Plan 2023 AS

The existing Service Vision document, and the recent Annual Reviews have been made available on line, and also include some narrated presentations (which have been well received, and referred to), which can be found here;

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton>

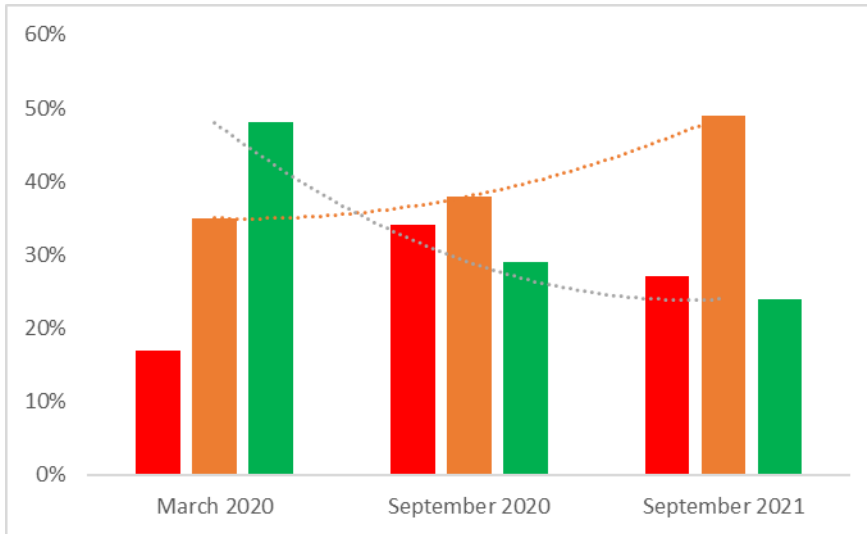
The above detailed update has previously been summarised in the following table, which brings together the separate service plans into one table and suggests scoring against a simple RAG rating, copied here for reference, and to be updated for 2024 once the new Service Plan/ KPIs have time to become effective:

SERVICE AREA	RAG - progress to Sept 2020	Score Sept 2020	RAG - progress to Sept 2021	Score Sept 2021	RAG – progress to Sept 2022	Score Sept 2022
DEVELOPMENT	score		score			
	green count	6	green count	7	green count	7
	amber count	18	amber count	25	amber count	12
	red count	13	red count	5	red count	19
FCERM	score		score		score	
	green count	19	green count	19	green count	14
	amber count	20	amber count	20	amber count	13
	red count	14	red count	14	red count	6
COMMUNITY AND RECOUSES	score		score		score	
	green count	16	green count	13	green count	31
	amber count	23	amber count	35	amber count	20
	red count	13	red count	6	red count	3
LAND MANAGEMENT	score		score		score	
	green count	14	green count	9	green count	13
	amber count	11	amber count	18	amber count	22
	red count	24	red count	30	red count	18
GREEN SEFTON	score		score		score	
	green count	55 (29%)	green count	48 (24%)	green count	65 (37%)
	amber count	72 (38%)	amber count	98 (49%)	amber count	67 (38%)
	red count	64 (34%)	red count	55 (27%)	red count	46 (26%)
				TOTAL	178	

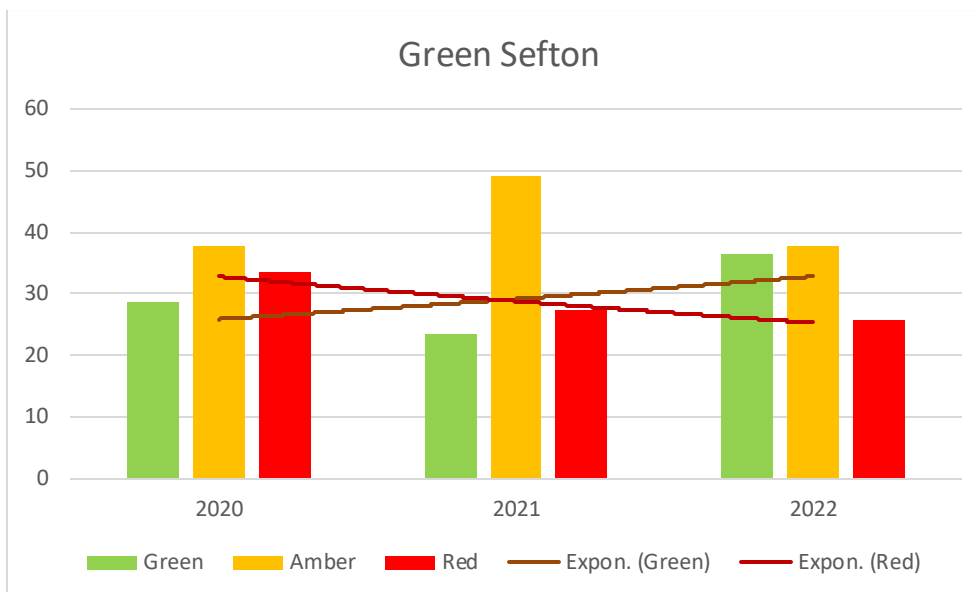
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The above can be summarised graphically, as follows, where it is clear that green items are steadily falling, and more and more items become amber as the priorities have become the operational delivery of the service as opposed to proactive, developmental works:

As reported in September 2022, and comparing actions to pre-pandemic times, it was clear at that point that green items were steadily falling, and more and more items become amber as the priorities have become the operational delivery of the service as opposed to proactive, developmental works:



This was addressed in 2022, with an updated graph presented as follows (which will be updated in 2024 once the new Service Plan/ KPI's have time to become effective):



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The service is directed by several key council strategies (including the 2030 Vision, and the Local Plan), and has in place some key documents too, such as the Coast Plan, Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Strategy and Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and more recently the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Taking these strategies forward will be the development of further sub-strategies and refresh documents including the coast Visitor Management Strategy, Nature Conservation Strategy, and Adaptation Strategy, together with the FCERM Investment Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Overall, for the Green Sefton portfolio, it will be necessary to begin thinking about how we manage our landscape within our reduced resources, which must be a focus in the coming times.

A place based approach is proposed, considering all landscape in a given area and what facilities would be appropriate to provide for that community, and what should be radically redesigned in order to meet ongoing challenges (including environmental, climate change and social, as well as economic). Progress in this area has included the conversations around Linacre Ward as a pilot for this approach, and more reactively, the development of the 'Green Ribbon' project within the Southport Town Deal bid which has led to several of the larger schemes now in development (Botanic Gardens, Hesketh Park, Southport Golf Course, and Ainsdale beach gateway). However, progress has not been as was hoped, due to staffing capacity, and this will be prioritised in the coming year.

Other strategy work this year has included the resurrection of the Allotment Strategy, being led by a Cabinet Member group, and the Tree Management Strategy, also encouraged by Elected Members. Both of these pieces of work will be progressed in 2024 and will underpin these distinct areas of the service for the future – highlighting the lack of resources available, but setting out a vision, and a framework to prioritise allocation of resources to achieve this over time.

The Playing Pitch Strategy has also been revisited, and adopted in 2023, which now sets out the strategic priorities for provision of sports pitches in the borough, including self management of facilities by clubs, and considering the pathway for engagement in sport generally. The Football Association has identified Sefton as a priority site for development of the sport in the borough, and several Expression of Interests for funding etc have been made in 2023, and will be for development and delivery in 2024.

3.2 Finance

3.2.1 Revenue

The finances of the service have been structured to reflect the structure of the service – Development, Community and Resources, and Land Management.

The PSR workstream required a reduction in revenue spend of circa £1.1M. This, on the back of reductions made since 2010, accounts for a circa 75% reduction in revenue spend on Green Sefton since 2010.

In 2019/20, additional service budget reductions were made with the introduction of additional income targets of £330k, and an additional £98k in 20/21 and £76k in 21/22.

Ongoing income targets associated with Green Sefton are often very weather dependant, such as golf courses and beach car parking. Other pressures on revenue budgets include utility charges, where unexpected increases are placing circa £100k of additional demand. Officers monitor this constantly with colleagues from the Finance team, and make adjustments accordingly – leading to an ongoing freeze on some vacant posts currently, and less allocation of Seasonal Gardeners/ Rangers in 2023 as opposed to 2022.

The internal Audit team identified two specific areas of Green Sefton for consideration in 2022, and audits took place to monitor the cash handling of monies at both the Beach Car Parks, and the two Golf Courses. Both found nothing untoward, but some actions and recommendations are being followed up on and monitored

3.2.2 Budget development and Income

At Full Council in March 2022, an increase in revenue spend was approved for management of our Play Facilities, as well as ‘normalising’ the Coast Visitor Action Plan – these much welcomed developments allowed for an increase in Coastal Season Rangers (including the provision of evening ‘patrols’), a new Coast focussed Community Ranger, and the appointment of an additional Play Inspector, as detailed elsewhere

In March 2023, Full Council in its budget setting removed the previously unachievable income targets, which has allowed the service to present a balanced budget for the next two years at least.

3.2.3 Capital

The service relies on Capital funding to invest in its assets. In 2023 the total capital programme value was £5.6M. Schemes varied from funding investigation and strategies to inform infrastructure improvements to address flooding, through to actual construction works to improve the sites and assets we manage. Without Council funding for such works, we are reliant on Grant in Aid from the Environment Agency and external grants from other organisations, and capacity must be allowed to bid for these, to deliver works, and then to meet contract conditions afterwards.

The major scheme the service is leading on remains the Crosby Flood and Coastal Defence scheme – a total value (incl partner contributions needed) of £23M project to renew the sea defences at the Northern end of the Crosby Coastal Park, also looking to regenerate the area too – this estimate needs revisiting given ongoing inflation rises and likely increases to be planned for. Other schemes include improvements to Southport Golf Course (both buildings and/ or the course itself), the development of a major funding bid for Botanic Gardens, the development of a ‘legacy’ project at Hesketh Park, and more (as detailed in the workload matrix articulated elsewhere)

Other schemes delivered in 2023 include the multi use games area, with new path network and other works completed at Rainbow Park, Melling, and the Parks Levelling

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Up Fund works (supported by Ward Member funding) at Poets Park and the newly renamed Seaforth Green.

3.2.4 Insurance:

Insurance claims received during the period Sept to October each year have been tracked:

September 2019 to October 2020 - 19 claims

September 2020 to October 2021 - 30 claims

September 21 to October 2022 - 40 claims

September 22 to October 2023 – 33 claims

Of those received in the last year;

1 was associated with 'Material Damage'

3 were for 'Motor' issues

And 29 were for 'Public Liability' (6 injury & 23 property damage)

These were split as follows in the portfolio:

1 claim on our Coast and Countryside

10 claims were in Parks and Greenspaces

And 22 claims were associated with Trees

The authority successfully defends many of these claims overall, and currently there are 30 'open' cases still being pursued/ investigated and defended

However, a discussion with colleagues in the insurance section has highlighted that the lack of regular, recorded site inspections is making it increasingly difficult to gather data and defend claims – another area to consider developing resources for in the future.

3.3 Staffing

The creation of Green Sefton required a major staffing restructure in 2017/18. The structure was then revisited in 2019/20 as things settled down, and some amendments were made to address areas of inefficiency (for example the repairs and maintenance had been split between contracted and in house works, but were found to be more efficient managed under one team), and to clarify some roles and responsibilities (which were subsequently subject to a further Job Evaluation review). This will again be revisited in Winter 2023 to ensure the structure remains appropriate to deliver the outcomes of the updated Service Vision and Service Plan (bearing in mind requests for further budget reductions over the next three financial years) and will be reported on accordingly.

It should be noted that the combined services had been reduced by 122 staff 2010-2018, although recent efforts have begun to see increases in team numbers again. The land managed and issues dealt with on a daily basis remain much the same however as is the expectations of community's, by statutory bodies and funders. Indeed, the portfolio we manage is actually increasing, as more and more sites/ issues and responses are requested of the team weekly. This, combined with the reduction on other public and emergency services leading to more acute issues associated with anti social behaviour/ vandalism etc, clearly places massive pressure on the remaining staff, impacting on our

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ability to move issues along, and to respond to public and councillor queries, complaints, freedom of information requests, and insurance claims.

39 Seasonal Ranger posts were advertised in summer 2023, the same number as 2022, and growing from the 26 posts in summer 2021, an additional 7 seasonal posts beyond those in summer 2019, and 2 more than in 2020. This steady increase (funded from innovations such as the increase in car parking charges, and the Visitor Action Plan monies), has assisted in managing issues on site, but did not cater for the amount of abuse staff received especially on the evening shifts on the coast. As such, some of the posts now created are for a slightly higher grade of officer, as 'Steward Rangers' for the evenings, to deal with inappropriate behaviours more directly. Issues seen in recent years with the recruitment process for seasonal Rangers each year are to be address with a new procedure trialled for 2023, and to be developed further for 2024 – to include earlier advertising, and a 'rolling process' to be employed until all posts are filled.

With an aging workforce, succession planning is key. Four Apprentices were employed within the service in Autumn 18, and it is the intention to seek further funding to employ a further apprentice per team (so a further 7 apprentices). (planning in part for at least three experienced gardeners who have announced their intention to retire over the next 18 months).

Learning and development of the workforce is fundamental, including the mandatory training and qualifications for undertaking practical works (for example applying chemicals, and driving vehicles and machinery in public places). A training plan has been developed for the service, which will ensure all staff are appropriately trained, and have opportunity to develop their skills and expertise over time. Two members of staff completed their NVQ level 4 or 5 in Leadership and Management, some of the grounds staff are ongoing with training to supervisor level, and further opportunities will be explored also.

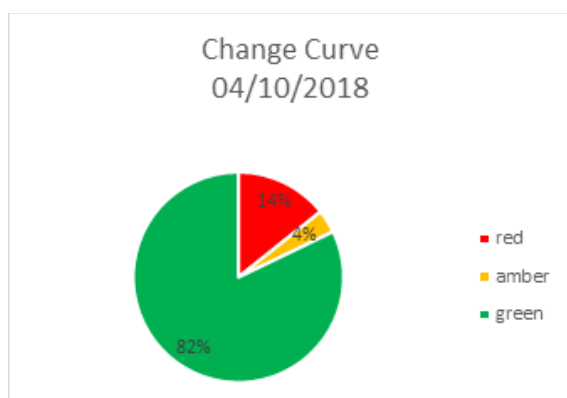
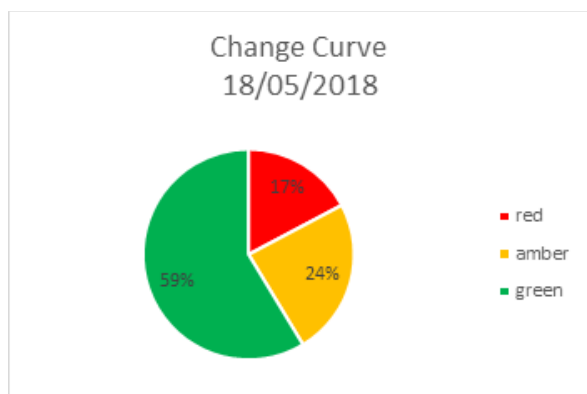
A key aim of the integration of services was to encourage cross skilling, and flexible working. While there have been isolated examples of this working in practise, and the pandemic revealed many examples of people willing to work outside of their normal areas, more can be done to remove the previous silo mentality (there is still a perceived split between the inland and coastal operations). The main challenge to this tough being the persistent capacity issues – every team is stretched beyond capacity and so there is little flexibility to encourage such cross working/ on the job training.

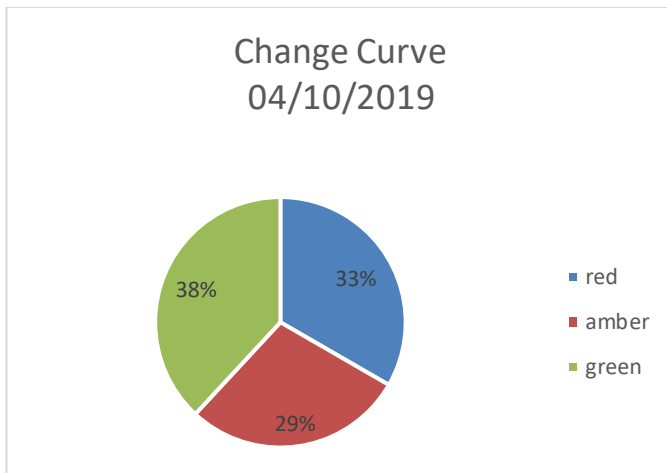
Efforts have been made to engender a new culture within the service – to encourage all staff to understand the wider portfolio, and become ambassadors for Green Sefton (indeed the whole Council/ Borough). This has included several away sessions (pre-pandemic), and regular team updates, team meetings, including face to face catch up's with operational staff, working groups on cross cutting issues, individual 1:1's and more. Monthly Microsoft Teams briefings have continued too – where an update is provided on issues relating to the service and opportunity is given for staff to ask any questions they may have. The refresh of the Service Vision in Autumn 2022 was used as a means to

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bring the teams together again and undertake some group exercises to re-look at the overall service again.

An exercise was previously undertaken using a 'change curve of emotions' exercise, as a simple test of how people are feeling about work/ the service etc, this has been summarised as below (with 'negative' emotions grouped as red colour, 'positive' as green, and amber as in between). As can be seen, staff seemed to be feeling increasingly positive about the service as the structure settled in, but by Autumn 2019, maybe the reality of working with stretched resources was taking its toll. The pandemic has stalled further team away sessions, but this exercise was revisited again in preparation for this report in 2022, together with the creation of a staff survey (which attendees of the away session completed at the time, but follow up work is needed with operational staff who were not able to attend – this is ongoing at the time of writing).





3.4 Risk management

The service's three broad areas manage four Risk Registers for Green Sefton, which are reported to Cabinet Member quarterly. This in turn feeds into the Operational In House Services (formerly Locality Services) Risk Register and that in turn escalates to the Corporate Risk Register as needed. The September 2023 update of these is included here:



Green Sefton Risk



Green Sefton Risk



Green Sefton Risk



Green Sefton Risk

Register - FCERM ORRegister - DevelopmRegister - CommunitRegister - Land Man:

There are a number of risks that are escalated/ appear on the OIHS Service Risk Register (SRR). Anything with a residual score of over 7 is considered for inclusion in the SRR, officers have then sense checked these items, and the risks that were then escalated to the SRR include (in order of residual score, high to low):

- Failure to ensure safety of highway and other Council owned trees
- Failure to meet commercial/ other innovation income targets for service
- Failure to achieve revenue targets
- Failure to provide (OIHS services) due to staff shortages
- Collapse/failure of northern section of Crosby Seawall and/or breaching of MEPAS rising main sewer and/or loss of access route to Crosby North Pumping station/Hightown.
- Sefton fail to capitalise on the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation
- Failure to achieve statutory requirements for maintenance and management of designated land (e.g. SSSI) on the Coast - must be maintained within agreed performance standards as directed by Natural England/ DEFRA and in legislation
- Cemeteries and Crematorium maintenance 2020 TUPE transfer resulted in Southport crem being transferred with no staffing resource, and no resources for the seasonal maintenance of the other 4 cemetery and crematorium sites, or replacement cycle of fleet and machinery
- Inadequate assets (e.g. vehicles / machinery) to operate effectively
- Failure of Green Sefton, as Lead Local Flood Authority, to manage surface/groundwater water flood risk effectively in Maghull.
- Green Sefton failing to produce service strategy based on a place based approach.

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All of the above are a result of a lack of resource/ capacity within the team. As such, there are several discussions ongoing about the resources within the service outlined elsewhere, and a focus and outcome of future income proposals must be to reinvest back into the service – both in terms of staffing as well as revenue budgets.

3.5 Asset Management

The service runs from seven main bases (in alphabetical order):

- Ainsdale Discovery Centre complex, Ainsdale
- Cambridge Road Depot, Crosby
- Derby Park Depot, Bootle
- Hesketh Park, Southport
- Magdalen House, Bootle
- Thornton Garden of Rest, Thornton
- Southport Crematorium

The future alternative use of some of these sites is being discussed (specifically parts of the Ainsdale Discovery Centre, and Derby Park depot), and so potential relocation should be considered moving forwards also.

In order to insource the grounds maintenance function, and now to support the wider service, procurement of fleet, machinery and tools/ equipment has taken place – significant spend on specialist operational machinery and going through the procurement and ordering process is a further spend on fleet (to replace the more expensive leased vehicles).

It is essential these assets remain operational for our delivery, and a planned reinvestment schedule needs to be in place – a focus area for 2022/23, as the original insourcing was in 2017, and it is necessary to consider the long term planning for vehicles and machinery. It must be noted that the service has grown over the last 5 years, and of course cost inflation too will impact on the tendered sum anticipated. The pre-procurement report to tender for ne specialist machinery was approved by Cabinet on 27th July 2023, and the tender is being prepared at the time of writing.

Revenue budgets have reduced by circa 75% which has resulted in reduced funding for routine repairs and maintenance – this has meant much of our hard infrastructure (benches, fencing railings, footpaths, walls (incl sea defences etc) are in a poor state of repair and may be at risk (or pose a risk) without future investment – a key part of the Service Vision and Plan refresh being to focus in such investment projects.

3.6 Community Engagement

It is well understood that the Council's Green Sefton assets contribute to a wide range of outcomes, not least the massive benefits to peoples health and well being. A core outcome of maintaining our sites to appropriate standards, and providing facilities people want to use within them, is to encourage greater use and participation (balancing this with protecting our special habitats and species we are custodians of too).

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The Community Engagement team, with support from officers across the service, lead on this engagement. From activities and events, facilitating and supporting volunteering, to seeking quality awards and funding, and enforcement together there are many success stories to reflect on.

In summary, it is recorded that we benefited from circa 44,000 hours of volunteer time per year (pre pandemic) – this equates to around £660k of contribution (or 25 FTE's)! and this excludes the massive contribution volunteers running our sports clubs and leagues offer too!. Although this is a great statistic, the reality is that these efforts are made by the few, not the many. Efforts are to be made to expand the pool of people getting involved – from the range of people in our communities (including businesses), not just the 'traditional volunteer'.

Also, efforts are needed to guide the work undertaken to ensure works undertaken are those that make the biggest positive impact, and do not in fact detract from other outcomes. We have in the past been guilty of allowing some volunteer groups, whilst working with the best of intentions, of undertaking their 'pet project's, often planting inappropriate shrubs/ perennials which ultimately requires increased maintenance (nd especially if the groups subsequently folds, which has happened on occasion).

We have maintained success in working with communities to benchmark and demonstrate quality in land management and the services we provide, such as with the In Bloom campaign, Green Flag, and the proposed Land Audit Management System (LAMS).

However, the integration of services to create Green Sefton included further reductions to staffing level on services which had seen significant reductions already in recent years. As such, opportunities will continue to be explored to seek external funding, and alternative funding mechanisms to increase the staffing resource and therefore exponentially increase the community involvement and offer.

In the meantime, a more strategic approach is needed to assess which groups/ projects offer the greater benefits to the communities we serve (we may have to prioritise some groups ideas, over others where they offer greater benefits). Another consideration are those issues which drain staffing resource, such as the demands of groups when individuals may fall out with each other (such as has happened, with huge staffing capacity (and morale) implications, within the last year).

To assist in this, the Volunteer Handbook was refreshed in 2022, with our expectations of groups more clearly laid out (together with those that they can expect from us) – this includes clear lines of communication, ensuring groups are constituted and have regular AGM's, and that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place too.

The service works in partnership wherever mutually beneficial. For example, the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership (including the summer 'Multi Agency Group'), the Liverpool City Regions Local Nature Partnership; Nature Connected, the Turning Tides Board, and the symbiotic funding relationship with the Environment Agency relating to flooding issues and more.

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Natural Alternatives is Green Sefton's own long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs.

Natural Alternatives offers a safe, secure and challenging work environment for participants providing training, education and work experience. Participants undertake conservation and access work as well as horticulture and small maintenance works across Green Sefton on a project basis with community and other groups. A maximum of 15 participants attend per day.

It is proposed to expand this model across the borough, in order to offer further opportunities to 'clients'. The start of this, borne out of the Covid situation, is the relocation of the team to the rear yard at Botanic Gardens, and in time this will have become a second base for the service, allowing for increased participant numbers

3.7 Contractual & Commissioning

Grounds maintenance of cemeteries and crematoria:

The grounds maintenance of Cemeteries and Crematoria were insourced to Green Sefton in April 2020, having been outsourced to contract since CCT in the early 1990's. This occurred just as the national lockdown was imposed for Covid 19, and within weeks the burials and cremations had doubled from previous average years. However, the benefits of insourcing were instantly available, as staff from other parts of the service were able to be quickly trained up to assist.

Some headline info about the insourced cemeteries and crematoria grounds maintenance:

160,000 burial plots, circa 49,000 headstones

Average burials per year 363 (with a team of 4) Although during the pandemic, this has been circa double the average at times. Approximately 1/3rd of these will be hand dug and hand back filled, the others will be dug with the assistance of an excavator with hand dug shaping.

61 hectares of land, equivalent to circa 85 full size football pitches, but with the added complication of the need to trim around 49,000 headstone obstacles, which is no easy task as each one is different and can include floral tributes (that shouldn't be there, but must not be damaged as this causes distress to the mourners).

We are trying to keep to a mowing schedule of every 4 weeks, which breaks down to a team of 3 trying to trim around approximately 4,000 headstones per week each!

This year, a lack of staffing at times, and machinery breakdowns etc, has resulted in complaints and a perceived poor performance; which have on occasion led to complaints and negative press attention

Grounds maintenance in parks and greenspaces:

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Green Sefton now manage the parks grounds maintenance that was previously outsourced from the early 1990's until 2017. This continues to prove to be successful, with staff now available to work across the wider portfolio, and not restricted to contract terms and conditions under the previous arrangement. This has been especially useful where staff can be relocated to other service areas such as supporting burials and cremations, and reacting to situations such as fly tipping left from traveller encampments.

Tree and woodland management:

The Arboricultural (tree and woodland management) is outsourced, with a 3+2 year term which started Spring 2019, and focuses mainly on off ground, highways works. In late 2021 though, the contractor announced they were no longer able to hold their contracted rates for the extended term, and so the works required retendering. This took place over Winter 2021, and the new contractor started in June 2022, for a new 5 year term, which is bedding in well.

During this new term, it is intended to upskill the in house team to undertake further 'on ground' works in parks and on the coast.

Leases of land and buildings:

Cabinet Member will be aware from previous reports that we have an extensive portfolio of individuals, community organisations or businesses with a lease, licence or other such management agreement or who aspire to have agreements.

These arrangements have a significant benefit to the Council in helping to manage, promote and improve usage of public land in Sefton.

Devolving land and premises to other parties provides five significant benefits, which will continue to be explored:

- 1) Increased income for the Council.
- 2) Assistance in moving public open spaces closer towards cost neutrality so there is no financial impact on the Council.
- 3) Community involvement, use and interest in Council assets that would otherwise not be achieved.
- 4) Investment in premises and land which would otherwise not be available, in some circumstances this might also mean securing grants for buildings and land to which the Council itself have no access.
- 5) A means of moving liability and risk from the Council.

To this end, a market testing exercise of buildings and land has been undertaken and has revealed several new opportunities that are being explored, such as the old Garage site on Liverpool Road North, Seaforth, the old lodge at the entrance to

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Botanic Gardens, and the middle yard in Hesketh Park. The phase 1 exercise has led to several new leases that begun on 2022, such as the developing new base for adults with learning difficulties out of the Hesketh Park middle yard.

3.8 Policy and Procedure

Each staff member has the ambassadorial role emphasised in their job description. Work has commenced to define how that role will manifest itself on a day to day basis. Initial examples have included opportunities to consider frequently asked questions from members of the public whilst carrying out work to see if we can provide a common response/approach. Now that the services have been merged there are a number of opportunities to consider best practice to determine issues such as rota work, distribution of skills etc across the teams

Embedding the need to provide environmental enforcement will also be a focus moving forwards (for example the dog control PSPO, and the new Coast and Visitor Areas PSPO too), and discussions have begun about wider enforcement on our land – both in partnership with the emergency services and others on Council land, and also in supporting the other larger land owners and partners across the borough too.

A number of working groups have been set up to ensure we have a standard and consistent approach across the service such as Health and Safety, asset management, community and communications, operational task group, adaptation to climate change and procurement.

3.9 Health and safety

Covid 19 has presented new challenges for us all in recent times. As such, new Risk Assessments have been created for all operations (whether site based or in the office/ working from home), and for all 140 buildings that the service manages. These have been updated throughout the pandemic, and the outcome communicated to all staff with regular briefings, and posters/ newsletters.

A full review of all 'day to day' Health & Safety procedures and risk assessment has been completed. This process revealed that over 140 risk assessments existed covering Green Sefton's combined operations. This has been used as a basis to form a Green Sefton H&S group who meet regularly to review progress of routine H&S monitoring of Risk Assessments and the development of new procedures.

Inevitably, the portfolio of land managed has inherent risks, but we are managing with limited resources and so a risk management approach has to be taken – albeit, over time, risks will increase as infrastructure starts to fail, inspections are undertaken less frequently etc. Officers are in regular discussion with the Risk Management team, including seeking views and assistance on the management of the Councils tree stock.

Incidents in 2023 have led to two reviews being instigated affecting, but not restricted to, the Green Sefton portfolio – one on Water Safety, and another on the way in which events and activities are booked and managed. These will be concluded in 2024, and reported to Cabinet Member accordingly

3.10 ICT Systems

ICT is considered as essential to support the Service. Agile working is proving successful across the service and seven bases. Further hardware will be necessary to spread this further to include site based staff being able to report issues, feed into systems, and gain access to council emails. It is essential that new IT systems are invested in, in order to enable and support the effective and efficient delivery and growth of the service;

Lack of WiFi at several of the operational bases still presents a barrier, and business cases have been prepared to install this in time

A new inspection/ recording system is being explored for all service areas

Cashless payment system has been procured for the beach car parks, and was successfully operational for 2021 season and onwards (in 2022, around half of all payments were cashless, which we will look to develop)

3.11 Communications

The Communications Plan that was drafted for the launch of the new service remains relevant, and efforts continue to embed 'Green Sefton' into wider consciousness, including:

- Creation of logo/ visual identity, used for uniforms, vehicles, promo material etc:



- Press Releases – to all Media
- Twitter and Facebook posts
- Periodic updates to all Councillors
- Friends groups, volunteers and partner letter and subsequent briefings

Ongoing social media, releases, a weekly column in the midweek Southport Visiter, and a slot on Radio Merseyside all continue to promote the work of the service, and fortnightly meetings take place with the Communications team to monitor all this, and develop both proactive campaigns/ messaging, as well as almost daily contact to respond to reactive press and other queries.

In summary for 2023:

A total of 29 press releases have been issued in 2023 so far (from January to mid-Sept).

Topics covered in the releases include:

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- Celebrating parks and greenspaces (Rainbow park new MUGA, Levelling up fund bids, KBT fly tipping stunt, Alex Greenwood project and more)
- Green Sefton staff achievements (Playground accreditation, guided walks and expertise from Community Rangers, pop up events etc)
- Summer coast campaign (water safety inc World Drowning Prevention Day, visitor beach guides, no fires/bbqs, dog control, multi-agency coast releases..)

We have received fewer media enquiries in 2023. This could be as a result of poor weather through the school summer holidays, resulting in a quieter July and August at the coast. We did find that local media outlets were supportive of our press releases, in particular the sharing of important no fires/ no BBQs messaging.

There was media interest received on Southport beach car park in May and the reasons for the reduction of opening hours and closure. This was responded to reactively, with the sentiment being mixed overall – some understood the pressures of high tides and sand conditions.

And when Ainsdale beach car park had reduced capacity in June as a result of soft sand from prolonged dry weather, we did proactive comms to explain this and share widely and frequently to avoid visitors being turned away. E.g. sharing specific posts for horse riders who's horse boxes would not be allowed onto the beach car park.

We didn't receive any enquiries related to washed up animals or substances, which could be a positive sign that comms on this last year has settled people's questions or confusion around this topic. We also didn't receive any litter related enquiries, which again could be down to the coast being less busy over the summer holidays.

A takeaway for next year is to prepare proactive communications and raise awareness of the variety of reasons why beach car parks can have reduced capacity or close and at short notice. This will help the Council keep control of the narrative and get ahead of future media enquiries.

Parks and greenspaces

Love Parks Week content was shared across the Council social media channels along with a press release. We also promoted Green Flag success for the borough via a press release and on social media.

It has been a busy and positive year for parks comms as developments and updates have been shared for Hesketh Park, Rainbow Park, and the Botanic Gardens public consultation. And the KBT fly tipping stunt that took place at Poets Park.

We have also highlighted the Council's commitment to play facilities through both press release and social media by sharing staff accreditation achievements, £200k increased Council funding, and the development of new MUGAs.

Summer Coast campaign overview

In total 18 'reel' videos were posted onto the Council's Instagram account.

Top 2 performing videos:

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- Crosby beach not for swimming post reached over 48k accounts, received 276 likes
- Litter picking 'don't be a scruff take home your stuff' video post reached over 44k, and 676 likes

For reference, last summer the total views received across all videos combined was 38k.

There were 11 press releases were issued over the summer.

A big focus of comms was sharing water safety messages, with particular focus on raising awareness to visitors that Crosby is not a bathing beach. RNLI were supportive in sharing this content with their own audiences which was helpful too.

Another priority was to raise awareness that fires and BBQs are not allowed anywhere along the coast, this was particularly important during a prolonged period of dry weather in June. We received support from local media outlets and residents in the sharing of this message, and VMS signs were used at Crosby beach to further push this message, and later in the season a second warning message on sinking sand/mud was added.

Dog behaviour was another focus, and we utilised the work of the Coast focussed Community Ranger, to promote coast pop up events and Green Sefton's partnership with the Dogs Trust. A press release was issued highlighting the safety angle as to why dogs need to be kept under control at the coast which was a different approach to previous comms on dog control.

Signage

New signage was produced for Crosby beach in response to issues with organised balloon releases and fireworks. Two different signage designs have been created and the signage has been up through the summer. The signage used 'what goes up must come down' slogan along with impactful images of animals injured as a result of balloons and fireworks.

This is the early stages of a long-term behaviour change and awareness campaign.

Natural coast and wildlife

We have continued to promote the Sefton coastline as our 'Natural Coast' and highlight the ecological and environmental value of the landscape and wildlife. In developing this further, a new slogan 'rarer than a rainforest' has been used in coast content to which positive feedback has been received from National Trust Formby who have asked if they can use as well.

Raising awareness of the SSSI and other coast accreditations has been central to coast communications, and this has been achieved through regular social media posts and inclusion in beach-guide style articles and press releases.

The Annual Review's are proving a useful tool in our communications efforts too - shared with all staff, Cllrs, friends and voluntary groups, sports and recreation groups, and other partners. A narrated version, together with links to the main reports have been

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uploaded each year on the website, and have received positive feedback/ are useful to refer to in discussions.

The Green Sefton web page was updated in 2022, and includes information and links on a range of useful subjects: [Green Sefton](#) and further development work is planned for 2024

4. Challenges and complaints

4.1 Without focussing on the negative, its important to acknowledge our challenges and consider ways to over come these. Some of the ongoing challenges for the service include:

- Capacity to deliver core and routine service, especially when demands are placed to undertake 'non core' and unscheduled works, and noting of course that some works are required under statute
- Capacity to develop new proposals (including capacity from support services, as well as within the team)
- Draw of resource heavy issues (eg sand clearance at Crosby promenade, Botanic Gardens aviary, and friends groups relationships when they have internal arguments)
- Management of expectations of what is deliverable within resources available – of residents/ visitors/ Cllrs and partners
- Succession management planning
- Seasonal staffing (timing of recruitment, and availability of suitable candidates to ensure staffing numbers for April, albeit with new procedures trialled for 2023, and plans for further development in 2024, as outlined above)
- Habitat conservation (insufficient resources to preserve habitats at risk)
- Climate change (peak demands on maintenance during periods of hot weather, increasing occurrences of heavy rainfall and flash flooding, heatwaves and other extreme weather events affecting our landscapes)
- Increase in number of cases of notifiable plants (eg Japanese Knotweed)
- Training and development (resource and capacity)
- Traditional local authority processes and procedures, incompatible with commercial working and development of self funding business cases

4.2 It has been clear that the service has continued to struggle to meet public, councillor and other expectations at times. This is at least in part due to the additional demands being placed on the service, at the same time as resources have never been lower (with ongoing staff absences, aging fleet and machinery etc), but is overall also due to the staffing levels and other operational resources assigned to the service. As such, there have been times when our sites have not looked as we would like, as maintenance activities were re-prioritised accordingly. This all indicates that despite some growth in

specific areas in 2022 (play maintenance, and the Coast Visitor Action Plan), reduced budgets overall, and less staffing availability leaves little resilience, and is seeing service standards and infrastructure continuing to decline over time...

- 4.3 Overall, there is much to celebrate though, with 10 formal compliments received (an increase of 9 compared to 2022, and on top of many more informal) and a sense that by and large, the public, residents and visitors really do appreciate the wonderful landscape assets in Sefton like never before. There has been an increase in complaints as some visitors are disappointed with the standards of maintenance being provided however, but this demonstrates visitors passion for our landscapes, and a desire to see improved standards. There have been 183 Stage 1 formal complaints in the last year (compared to 157 in the previous year), with 8 escalating to Stage 2 (compared to 13 the previous year). At the height of summer at times an average of over one complaint per working day were being received (with 27 formal complaints received in June, a similar level to 2022 when 28 were received in July at its peak). These demand a high level of officer support and administration, as few complaints are 'simple' to respond to and resolve. None of these however have then been raised with the Ombudsman in 2023, compared to 1 in the previous year.

5 Conclusions

This review demonstrates that the service has performed incredibly well to respond to ongoing challenges, keep our sites safe and accessible with limited resources, and still develop the service in many areas.

This has all been summarised by the table shown in the covering report to this document - which provides the headlines actions/ priorities as agreed in 2022 with a summary of progress in 2023 and outlines actions planned for 2024 for each of these, together with new actions added to the end.

These are inevitably just some of the headline actions, with many other issues progressing day to day (for which, regular Cabinet Member papers are presented monthly).

Finally, the headlines detailed in the table have been populated in a 'importance/ urgency' matrix in order to inform the work programme of officers in the coming year. This will again be regularly reviewed, with changes reported and discussed with Cabinet Member regularly too

More work is yet to be done, and as the report outlines, we must focus on these priority work areas in order to deliver on the Services' own 2030 vision, that ultimately contributes to that of the Council overall.

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A further Annual Review will be undertaken in Autumn 2024 for further awareness and discussion at that time.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	7 November 2023
Subject:	Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2023/24; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; to update on arrangements for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre; and to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation: That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the reports on the Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies; Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy); Southport Market; and Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 January 2024;
- (3) the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above;
- (4) the update on the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and informal meeting of the Committee be noted; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;

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Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2023/24 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

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

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

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. However, any implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above.
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above.
Place – leadership and influencer: As above.
Drivers of change and reform: As above.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above.
Greater income for social investment: As above.
Cleaner Greener: As above.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

Executive Director – Place

Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services

Assistant Director of Place (Operational In-House Services)

Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)

Assistant Director of Place (Communities)

Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)

Assistant Director of Place (Commercial Development)

(B) External Consultations

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2023/2024 – Appendix 1
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review – Appendix 2
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Appendix 3

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

- 1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee. The Work Programme was approved by the Committee on 27 June 2023.
- 1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2023/24 and updated, as appropriate.
- 1.4 The Work Programme indicates that a number of reports should be considered at this meeting of the Committee. Three reports have had to be deferred to the next meeting and details of such reports are set out below:

(A) **Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies.**

The Executive Director – Place has advised that it is not possible to submit the report to this meeting for the reason that work is ongoing on the SHOL business plan following some changes in strategy for one of the venues. This is in progress and the report should be available for discussion at the next meeting.

(B) **Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy)**

The Executive Director – Place has advised that it is not possible to submit the report to this meeting for the reason that work is ongoing on the implementation of the strategy and action plan, particularly in relation to the Crosby Library project (both the existing library and the new village centre scheme). It is anticipated however that a presentation will be made to the Committee regarding the Bootle Regeneration Strategy.

(C) **Southport Market**

The Executive Director – Place has advised that it is not possible to submit the report to this meeting due to unavoidable apologies being received from the lead officers. Therefore, such officers would not be available to address questions relating to the report. Furthermore, work

is ongoing on the impacts of economic conditions on the hospitality sector (and in turn Southport Market).

(D) **Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies**

The Executive Director – Corporate Resources and Customer Services has advised that it is necessary to defer this report to enable Cabinet at its meeting in December 2023 to receive an update report outlining progress, key issues and financial projections for next 3 years. Thereafter the report can be considered by this Committee at its January meeting.

It is recommended therefore that these matters be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee for the reason stated.

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2023/24

- 2.1 It is usual practice for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 2.2 At its meeting held on 20 June 2023 the Committee agreed that any future reviews during the year be dealt with by informal meetings of the Committee rather than via Working Groups.
- 2.3 The Committee agreed that the first review be on the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter a visit be arranged to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and that an informal meeting of the Committee be held following the visit. Unfortunately, it has been problematic agreeing a suitably convenient date for the meeting and visit.
- 2.4 Contact has again been made with the MRWA to find out when they can facilitate a visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre.
- 2.5 An update will be provided at the meeting on the up to date position regarding the visit.
- 2.6 The Committee's views are sought on the selection of a topic(s) for consideration by an informal meeting(s) of the Committee following the conclusion of the topic of refuse and waste recycling.
- 2.7 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2.

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

- 3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.
- 3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective

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decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 3 for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.
- 3.6 The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.
- 3.7 In respect of pre-scrutiny the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting held on 20 June 2023 noted that often strategies and plans were included on the Forward Plan but that rarely were they submitted to Overview and Scrutiny for comment prior to their submission to Cabinet/Council; and suggested that officers should plan more time into the process for formulating plans and strategies to enable Overview and Scrutiny to have an input and provide comments to Cabinet/Council. This Committee at its meeting held on 27 June 2023 raised similar concerns.

As Members will be aware, a report was considered at the last meeting of the Committee and a recommendation approved that Cabinet be requested to approve changes to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol and that Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fall within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, be requested to seek the views of the Committees on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it is not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committees to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon; and Section 6 of the Protocol relating to pre-scrutiny be amended accordingly.

The report referred to above was considered and approved by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the September cycle of meetings. The report will also be considered by Cabinet on the matter at its meeting to be held on 2 November 2023. The outcome of the Cabinet's deliberations on the matter will be reported verbally at the meeting.

4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.

4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

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

4.4 **Role**

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

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

4.5 **Membership**

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

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Desmond, Hart and Howard. Councillor Howard is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

4.6 **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be Members of the majority group. Councillor Steve Radford, a Liberal Party Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2023/24 Municipal Year; and Councillor Pat Moloney, a Liberal Democrat Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Vice-Chair.

4.7 **Quoracy Issues**

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

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number

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of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

4.8 **Meetings**

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

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

4.9 The last meeting of the Committee was held on 25 October 2023. The Committee considered the following items:

- Verbal Update from Mayor Steve Rotheram
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update
- Developing the LCR Community Wealth Building Strategy

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


OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24
Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
2.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser
3.	Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People – Migration Update	Simon Burnett/Allan Glennon

Tuesday, 19 September 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Southport Market Update	Stephen Watson/Stuart Barnes/Mark Catherall
3.	Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Pilot	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
4.	Domestic Abuse Report	Simon Burnett/Janette Maxwell
5.	Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Final Report – Update on Recommendations	Paul Fraser
6.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
7.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 7 November 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report	Michelle Williams
2.	Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan	Peter Moore
3.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy)	Stuart Barnes
4.	Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephan Van Arendsen
5.	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephen Watson
6.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
7.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 16 January 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts
3.	Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services	Michelle Williams
4.	Green Sefton Annual Review 2023	Michelle Williams
5.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
6.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 5 March 2024, 6.30 p.m., - Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth	Stuart Barnes
2.	Damp, Mould and Condensation in Residential Properties	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
3.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
4.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

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APPENDIX 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

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

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

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

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SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

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

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

APPENDIX 2

KEY QUESTIONS

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

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

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2023 - 29 FEBRUARY 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE:

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

Phil Porter
Chief Executive

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FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme	Nicky Owen nicky.owen@sefton.gov.uk
Bootle Regeneration Strategy	Heather Jago heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4619
Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Business Plan	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk
Provision of Council Housing at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton	Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk
Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446
Southport Business Improvement District	Mark Catherall mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2315

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme</p> <p>Cabinet report detailing the proposals for proceeding with delivery of Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme, which is being funded by £20m Capital Levelling Up Funding (“CLUF”) awarded to the Council by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”). The report includes the Business Case for the development, including an updated Business Plan for the Strand’s operating costs and income over the coming 3 years, fully accounting for proceeding with the development project.</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	<p>2 Nov 2023</p> <p>Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/10/2023 to 02/11/2023. Reason: is to allow more time for the Cabinet Member and other colleagues to fully assess the complex content of the report and appendices for such an important, large-scale initiative</p>			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Paragraph 3)			
Wards Affected	Linacre			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Commercial Development)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Members, officers, LCR Combined Authority, Strand tenants, statutory consultees (Utility companies, police, fire brigade) local community groups and residents.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails, letters, meetings, a dedicated website and a unit in the Strand Shopping Centre.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme			

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Contact Officer(s) details	Nicky Owen nicky.owen@sefton.gov.uk
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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Bootle Regeneration Strategy Update and review Bootle Regeneration Strategy (Strand transformation related)			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	2 Nov 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/10/2023 to 02/11/2023. Reason: work is on-going on the proposal			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Derby; Linacre			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Members, Ward Councillors			
Method(s) of Consultation	Via briefings and meetings (e.g. Members Reference Group)			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Bootle Regeneration Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Heather Jago heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4619			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Business Plan Updated business plan for 2023-26 for SHOL			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	2 Nov 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/10/2023 to 02/11/2023. Reason: work is on-going on the proposal			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Led by company with input from board and council officers			
Method(s) of Consultation	Led by company with input from board and council officers			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - business plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Provision of Council Housing at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton Report to consider the provision of Council Housing (social rent) at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	2 Nov 2023 18 Jan 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Paragraph 3)			
Wards Affected	St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Officers, Cabinet Member Communities and Housing, Key Stakeholders			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails and meetings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Provision of Council Housing at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan Approval of the Phase 1A Business Plan outlining future housing development by Sandway Homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director				
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	None			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every 5 years. This Strategy seeks to tackle all forms of homelessness and end rough sleeping.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Public Consultation and Engagement Panel; key agencies linked to homelessness			
Method(s) of Consultation	Presented to the Public Consultation and Engagement Panel in July 2023 with a large number of key agencies linked to homelessness engaged with as well as interviews with lived experience.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029			
Contact Officer(s) details	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Business Improvement District Southport Business Improvement District Business Plan for 2024-2029 and ballot approvals.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Cambridge; Dukes			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Officers, Members and Businesses			
Method(s) of Consultation	The BID will undertake extensive consultation with all businesses within the BID area. The outcomes of this consultation will be included within the report.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Business Improvement District			
Contact Officer(s) details	Mark Catherall mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2315			

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee -(Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	7 November 2023
Subject:	Cabinet Member Reports – September 2023 to November 2023		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period September 2023 to November 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

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

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

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

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(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):								
Legal Implications:								
Equality Implications: There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. Any equality implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
Impact on Children and Young People: No There are no direct impacts on children and young people arising from this report. Any implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will <table border="1"><tr><td>Have a positive impact</td><td>No</td></tr><tr><td>Have a neutral impact</td><td>Yes</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> There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.	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
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: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Atkinson's, Fairclough's, Hardy's, Moncur's (relating to Green Sefton) and Veidman's portfolios during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to their portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above
Place – leadership and influencer: As above
Drivers of change and reform: As above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above
Greater income for social investment: As above
Cleaner Greener: As above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

Assistant Director of People – Communities
 Assistant Director of People – Operational In-House Services
 Assistant Director of Place – Highways and Public Protection
 Assistant Director of Place – Regeneration and Housing

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 2068
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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

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

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Agenda Item 8

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.2 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, are the most recent Cabinet Member reports for the Communities and Housing, Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; Regeneration and Skills and Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) portfolios.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Ian Moncur	Health and Well Being	October 2023

Green Sefton update

Overview

Overall, the service continues to perform well under the pressures of expectation on service delivery, within the resources made available, and in the context of the ongoing pandemic legacy situation still affecting staffing levels availability/ the ripple effect on works/ projects etc.

It is clear that several areas of the service are struggling to meet expectations / basic standards within resources available and efforts are being made to address this. This has resulted in further increase in complaints, and negative press coverage for several areas of the service into the peak season of 2023.

To start to address this, an increase in revenue budget was approved by Full Council as part of the budget setting process for an additional £200k into the management of play areas / facilities from 2022/23 onwards (increasing the budget from £45k per year), and for several of the actions from the Coast Visitor Action Plan for the delivery of those actions on a permanent basis with a further £300k annual uplift – to include additional daytime and evening ranger staff, a full time Community Ranger for the Coast, increased litter management at key gateways, ongoing provision of temporary toilets at beach entrances, and a communications plan to encourage appropriate visitor behaviour. Further, the unachievable income targets were removed from April 2023, which allows the service to present a balanced budget for 23/24.

In addition, to develop the service/and undertake improvements, external grants and other funding are being sought such as;

- the 500k Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier funding for conservation works over the next 5 years along the coast was accepted in February 2022, and the first year’s work have proved successful attracting regional media attention.
- a major bid for Botanic Gardens is in early development, with a Task Group set up (chaired by Cabinet Member, and with ward councillors and community reps), and approval to consult publicly given at the Consultation and Engagement Panel in March 2022. Further, a successful pre-development bid to the HLF has provided resource and capacity to lead and deliver this consultation in Winter 2022/ Spring 2023, and to undertake the required surveys and analysis etc, all in order to be able to make a bid some time afterwards (whenever match funding has been secured). In the last quarter, this consultation has completed and design workshops have taken place with the Task Group to develop and understand the scale and scope of the project, with the outcome of the consultation in mind – all to be reported to Cabinet Member in due course.

Agenda Item 8

- consultation has been completed for the allocation of 'legacy' monies left for Hesketh Park in a residents will, and cost estimate / details for priority projects have been developed and a contract has now been signed with the trustees to formalise this suite of projects to be developed and delivered. Officers are now exploring options for Project Management support, and for the future operator tendering for the Conservatory.
- the Ainsdale Beach gateway schemes have reached various blockages, and so a paper was presented to SCIG in June 23 which agreed to pause all, and to seek resources for development of an overall masterplan for the area instead. This is being explored at the time of writing, together with a public statement to be shared to explain the apparent delays.
- Cabinet gave formal approval to seek tenders for the future investment in Southport Golf Links in March 2022. The White House Café reopened in May 23 (with SHOL operating), and the course tender itself remains in abeyance, awaiting capacity and resources to proceed.
- An unsolicited Expression of Interest has been received by a group of golfers at Bootle Golf Course who are interested in seeking external funding to renovate, and then operate, the clubhouse building at Bootle Golf Course. Officers are assessing their proposal at the time of writing, and which will be discussed with/ reported to Cabinet Member in due course.
- the FCERM team continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partner agencies on seeking capital monies to reduce flood risk. Public consultation on the 'Making Space for Water' project in Churchtown/ Crossens commenced in September.

What is performing well

The 2022 Annual Review was presented to an Informal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (regeneration and skills) committee in October, and with a formal presentation at the November meeting. This was well received and outlined some of the successes for the service in the last year, and also explained some of the challenges. A narrated version of the presentation has been uploaded on the website here: www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton Officers are currently preparing the 2023 Annual Review, to be presented to O+S in November

The 2022 review led to the refresh and launching of the Service Vision in April 2023, which was adopted by Cabinet Member, and included taking on board comments from the O+S Committee, Cabinet Member, and the wider team of Green Sefton.

This has then flowed into revisiting the Service Plan, which was adopted by Cabinet Member in October 2023

What requires improvement and what action is being taken

Overall work programming

The Annual report highlighted the tracking of the services overall performance against the actions contained within the Service Plan which was RAG rated over the previous two years. This clearly shows that many actions slowed down or stalled since the pandemic started due to a reduced staffing capacity to deal with developmental issues, and new operational

Agenda Item 8

September 22. This has since been shared with all volunteer groups, with a request that the sign up to the updated document, and expectations contained therein.

Defining Standards

As part of addressing some of the frustrations from the community referred to above, we have also instigated a piece of work to define our maintenance service standards that we are currently resourced to provide. This is initially being prioritised on the inland parks and greenspaces maintenance aspects of the service, but team leaders are working up thoughts on defining standards across wider areas too. The first draft of this new document was shared with Cabinet Member at the April 2022 meeting, and final amendments are being made before releasing this wider in the coming months, which the upcoming kit and machinery tender will inform in Winter 23/24

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 7 November 2023)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	November 2023

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Christmas 2023 Update

The order for this year's cut trees has been placed and confirmed, delivery date is expected around mid-November.

Areas that have ordered a cut tree.

- Stanley Rd - Bootle Strand - 26ft+
- Seaforth Rd – Outside Bowersdale Park – 20ft
- South Rd – Rail Terminus – 26ft+
- Crosby – Village – 26ft+
- Netherton - Marian Square Shopping centre – 26ft+
- Southport – Bispham Rd – 26ft+

A new cut tree pit has been ordered for Marian Square that will be installed in the centre of the shopping centre.

Christmas Light Switch on Events

Bootle Together will be holding their Christmas Event on Saturday 25th. Further details will be shared as plans progress.

South Rd Christmas Light Switch on will take place on Thursday 23rd November 1-5pm.

Marian Square, Crosby Village & Bispham Rd have yet to confirm their dates and times.

The Youth team have been approached to support some of the Christmas community activities.

Mayors Toy Appeal and Foodbank Donations

All ward members have been asked to donate towards the Mayors Toy Appeal and to their local Foodbank to support demand over the Christmas period. The deadline for donations is the 31st of October.

The Council Communications team are looking at producing some short videos to promote the Mayors Toy Appeal and all the work that goes into supporting it. The group secretaries have been asked to approach their members and request volunteers to take part.

The High Park Project held their first conference at the Atkinson Centre on September 20th. The event highlighted the work the project has been undertaking over the last few years and had feedback from participants on participation, project themes and outcomes, case studies, impact, legacy and plans for future projects.

A meeting has taken place with Highways, Environmental Enforcement, Traffic Services and the area manager of Shell to discuss issues of fly tipping and bin storage on Shell owned land on Crosby Road. A further site meeting is due to take place with the Area Coordinator and an engineer from Shell to agree a solution.

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Cost of Living Welfare Reform

Foodbank

4th April 2023 – 30th September 2023	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	3584	979
Adults Fed	4553	1281
Children Fed	2577	643
Total Fed	7130	1924
Crisis Type	Rising cost of essentials –2309 vouchers presented 4581 people fed	Rising cost of essentials - 404 vouchers presented 780 people fed
Family Type	Single 2161 vouchers presented 60.3%	Single 555 vouchers presented 56.69%
Age group	Adults Age not specified: 1109	Adults 35-44: 362

Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator

The coordinator has met with Public Health to discuss a project that will increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers. The project will utilise the benefits of a Food Provision network and the Sefton Partnership to build a closer relationship with public health and their partners.

Meols Cop station in Norwood and Birkdale have been identified as possible pilot sites for a project to develop a network of food growing hubs in raised beds on unused sections of railway platforms. A further briefing and Business Case will follow, after discussions with rail providers and the active community food growing groups in these two areas.

Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)

Summer 2023 HAF was attended by a total of 2807 young people, an increase from 1795 in summer 2022. Of these 2140 were primary aged with the remaining 667 made up of secondary aged young people. Our providers also fed back that at least 410 of HAF funded attendees had special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). 28413 individual sessions were funded summer HAF, or which 26479 places were taken up.

Applications for providers of winter HAF opened on October 9th. As with previous rounds of HAF we expect less providers to apply to deliver during the Christmas holidays compared to Easter and Summer, we anticipate around 23 camps to run. Throughout the summer providers were already thinking about the winter holidays and many are looking forward to family cooking sessions, trips to the pantomime and Christmas parties.

We will continue to support Active Sefton to offer free swimming sessions to young people in receipt of benefits related free school meals with families being eligible for one free swim in the October half term.

Community Safety

A recruitment process has taken place for the Community Safety Manager position in the team. The successful candidate, Jennifer Currie, will be starting in November.

A site visit took place with Sefton ARC, the contractor and Police, with two potential locations for cameras on Kings Gardens identified - one on the far side of the lake at the end of the Victorian bridge in front of the Café - which would be located on the town pier and the opposite side towards Pleasure land. The other would be located on the town

centre side of the bridge and would cover either side of the path adjacent to the lake parking up the shelters and benches.

Further discussions will take place with a view to the detail around cabling and associated costs.

Work is continuing around the issue of parking outside Merchant Taylors Boys School during peak times. Coaches are causing obstruction and leaving engines running whilst waiting to drop off/collect students. Colleagues from Highways have discussed this with Merchant Taylors school, and they are very supportive of asking buses to stop idling and will be engaging with the services.

Hate Crime

The Hate Crime Joint Action Group (JAG formerly MARAC) meetings continue to take place monthly. The JAG supported a walkabout in the Seaforth area during National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October.

Various forms of hate graffiti were reported on the bridge on Manley Road. Network Rail were contacted, and the graffiti was quickly removed.

Equalities

Sefton representatives attended the Navajo awards ceremony to accept the award for successfully passing our reassessment.

Sue Logie (Youth Worker) delivered an LGBTQIA+ Workshop to SLB/ELT members as part of National Inclusion Week, Sue used the lived experience workshop that she delivers to young people and other professionals which covers stereotypes, perceptions, use of language and two lived experience stories. It led to interesting discussion points that will support the work of the corporate equalities group in ensuring we are a fully diverse and inclusive organisation.

Anti-Social Behaviour

To tackle the issue of street drinkers we are working with council and police colleagues in licensing and Sefton legal team to develop a process to engage off licenses to help reduce availability of alcohol to the cohorts involved. This will include restricting the sales of single cans, especially cheaper brands.

SASBU are discussing new approaches to tackling ASB involving social housing landlords. The inaction of landlords in ASB cases is proving frustrating and hindering the support that can be given to victims.

Youth Service

The Team engaged with 65 young people face to face in Serious Violence (Your Safety Matters) consultation as part of the Serious violence duty consultation led by the Violence Reduction Partnership. We also shared the online version of the consultation on social media and with our Grant Funded Organisations and other partners.

We are working with our grant funded organisations and partners to ensure information on activities for Halloween and Bonfire night are shared.

LIBRARIES Agenda Item 8

Summer Reading Challenge success

It was predicted that this year's Summer Reading Challenge was going to do well with early indications of take up exceeding expectations. The initial statistics have now been compiled and show a fantastic result across the whole of Sefton. In general joiners were up by 22% and completers by 35% compared to last year, with 2334 children completing the challenge. In total, 27,206 books were taken out by children taking part in the challenge over the summer holidays. One amazing achievement was at Netherton Library where the number of completers of the challenge was up by 127%.

Visit by the Children's Poet Laureate

Bootle Library has been visited by The Children's laureate Joseph Coelho on the 4th October. This was part of his nationwide 'Library Marathon'. Joseph is touring the country championing local libraries and the vital role they play within the community.

This is the second time Bootle Library has welcomed a poet Laureate, as it hosted an event for Simon Armitage, the current poet laureate in 2021.

Local schools came to meet Joseph, and he joined the library, taking a book out.

Meadows Library welcomes Hornby enthusiasts

In August a large 2- day event took place at Meadows Library with help from the Leisure Centre who provided space for the event. The event was a celebration of all things Hornby, with experts on model trains, Meccano and Dinky toys demonstrating the toys and being on hand with advice. The event was part of the libraries Heritage Lottery funded scheme and took place in Partnership with the Frank Hornby Society. Over the 2 days the event attracted over 220 visitors. It was really pleasing to see parents and grandparents with young children attending. During the event the first Frank Hornby Heritage trail walk took place, and the walk has now been produced in a booklet which will be distributed in the community and in local schools.

Atkinson Art Outreach

On 15th August 3 sculptures from the Atkinson Art Gallery were moved to Crosby Library for temporary display. This supports the Atkinson's ambitions to display its collection across the borough and if favourably received by residents, other library venues will be considered. The pieces will be displayed with two of the libraries own heritage pieces stored at Crosby Library: a stone lion from outside the original Waterloo Library, which was bombed in WWII, and a 300-year-old wooden water pipe discovered when Waterloo Town Hall was being extended in 1907.

With the pieces now in place an art trail around the building has been created in the form of a treasure hunt.

Update on Library Improvement Fund project funding

In 2022, the Library Service successfully bid for LIF funding to install 4 sound proofed pods and software to convert them into language labs to support migrant integration. The funding had to be spent by September 2023, and this has been successfully achieved in good time. The pods have proved massively popular, way beyond expectations. With some additional UKSPF funding, the library service now plans to install a pod in Netherton Library, to provide community and council groups with a space for private 1-to-1 meetings.

THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

The Atkinson suffered a mechanical failure to its safety curtain just before the sold-out ballet performance of *Swan Lake* on 3rd October. The situation was handled with utmost professionalism by both technical and front of house teams and at no point was the safety of customers, performers or staff placed in a position of risk. Fortunately, the production company Crown Ballet have managed to reschedule the performance to Saturday 21st October.

The fault required a specialist repair which meant that the theatre performance of Eric Chappelle's *Ground Rules* 5th October was cancelled, as was the first of five scheduled performances of the Helen Forrester adaptation *By the Waters of Liverpool* on 12th October.

Understandably the cancellations have caused frustration and disappointment to our customers. Nevertheless, most have been understanding that the decisions were made out of safety compliance, and our box office team have managed the communications efficiently.

Exhibitions Programme

Self Portrait Prize 2023

Saturday 23 September 2023 – Saturday 16 December 2023

The Atkinson is delighted to have been selected to host this prestigious exhibition. Established in 2011, it is the only art competition of its kind to focus exclusively on self-portraiture. It was inspired by Ruth Borchard, who between 1958 and 1971 created a collection of paintings dedicated exclusively to self-portraiture. It is open to artists of all ages and abilities, and submitted self-portraits can be in any medium.

Selected from over 1800 entries, this year's £10,000 prize was won by Colin Davidson, an internationally renowned portrait artist who lives and works near Belfast, Northern Ireland. Colin's portrait sitters have included Brad Pitt, Ed Sheeran, Liam Neeson, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Lady Mary Peters, Markéta Irglová, Mark Knopfler and Seamus Heaney.

With the support from the Atkinson's Curatorial lead Stephen Whittle, the 2023 Prize's judging panel included eminent members of the art world: Director of the National Gallery, Dr Gabriele Finaldi; Financial Times columnist Melanie Gerlis; former Director of the British Council, Andrea Rose; Prize Winner Lucy Jones; and Ruth Borchard's grandson David Borchard.

Local Roots Project : what do the trees of Sefton mean to you?

Over the past 3 months, participants from Life Rooms Bootle, students from Hugh Baird University Centre and photographer Andy Yates have been exploring this question through a series of photography and creative writing workshops.

Inspired by an initial visit to see the recent 'The Poetry of Trees' exhibition at The Atkinson, the participants explored trees in green spaces and urban settings in their local area. They created a series of poignant photographs and wrote poems which responded to these environments. Using 'The Poetry of Trees' book as a starting point, the participants also went on to produce a series of small zines which brought the imagery and writing together.

The exhibition in The Atkinson foyer space celebrates the individual and collective work produced by both the Life Rooms and Hugh Baird participants. This project is a co-commission by Open Eye Gallery, The Atkinson and Life Rooms as part of Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

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Museum programme

Museum evaluation : each year the Atkinson completes the annual museum survey and the data is collated by the South West Museums development service. The survey gives us a broad estimate of the value of The Atkinson's museum and gallery service to the local economy. Further analysis will be prepared but the initial indications from the data provided this year suggest that with 103,800 visitors Atkinson's museum provides significant economic impact, and performs well when compared with regional and national comparators.

Southport Library

The library has begun a new initiative with a **Ukulele project**. The launch event on 6th October saw approximately 50 participants performing in the library spaces. Working in partnership with two regional community groups, library patrons have been invited to loan a ukulele as you would a book! Starter courses will be held in the library, encouraging people to learn together – further evidence of Sefton's libraries as fun and engaging spaces. All 18 ukuleles were donated to the library by project partners The Ukulele Project and Ukelele Buddies, and are now out on loan with participants signed up on the courses.

Other news

Southport war memorial re-dedication

On 29th September the Atkinson hosted a reception for the visit of HRH Princess Anne to the re-dedication of Southport's war memorial. The event was enhanced with a wonderful display of artwork from local schools in the Atkinson foyer. The curatorial team also prepared a bespoke exhibition within the reception studio to reveal stories from local families at the time of the war, including historic film footage from the original dedication event. To support the occasion the Atkinson's Technical team delivered the sound engineering for the ceremony itself, to ensure that the public address system could work effectively within the designated outdoor space.

After the event the Chairman of Southport Royal British Legion wrote to the Atkinson to pass on their gratitude for supporting the event:

"The attention to detail that was displayed by all of your team was exceptional and ensured the overall success of the event. On behalf of our President, myself, our committee, and our members please accept our heartfelt thanks for supporting our branch, our Armed Forces Community, and our town. To have built this relationship between us is important as it allows us to continue our much-needed work within the community."

HOUSING

Property Pool Plus Implementation Update

By the time we next meet as a committee on the 7th November the new PPP system should be up and running, with a planned 'go live' date of the 6th November.

The new system is the culmination of 2 years of work to update the Property Pool Plus Policy and IT system to ensure that it remains 'fit for purpose' for our residents, and in line with new legislation and best practice which has emerged since the joint waiting list first came into operation.

The change over to the new system has meant that the list has been closed to new applicants since the 7th October, however, I can assure colleagues that provision has

been made in the planning to ensure that priority cases are still processed and offered the housing assistance that they require.

Homelessness

The Homelessness Act 2002, requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in its Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory and voluntary organisations.

Sefton commissioned Imogen Blood and Associates to carry out the Homeless Review in early 2023. Since then, 32 professionals (council, partners, providers, CVS) have been interviewed; two focus group discussions at Homelessness Forum meetings have been carried out; wider services survey has been done with 27 responses received; 40 people with lived experience have been interviewed in visits to a dozen services; a snapshot survey of supported housing residents were done in July with 161 responses received; analysis of quantitative data, both published and directly supplied; attendance at Sefton's Consultation & Engagement Panel in July with an interim Equality Impact Assessment completed.

A draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has now been produced, which is now subject to a 12-week consultation in order that a shared strategy is produced by all partners who influence homelessness.

The suggested strategic priorities for homelessness in Sefton by the consultants are:

1. Continue to improve accommodation and coordination of support for people with high health and/or care needs.
2. Implement housing-led oversight within the supported housing pathway and improve data reporting so this can be used to monitor whole system performance.
3. Continue to improve the quality of emergency bed and temporary accommodation provision and associated support.
4. Develop alternative housing models and pathways for those who are in or close to work, including younger people.
5. Improve access to affordable housing, with housing strategy and development decisions to be informed by intelligence and priorities from the review.
6. Further improvements to the coordination of homelessness prevention activities across sectors, to include a focus on 'hidden' homelessness, tenancy sustainment and pre- eviction protocols.
7. Sustain, further promote and seek to expand floating support, tenancy sustainment and dispersed schemes, especially where there is potential to convert to general needs.
8. Continue to implement, evaluate and develop new approaches to delivering Housing Options services across the whole system.

Following the 12-week consultation, a report will be taken to Cabinet in early 2024 to approve the new strategy and action plan.

Housing Standards Team

The new 5 year Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes commenced on 1st March 2023. As at 3/10/23 we have received 2,025 licence applications, which is 58% of the expected number of applications. 455 licences have been issued and 211 compliance inspections have been carried out with many landlords seeking to apply for property accreditation.

Agenda Item 8

The team have been successful at a further Housing Tribunal appeal where the Landlord appealed against their Civil Penalty Fine for failing to licence a property during the previous scheme.

The Civil Penalty was upheld with an agreed reduced fine from £3750 to £3000. There are a further 4 appeal cases pending against Civil Penalty Notices served for failure to licence properties, breach of licence conditions and breach of HMO Management Regulations.

101 requests for service relating to poor housing standards or poor housing management have been received between 25 July and 6 Sept 2023. Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action. During August & September this has included the service of 1 x Emergency Prohibition Order, 1 x Prohibition Order, 5 Notices for failure to have smoke alarms fitted and 2 for failure to have the required Electrical Safety Certificates.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 8 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes and commencement of a further Enforced Sale of a long-term vacant property. CM will note from the KPI's that the proportion of long term vacant properties in the borough has declined from 3.77% to 3.55% since the last update in April.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues. There have been 6 Unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments in Sefton during August & September.

Strategic Housing Commissioning Group (SHCG)

The Housing Service is relevant to a number of departments across the council and during the preparation of the recently adopted Housing Strategy I asked officers to ensure that the service was fully integrated in order to reflect wider corporate priorities relating to housing. The Housing Strategy, and the Action Plan which accompanies it was developed following extensive consultation and joint working with a range of stakeholders.

The SHCG was convened in late 2021 so that the housing team could meet regularly with colleagues in both Adults and Childrens Social Care during the preparation of the Housing Strategy. Now that the strategy has been adopted the group has been refreshed and expanded. The group brings together colleagues from Childrens Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Options to consider specialist housing need in the borough. The group also considers accommodation offers from providers to ensure that we are prioritising opportunities at a corporate level.

Of particular importance is the work that the Housing Services does to support Children's Social Care and work continues with to understand their housing needs and updates are being provided to Corporate Parenting Board in relation to this.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act became law on 29 August 2023. This new legislation will affect supported housing providers by setting a framework for new systems for supported housing and the older person's housing sector including sheltered and extra care.

The [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act](#) is a Private Members' Bill which aims to tackle problematic exempt accommodation whilst being committed to avoiding unintended consequences for good quality providers of supported housing.

It will aim to improve the regulation and oversight of 'supported exempt' housing (Supported exempt housing is a subset of supported housing which is exempt from the benefit cap and housing benefit limits in welfare regulations).

What will the Act mean for supported housing providers?

The Act will:

- Requires local authorities to review exempt provision in their areas and to publish a local Supported Housing Strategy
- Gives the Secretary of State power to publish national standards relating to exempt accommodation
- Includes powers for the Secretary of State to make licensing regulations to be exercised by local authorities (with consequences for non-compliant providers, including removing or restricting Housing Benefit entitlement); and
- Amends s191 of the Housing Act 1996 to clarify that where someone leaves exempt accommodation due to poor conditions of care or standards of accommodation, they will not be deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless.

The Act will require **secondary legislation to implement many of its proposals.**

Next steps

In the autumn, the government will publish a formal consultation on the detailed implementation of the new system. The first round of consultation will review the new provisions in the Act, as well as a review by the DWP on the definition of 'Care, Support and Supervision'. A second public consultation will take place in 2024 and will include the draft regulations developed by DLUHC and the DWP.

Over the next few months there will be formal consultation with DLUHC and DWP officials. This consultation will look at:

- The scope and nature of the licensing scheme.
- The Housing Benefit rules.
- The potential National Supported Housing Standards.
- The strategic plans and transition to the new system.

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