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Sefton Council 

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

DATE: Tuesday, 10th September 2024

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Committee Room, Town Hall Bootle

Member

Councillor

Cllr. Susan Bradshaw (Chair)

Cllr. Leslie Byrom C.B.E. (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. Iain Brodie - Browne

Cllr. Dominic McNabb

Cllr. Paula Murphy

Cllr. Catie Page

Cllr. Chloe Parker, NPQH

Cllr. Simon Shaw

Cllr. Carla Thomas

Cllr. Sir Ron Watson C.B.E.

Substitute

Councillor

Cllr. Janet Harrison Kelly

Cllr. Clare Carragher

Cllr. Leo Evans

Cllr. Maria Porter

Cllr. Joe Johnson

Cllr. Greg Myers

Cllr. Nina Killen

Cllr. Leo Evans

Cllr. Michael Roche

Cllr. Mike Morris M.B.E.

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

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

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A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2024

4. Customer Services Activity (Pages 11 - 38)

Presentation and report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial

5. Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 - September Update (Pages 39 - 52)

Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial

6. Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work and Sickness Absence (Pages 53 - 62)

Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial

7. Cabinet Member Report - June 2024 to September 2024 (Pages 63 - 86)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

8. Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

(Pages 87 - 118)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL,
SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 11TH JUNE, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Johnson, McNabb, Catie Page, Parker
and Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Howard

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Bradshaw, welcomed Members to the first meeting of Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Councillor Bradshaw especially welcomed Councillors Brodie-Browne, McNabb, Parker, Shaw and Thomas as newly appointed members of the Committee; and expressed her thanks to Councillors Evans, Grace, Killen and McGinnity and former Councillor D'Albuquerque for their help and involvement on the Committee during the previous year.

Councillor Bradshaw also paid special thanks to Councillor Lappin, former Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services for her invaluable help and attendance at meetings of the Committee during the last municipal year; and extended the best wishes of the Committee to Councillor Lappin in her newly appointed role as Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills.

Finally, Councillor Bradshaw welcomed to the meeting Councillor Howard as the new Cabinet Member for the newly named portfolio of Corporate Services; and again, on behalf of the Committee, wished Councillor Howard every success in her new role.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Murphy and Sir Ron Watson.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Catie	Minute No. 5 –	She owns a property in use as

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Page	Changes to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and Potential Impacts on Service Users in Sefton	part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme
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4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. CHANGES TO THE HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON SERVICE USERS IN SEFTON

Further to Minute No. 52 (2) of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) that updated on visas issued to refugees as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and how this would impact those that arrived in Sefton.

The report provided information on the Government announcement on 19 February 2024 to various visa schemes currently open to Ukrainians as follows:

- the Ukraine Family Scheme closed to all new applications on 19 February 2024
- the Ukraine Extension Scheme closed on 16 May 2024
- the intention to create a new Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme
- changes to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme

The report also identified that currently, 105 individual Ukrainians were living with Sefton hosts on the Homes for Ukraine programme and detailed when their visas would expire; and that there were 140 Ukrainians that had moved on into their own accommodation and were no longer on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Attached to the report was a fact sheet that provided a brief overview of the different types of international migrants that may come to the UK and a summary of some of the schemes that they may have accessed.

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

- the excellent support provided to Ukrainian families resettled in the Formby area

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- acknowledgement that Ukrainian families would like to move back home but due to the ongoing conflict in their country this was impossible
- the number of Ukrainian families who had not yet moved into their own accommodation
- the numbers of unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and young people who were seeking asylum in the UK but who had been separated from their parents or carers; and how they were looked after and cared for

RESOLVED:

That the report updating on visas issued to refugees as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and how this would impact those that arrived in Sefton, be noted.

6. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the Annual Progress Report Climate Emergency.

The report indicated that Sefton Council had declared a climate emergency in July 2019; that following that declaration, work had progressed within the council and a climate emergency strategy and associated action plan created; and that Annual reporting on progress made was required as part of the governance approach to the programme.

Progress during 2023/24 was highlighted in the 'Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24' which was attached to the report as Appendix 1; and the report indicated that the Council emissions continued to fall for the 4th successive year; that during 2023-24 the Council had reduced overall emissions by 29%; that the fall was in line with the planned reductions in the Council's net zero trajectory; and that this had been achieved by the move to use electricity from renewable energy sources and had counteracted the rise in gas use (driven by a resumption of operations at Dunes Splashworld, the Council's largest gas user).

The report also provided a summary of highlights of the progress made in relation to:

- Street lighting
- Public engagement
- Adapting to the effects of Climate Change
- Decarbonising our buildings
- Purchase of 'clean' electricity
- Gren Sefton

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The report concluded that work would continue to deliver the climate emergency action plan and that in 2024-254 key projects would focus on:

- Delivering some decarbonisation works (works awarded under PSDS 3c)
- Updating and relaunching climate emergency training for all staff and elected members
- Build upon the engagement and educational activities already underway.
- Work with colleagues in property service to embed climate friendly policies within the emerging corporate landlord property management framework.
- As we near the half-way point to our 2030 target, to review the strategy and make any adjustments necessary to remain on track.

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

- the award from Sports England Swimming Pool Improvement Fund to be used to provide additional photovoltaic (PV) panels at Formby Pool was greatly welcomed
- opportunities for the Council to ensure that vehicles used via fleet rental or lease schemes were electric rather than diesel vehicles; and the requirement to increase the number of charging points available for the Council's fleet vehicles
- concerns expressed about the capacity of the National Grid to cope with a large increase in demand for electric vehicle charging
- concerns raised about vulnerable people, particularly during a cost of living crisis, and their ability to afford increased utility costs for charging their electric wheelchairs and scooters; and the negative impact this could have on their ability to go about their everyday lives
- the requirements of new technology to continually improve to meet the challenge of the climate emergency
- investment in new technology to decarbonise buildings rather than repairing and updating outdated systems was essential
- the adoption of nature-based solutions, such as the introduction of wildflower meadows, to help adapt to the flooding risks associated with a changing climate

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on the targets in the Sefton climate emergency strategy and action plan be noted.

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7. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for 2024/25; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; the identification of items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and that provided an update on cyber security attacks on Sefton MBC.

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

- brute force cyber-attacks
- cyber-attacks on governmental and public utilities aimed at shutting down critical infrastructure networks or industrial control systems

RESOLVED: That

- (1) subject to (2) below the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Corporate Communications Strategy be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 10 September 2024;
- (3) “Customer Journey/Channel Shift” be approved as a topic for review by an informal meeting of the Committee; and that a scoping document be produced in accordance with the terms of reference set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) the update on cyber security attacks on Sefton MBC be noted.

8. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - FEBRUARY 2024 TO JUNE 2024

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

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

- The numbers of residents using One Stop Shops and the feedback they provided by leaving reviews about the services they received; and it was suggested that there was room for improvement with the service

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2024

- Equality and diversity training
- The organisation and clerking of school admission appeal hearings and the potential for the number of hearings to increase in the coming years
- the training event for new and existing Education Appeal Panel Members in March 2024

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Corporate Services be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Howard be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

Report: Customer Services Activity



Date of meeting:	10 th September 2024		
Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance & Corporate Services)		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Commercial		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

The report provides details of customer activity to the Council’s Contact Centre and One Stop Shop service. It also outlines the variety of access channels for customers, including web-based services, and how the Council continues to improve the quality and consistency of services. Importantly, it provides clarity on the measures in place to deliver customer service excellence for those using the range of services.

It sets out actions and recommendations as to the direction that the Council’s customer services will take in the future in response to both the availability of more access channels, and customer expectations that councils are providing web-based services.

A presentation is attached at Appendix 1 providing a summary overview of service delivery and volumetric data.

Recommendation(s):

That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:-

- (1) Notes the current position of customer services provided by the Council as set out within the report and presentation attached at Appendix 1
- (2) Considers the proposed action plan and recommendations
- (3) Agree to recommendations set out in the action plan.

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1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

1.1 Sefton Council's Customer Services team is committed to improving access and quality of all services offered, ensuring that customers who contact the Council receive the best experience possible whilst making the best use of available technology and online services.

1.2 Whilst the team takes great pride in the services that it provides to customers and residents it recognises that there is always room for improvement. In addition to those who need to contact the Council regularly, there will be many people who will need support for the first time.

1.3 The team's approach and strategy is to provide clarity to all staff, residents and customers on the measures that the Council is taking to provide excellent customer service and how it continues to strive for improvement.

1.4 At Sefton, the aim is to put customers and residents first at all times by providing excellent customer satisfaction, by ensuring that all services are:

- Easy to use and understand - This is of vital importance to online services, as simplifying processes can maximise the number of customers and residents that can be self-sufficient, freeing up staff to deal with customers and residents who have complex enquiries and those who need help most.
- Flexible to the particular needs of each customer and accessible through all devices and channels - Staff should have the required knowledge, training and flexibility to go above and beyond for customers and residents, meaning all needs are catered for. Additionally, services are digital by design – online will be the first choice for those who are able. Staff, and all those accessing our services, will be clear about the digital offer and services will be responsive. Moving customers and residents online reduces the demand on staff, freeing them up to help those who may not have a device or have more complex needs.
- Meeting customer and resident's expectations and, when possible, resolving enquiries at the first point of contact in a timely manner is of the utmost importance. The Council aims to resolve enquiries the first time a customer or resident makes contact, and where this is not possible, they will be signposted to a trusted service that can support them.
- It is evident that more customers and residents are accessing everyday services online. Consequently, the Council's digital offer has become important than ever. The Council therefore strives to make the online customer journey accessible, user-friendly and straightforward, and continues to regularly explore and invest in digital transformation so that customers and residents can benefit from various online self-service portals.

1.5 Technology

The Council has heavily invested in new technology for a number of services, including highest-volume services i.e. Bins and Council Tax, that allows customers to view and manage various records via safe and secure customer portals, enabling access to services via a tablet, laptop and most mobile devices. While some of the portals have only been recently implemented, it is pleasing to see customer contact for a number of services reduce and it is expected for that trend to continue. The primary portals being used by service users are as follows:

- **MyServices - Customer Experience Platform (CXP) portal for various Council services**

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The CXP-based MyServices portal allows customers to register for an online account where they can now access services such as:

- Various services related to Bins, Recycling, Bulky Items collections, Clinical and Garden Waste
- Street Services such as dog-fouling, fly-tipping, graffiti removal, rear entry cleaning etc.
- Stray Dog Service
- Highways, Street Lighting, Traffic and Council Car Parks
- Planning & Building Control
- Some Sports and Leisure Services
- Anti-Social Behaviour reporting
- Enrolment for Sefton Community Learning Service courses

As well as submitting service requests, the MyRequests section of the portal also allows users to track, amend, cancel and escalate some types of service request. In time, the portal could be further developed to include widgets tailored to the customer profile e.g. bin calendars, nearest services, my councillor/MP etc.

At present there are over 23,000 registered users for MyServices on CXP, however it is expected that this will continue to increase.

- **MyAccount (Council Tax Portal)**

The 'My Account' portal implemented for Council Tax customers in October 2023 has been a notable success. Once registered for an account, customers can do all of the following:

- Sign up to paperless billing and access their bill 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All bills are stored on the online account, eliminating the requirement to keep paper copies.
- View up-to-date account information and check their balance.
- Sign up for Direct Debit and update payment details instantly.
- Apply for any Discounts or Exemptions that they may be eligible for.
- Make changes to their account without needing to speak to a Customer Services Advisor in the Contact Centre or One Stop Shops.

Between October 2023 – July 2024, over 20,000 Sefton households have registered for a 'My Account' which has significantly reduced workloads for the back-office Council Tax team.

- **Citizen Access Benefits (Benefits Portal)**

A benefits portal has been implemented for claimants of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. Once claimants have registered, they may use the portal to:

- Make a new claim.
- Retrieve and continue with a claim previously started.
- Report relevant changes of circumstance or address.
- View claim summary or Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction letters
- Upload evidence.

- **Taxi Licensing (Rocktime portal)**

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The Taxi Licensing system was successfully implemented on 2nd April 2024. This includes an online portal which now allows all taxi drivers, vehicle owners and operators to:

- Apply online.
- Retrieve and continue with an application previously started.
- Upload various evidence documents.
- Pay all licensing fees.

At present, there are over 3,600 customers who have registered on the portal in just 3-months.

The Council also have a number of other customer portals, managed within departments/service areas rather than by the Customer Services team, including Parking, School Admissions and Active Sefton. While the various portals cover a wide range of services it is notable that each is currently offered as a distinct account requiring customers to navigate to, register for and log in to each separately and from different locations on the Council website. Bringing all the portals together under a single point of access may bring about improvements to their accessibility and the overall customer journey for residents. This option will be explored further with the Council's ICT Team and its Customer Journey Development Lead officer.

1.6 Access Channels: How Customers Access Council Services and Proposed Action Plan

The table below shows how customers are accessing Council services and the volumes of contact that have been received over the last two years for each channel of contact. It is proposed for members to agree to the recommendations and the timescales proposed.

Access Channel	Contact Volumes 2022/23	Contact Volumes 2023/24	Current position	Recommendations	Timescale
Telephone	209,315	200,194	Very effective for basic enquiries, signposting and first point of contact resolution. Too many calls are handled from customers who could go online.	Reduce call volumes by at least 5% year-on-year by continuing to actively encourage customers to go online if they are able to so. Prioritising telephone calls from customers who need assistance most.	31 st March 2025, and each year thereafter
Visits to One Stop Shops	37,498	36,910	Essential for customers with complex enquiries and customers who are	While visits are initially likely to increase due to Taxi Licensing drivers requiring to attend Bootle One Stop Shop to provide	30 th September 2025, and each year thereafter.

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			excluded	<p>various evidence, to be uploaded into the new taxi portal, this will not be the case from September 2025, and a decrease in visits is then expected.</p> <p>Continue to provide a comprehensive service for customers with complex enquiries.</p> <p>Ensure support is provided to customers who are digitally excluded.</p> <p>Enhance the service that is offered from Southport.</p>	
E-mail	29,093	24,751	Broadly ineffective due to lengthy response times from service areas - contact by e-mail is increased when Contact Centre is busy handling telephone calls	Gradually phase out this option of contact and increase use of webchat and website activity	31 st March 2027
Social media	<p>The most popular channels, as of 31st March 2024, are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Twitter (26,753 followers) 2. Facebook (16,904 fans) 3. LinkedIn (11,227 followers) 4. Instagram (6,313 followers) 		<p>News, campaigns, and important service information is frequently circulated via existing Social Media accounts.</p> <p>Incoming responses and general enquiries are answered through general threads for</p>	<p>Continue to develop Social Media content and explore better ways to provide more timely, relevant and accurate responses to incoming enquiries and service requests.</p> <p>Review SM platforms in use, do they remain relevant, are there any additional platforms the Council should utilising.</p>	Continuous and ongoing with Communications Team

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			broad topics and Direct Messaging for user specific enquiries and service requests.		
Website / Online	<p>The most viewed service areas, in Q4 2023/24, were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bins pages (415,021 views) 2. Council Tax pages (124,082 views) 3. Jobs page (48,726 views) 4. Search and View Planning applications and appeals (31,333) 		The Council's preferred method of contact allowing customers to access service information, and trigger service requests.	<p>Continue to improve technology, online services and e-forms.</p> <p>Encourage customers to go online.</p> <p>Consolidate online offerings under a common point of access.</p>	Continuous and ongoing working with ICT Team

1.7 Commitment to excellent Customer Service

• Customer Service Excellence

The Customer Services team has achieved the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation for a number of years and remains committed to this in the future. The CSE standard is a trademark of the Cabinet Office, and acts as a quality mark to drive continuous improvement. On an annual basis, the team has been successfully assessed against the criteria of the standard by a licensed certification body that measures evidence and performance in the following areas:-

- Customer Insight
- The Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service.

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The Customer Services team, and the criteria for the CSE accreditation, recognise that an important source of ideas for improvements is customer and resident feedback. Part of this feedback is a Customer Satisfaction Survey, conducted at Bootle One Stop Shop and The Atkinson, twice a year and the team is exploring the options of doing something similar via the Contact Centre and the Council's website to drive further improvements.

Results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey that was completed as recently as May 2024, confirmed that all questions asked in the survey received a very high level of customer satisfaction. The full report can be found at: [cs-user-experience-survey-report-5-24.pdf \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/cs-user-experience-survey-report-5-24.pdf)

2. **Financial Implications** : Approved business cases are in place for technology investments setting out financial implications.
3. **Legal Implications - None**
4. **Corporate Risk Implications - None**
5. **Staffing HR Implications** - Customers using online services will free up staff to provide support to vulnerable residents, or those needing support to access digital services.

6 Conclusion

It is evident from the information and data provided above that the Council's various online options are reducing customer contact into the Contact Centre and this needs to be continued to be encouraged. However, it is recognised and understood that not everyone can get online or is able to use online services.

The team remains committed to delivering vital services face-to-face to digitally excluded customers and residents and continues to provide support offered by staff in the Contact Centre and One Stop Shops.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The Council could choose not to offer online customer services and instead continue with just telephone and face to face services. However, it must be recognised that many people now expect councils to offer web-based services as standard, and that in order for customers to deal with the Council as quickly and as easily as possible, in a cost-effective manner, then we must make the best use of use of technology.

It is however recognised that people using council-services have different requirements, capabilities and experiences and so the Council remains committed to improving the quality and consistency of services so that they are accessible to all by having the right mix of digital and non-digital services to meet all needs.

Equality Implications:

The equality implications have been identified and mitigated. The Council aims to ensure that services are accessible to all by **Page 17** vital and non-digital options

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available, and appropriate support in place when required.

Impact on Children and Young People: None

Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Commercial (FD.7759/24.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5859/24.....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations - Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Committee’s decision.

Contact Officer:	Diane Turner, Corporate Resources
Telephone Number:	MS Teams / 01519343481
Email Address:	Diane.turner22@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Customer Services Activity Presentation September 2024, key highlights show

- 4.4% reduction in calls made to the Contact Centre between 2022/23 – 2023/24
- Visits to One Stop Shops have remained steady
- Since 2020, customers have embraced online payment options for Council services:-
 - 95% reduction in payments made via OSS Kiosks since 2019/20
 - 45% increase in payments made via Council website and portals
 - 41% increase in payments made via automated payment telephone line.

Customer Services – Customer Contact Activity



Contact Centre



One Stop Shops in Bootle and Southport

Contact Centre – Activities



Phone Calls



Payments



Switchboard



Complaints



E-mails



Social Media



Webchat

Contact Centre – Telephone calls

PRIORITY

E.L.A.S.
Adult Social Care
Household Support Fund



High Volume Services are:
Council Tax
Cleansing
Switchboard



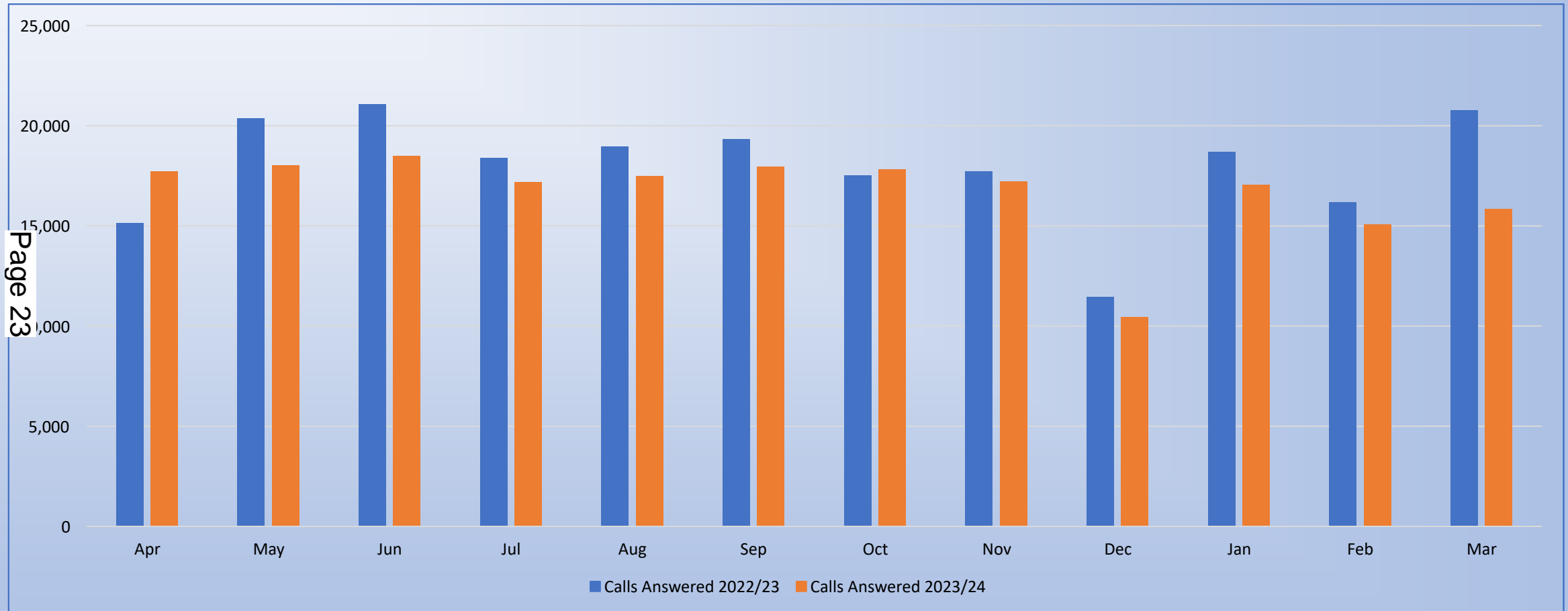
Triage One Stop Shop appointments
Online support - Council Tax Reduction applications &
ELAS

Contact Centre – Switchboard Service

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Contact Centre Monthly Call Volumes 2022/23 v 2023/24



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Contact Centre – Average Wait Time For Calls To Be Answered for Prioritised Services 01.01.24 to 31.7.24

Service	Number of Calls Answered	Customer Average Wait Time
ELAS (1/1/2024 to 31/7/2024)	5541	0:03:46
Adult Social Care (1/1/2024 to 31/7/2024)	11314	0:02:48
Childrens Social Care (1/1/2024 to 30/4/2024)	1966	0:01:10
Household Support Fund (8/4/2024 to 31/7/2024)	1914	0:06:15
Elections (June 2024)	1025	0:02:07

Contact Centre – E-mails and Webchat

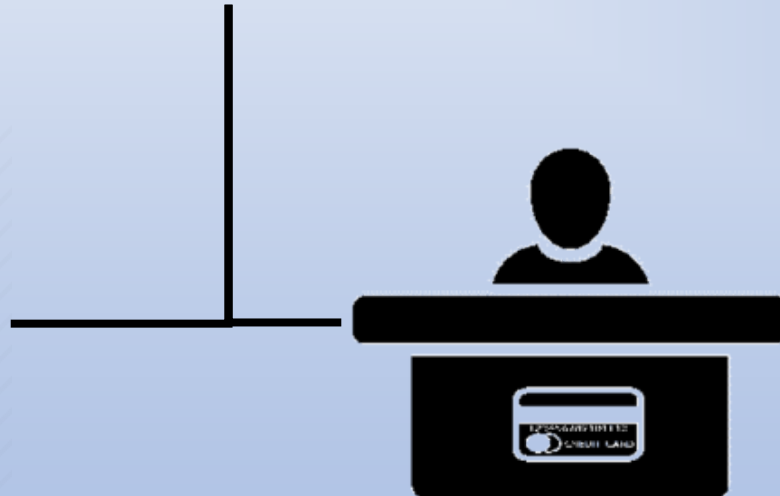
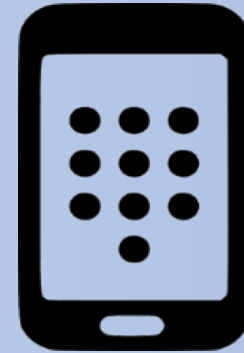


Approximately 2,000 e-mails per month
Cleaving, Council Tax and Benefits
Many enquiries could be completed online so
we are hoping to phase out this channel of
contact



Approximately 250 webchat enquiries per month
Direct assistance
Signposting to webforms and links

Contact Centre - Taking Payments for Council Services

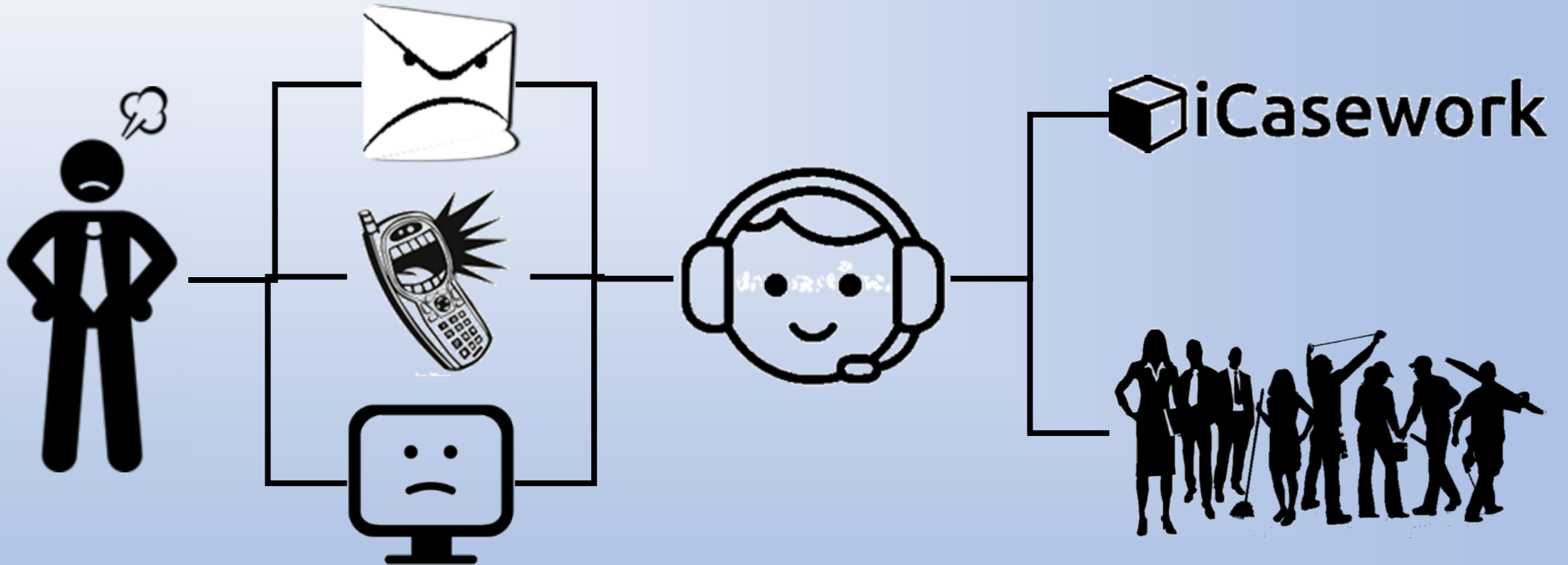


Assisted:

- Council Tax Payments
- Bulky Items Payments
- Pest Control Payments

....

Contact Centre - Triaging Corporate Complaints



Contact Centre – Social Media Enquiries



Air Show
Flower Show
Major Incidents etc...



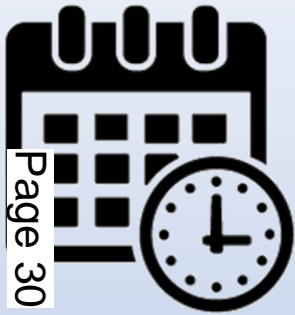
Cleansing Issues
Road Closures
Opening Times
Minor Disruptions etc...

One Stop Shop – Activities



One Stop Shop – Face to Face Enquiries

Bootle One Stop Shop



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Taxi Licensing



Taxi Licensing

Council Tax

Blue Badges

E.L.A.S.

etc...



E-Forms

Southport One Stop Shop

**BY APPOINTMENT
ONLY**

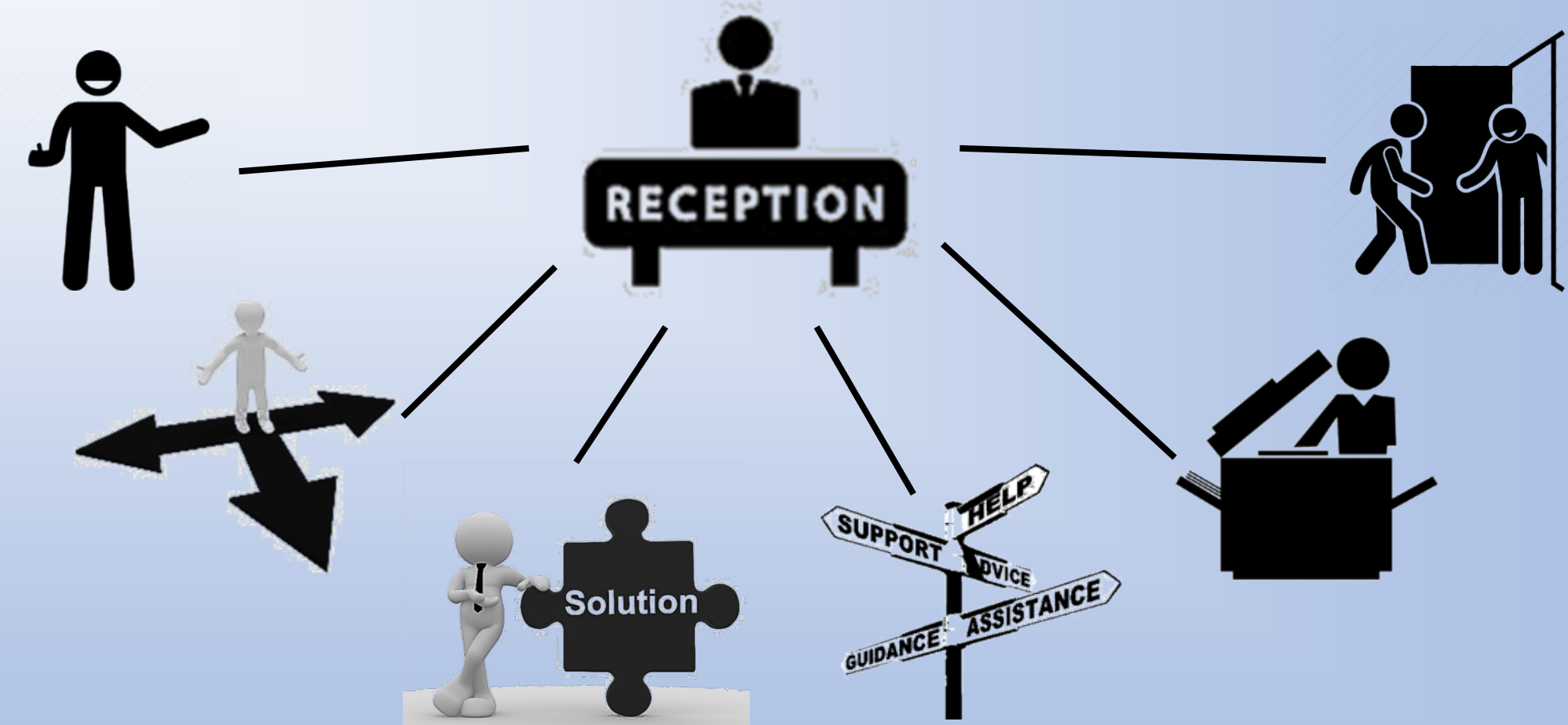
Council Tax

Benefits

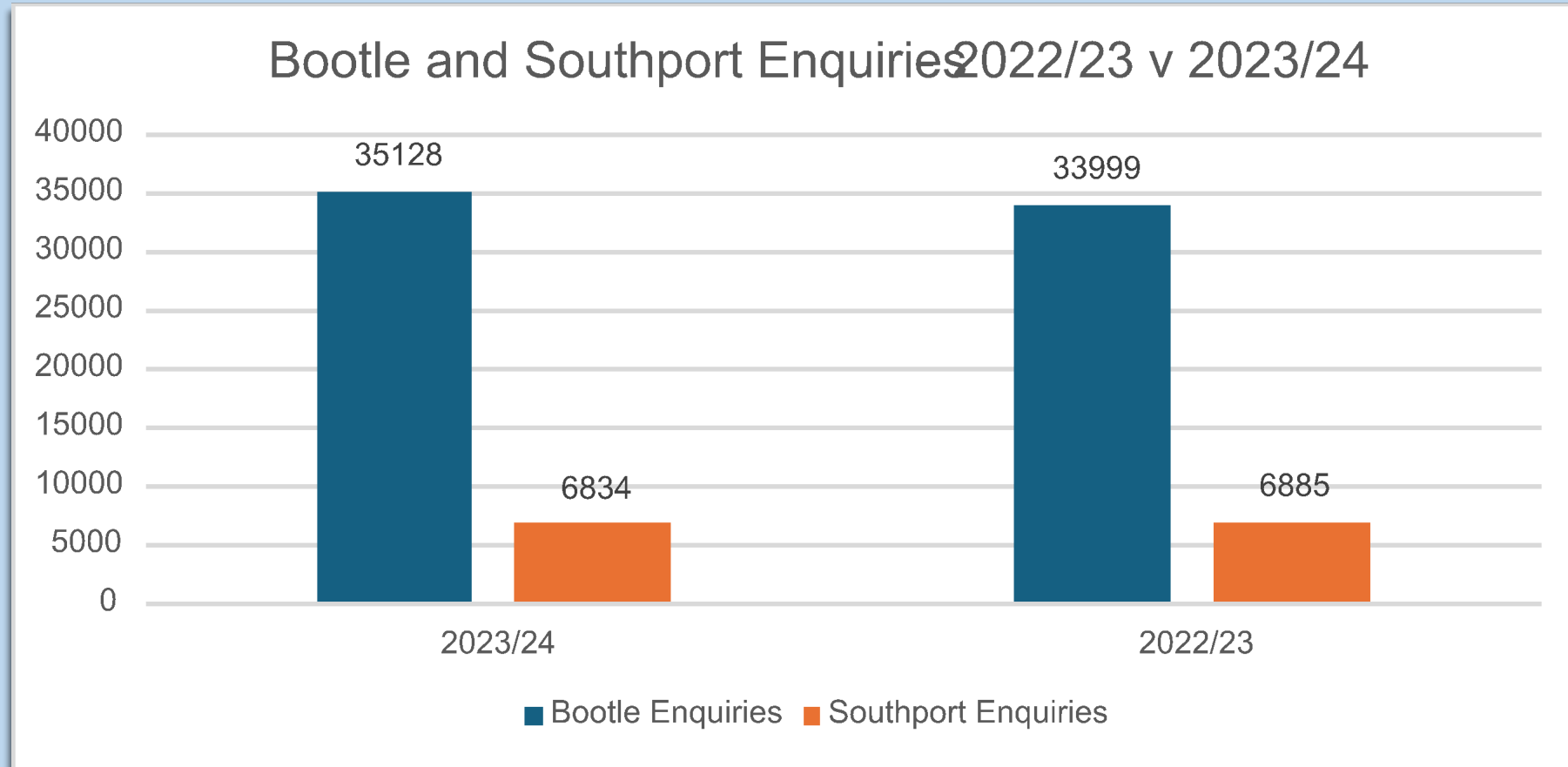
Blue Badges

etc...

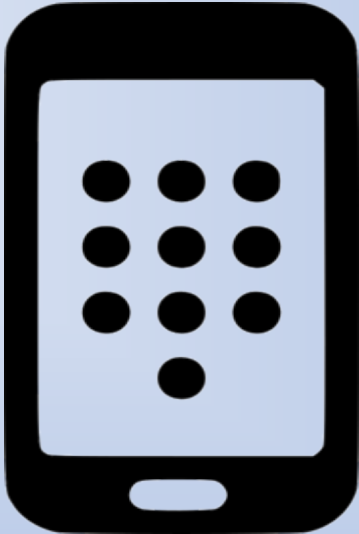
One Stop Shop – Reception Service



Bootle & Southport Enquiries from 2022/23 to 2023/24



One Stop Shop – Payments for Council services



Payment Kiosk
and Online
Payment
Analysis
2019/20 v
2022/23 v
2023/24

	2019/20	2022/23	Inc / Dec	2023/24	Inc/ Dec
One Stop Shop Kiosks	£5,377,376	£810,822	-85%	£280,049	-95%
Council Website & Portals	£8,553,834	£11,013,746	+29%	£12,697,878	+45%
Automated Telephone Line	£5,177,206	£7,138,825	+38%	£7,289,998	+41%

One Stop Shop – Customer Satisfaction Survey



[Customer Satisfaction Survey May 2024](#)



Recent Improvements

Page 36



My Account Service


Citizen Access Benefits







Taxi Licensing



Sefton Council 



Popular Services

-  Report a missed bin >
-  Street services >
-  Report a street light >
-  All services >

For Consideration



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Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – September Update

Date of meeting:	10 th September 2024
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)
Report of:	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial
Portfolio:	Corporate Services
Wards affected:	All
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Is this a key decision:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No

Summary:

To inform **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)** of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2024/25.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2024:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects.
- 4) The measures being taken by the Council to respond to the tragic incident in Southport on 29th July 2024.

Recommendation(s):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) is recommended to: -

Revenue Outturn

- 1) Note the current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget.
- 2) Note the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies

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to ensure each service achieves a balanced position.

- 3) Note the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2024/25 revenue budget and acknowledge that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved.

Capital Programme

- 4) Note the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme (paragraph 8.1).
- 5) Note the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 July 2024 of £15.781m (paragraph 8.08); the latest full year forecast is £87.038m (paragraph 8.09).
- 6) Note that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Service and Commercial to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council (paragraphs 8.12-8.14).

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

To ensure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) are informed of the current position in relation to the 2024/25 revenue budget.

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

To keep members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2024/25 and agreed allocations for future years.

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

1. Introduction

1.1 On 29 February 2024, Members approved the Budget for the financial year 2024/25. This budget was developed throughout the preceding nine months and took account of all known issues. Within that report, and as with previous years, the inherent financial risk within the budget, especially with respect to Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Excellence (Home to School Transport), was identified. This was further reflected within the reserves' strategy for the Council, as reported in the Robustness Report also presented to Budget Council.

1.2 This report is the second of the Council's monthly budget monitoring reports for 2024/25 and provides an early revenue forecast outturn position for all services, including the pressures that have materialised since the budget was set.

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- 1.3 The report also outlines the current position regarding key income streams for the Authority, namely Council Tax and Business Rates. Variations against expected receipts in these two areas will also affect the Council’s financial position in future years.
- 1.4 The capital section of the report informs Members of the latest estimate of capital expenditure for 2024/25 and forecast expenditure for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The capital budget to date is presented in paragraph 8.1. Paragraphs 8.2 to 8.11 review progress of the capital programme, including additional capital schemes. Finally, paragraphs 8.12 to 8.14 confirm that there are adequate levels of resources available to finance the capital programme.

2. Revenue Budget 2024/25 – Forecast Outturn Position as at the end of July 2024

- 2.1 Members are provided with updates of the Council’s forecast financial revenue position each month during the financial year from July. As would be expected as the forecast develop through the year, they become more robust and can inform decision making. The Council adopted this approach by developing its in year remedial budget actions on the back of the mid-year review position and this report is the first step that will lead to that.
- 2.2 As at the end of July 2024, the forecast outturn shows a net overspend on services of £4.144m, which relates to potential additional pressures within Adult Social Care and Children’s Social Care. It should be noted that the majority of services are reporting a balanced position or are implementing local remedial actions to return a balanced position at this stage. As with all organisations at this time, the Council is operating in a very challenging financial environment. However, it is vital that the Council achieves a balanced forecast outturn position to ensure its financial sustainability.
- 2.3 The table below highlights the variations across services that make up the £4.144m forecast overspend:

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance to June Forecast
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Services				
Strategic Management	3.996	3.996	0.000	0.000
Adult Social Care	121.738	123.738	2.000	0.000
Children's Social Care	81.226	84.726	3.500	0.000
Communities	11.387	11.387	0.000	0.000
Corporate Resources	10.429	10.429	0.000	0.000
Economic Growth & Housing	6.882	6.882	0.000	0.000
Education Excellence	17.928	17.928	0.000	0.000
Health & Wellbeing	19.857	19.804	-0.053	0.067
Highways & Public Protection	10.881	10.881	0.000	0.000
Operational In-House Services	17.611	17.611	0.000	0.000
Property and Building Services	-0.530	-0.530	0.000	0.000

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Total Service Net Expenditure	301.405	306.852	5.447	0.067
Council Wide Budgets	15.525	14.222	-1.303	0.027
Levies	37.290	37.290	0.000	0.000
General Government Grants	-95.740	-95.740	0.000	0.000
Total Net Expenditure	258.480	262.624		
<u>Forecast Year-End Deficit</u>			<u>4.144</u>	<u>0.094</u>

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

- Adult Social Care** – Initial forecasts assume that the Adult Social Care budget will overspend by £2.000m during 2024/25. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties that could impact on this position before the year-end. The service has also committed to a number of efficiencies and savings that amount to £4.8m, in order to meet the savings approved as part of the approved 2024/25 budget plus additional savings to meet the additional budgetary pressures arising from the increases in provider fees approved at Cabinet meetings in May 2024. The achievement of these savings will be carefully monitored throughout the year. As at the end of July, £1.3m of the £4.8m of savings have been delivered. The current position reflects the delivery of these savings in full during this year which the service has confirmed.

Like all councils, the Service is experiencing growth pressure with demand for services and are seeking to meet the cost of this within the resources available. As would be expected with a budget of this size and volatility, this remains a key risk during the current year, with the added uncertainty of whether additional winter pressures or other grant funding would be received in year. Work will continue to be undertaken throughout the year to understand the pressures arising and refine forecasts. As an adverse forecast outturn position is currently forecast work will be undertaken to explore options to ensure that any potential overspend is mitigated.

- Children’s Social Care** – The current forecast for the service shows a potential overspend of £3.500m. However, there are a number of significant assumptions and uncertainties that could impact on this position before the year-end. Further work is being undertaken to understand the pressures and refine forecasts.

Members will be aware that the 2023/24 approved budget included an additional £21m of investment in the service based on the requirement for additional staffing (including temporary funding for additional agency costs whilst more permanent staff are recruited to, including International Social Workers and from staff coming through the social work academy) as well as additional resources to reflect the number of packages at the time, some potential growth as well as resource for inflationary pressures. The 2024/25 approved budget included an additional £3m to reflect the number of packages at the time as well as resource for inflationary pressures.

The current forecast for staffing is an overspend of £1.400m. A report to Cabinet in May 2024 approved a new staffing structure within the Service, with the cost of the new structure being £2.450m more than the existing staffing budget. Cabinet approved the virement of £2.450m, to fund the increased cost of the new structure, from the Residential Care budget

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to the staffing budget based on the forecast reduction in packages across the year provided by the Service based on the improvement work that they are undertaking and the performance information that they produced. However, as the new structure is recruited to with permanent staff, significant numbers of existing high-cost agency placements have continued to be required, resulting in a significant overspend being forecast.

Certain areas of accommodation and support packages are currently forecast to overspend by £2.100m. The report to Cabinet in May 2024 outlined that budget realignment would be undertaken to ensure budgets reflected the packages in place at the start of 2024/25 as well as the anticipated reduction in Residential Care packages across the year. This was possible because of continuing improvements in practice which have resulted in more children being placed in more appropriate settings at a lower cost. However, the Service has recently seen 14 additional children having to be placed in a residential setting at a cost of £0.090m per week (£4.5m for a full year). In addition, the costs of packages for Children with Disabilities have increased, although specialist work is being undertaken to ensure health are making the appropriate contributions to the cost of care. It is currently assumed that the increase in Residential Care packages will be short-term but further work will be undertaken to assess the assumptions made a refine the forecasts accordingly.

In considering this forecast, work will also be undertaken to determine if any of this pressure is temporary or permanent in nature and needs reflecting in future budget setting processes. At present it is considered that the increase in Residential Care packages is short-term and so it is estimated that the future years impact is modest at this stage. Together with Adult Social Care this is clearly the biggest risk to the Council's budget and a comprehensive review of all these additional residential placements and all agency staff is being undertaken in order to inform a revised forecast that will be reported as at end of July 2024.

- **Other Service Areas** – Most other service areas are currently showing a balanced position. However, based on the initial monitoring undertaken some services are forecasting minor overspends. Given these are early forecasts of the financial year, work will continue to refine forecasts as more information on expenditure and income becomes available. Services will need to ensure that additional cost control measures are in place between now and the end of the year, and mitigating savings are made to offset any forecast overspend, to ensure each service delivers a balanced position.
- **Corporate Budgets** – The Council continues to achieve positive investment returns on its cash balances. It is forecast that this will achieve additional income of £0.403m in 2024/25.

3. Revenue Budget Summary 2024/25

3.1 An overspend of £4.144m is currently forecast. However, as mentioned in section 2, this is a forecast based on a number of uncertainties and assumptions, particularly around Adult and Children's Social Care, which remain volatile. Additional work will continue to be undertaken across service areas to refine the forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced budget position. As also mentioned in section 2, within Children's Social Care a comprehensive review of all the additional residential placements and all agency staff continues to be undertaken in order to inform a revised forecast that will be reported as at end of August 2024.

3.2 As mentioned, the Council must achieve an overall balanced position to ensure its financial sustainability. Should an overall forecast overspend remain following completion of the August 2024 monitoring position, a remedial action plan to meet the residual balance will need to be produced and will be presented for Members' approval.

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Other Proposed Remedial Actions

- 3.3 After allocating the additional provision above, there is still a forecast overspend of **£4.144m**. It is proposed to continue with the adoption of financial principles used in previous years, to enable a balanced forecast outturn position to ensure the Council's financial sustainability. This will include cost control in relation to recruitment, non-essential expenditure and no further growth items / additionality.

Summary 2024/25

- 3.4 An overspend of **£4.144m** is currently forecast. However, this represents the current position that has been forecast to the year end- in the event that further pressure is experienced, further remedial action will be required. As a result of measures taken in 2023/24 to ensure a balanced outturn position, there is no flexibility left for the use of existing Earmarked Reserves or General Balances- as a result this pressure, and any further pressure, will need to be met from within the existing Council budget and delivery monitored carefully and reported to Cabinet.

4. Recovery Plan relating to the Incident in Southport

- 4.1 Following the tragic incident in Southport on 29th July 2024 and the violent attack on the Southport Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre on 30 July, there will be long-term impacts for individuals, families, communities and Southport, but it will take time to understand this impact and fully respond to it. The Council has worked with our partner organisations to deal with the immediate aftermath of the tragic events, and our priority now is continue listening to the parents, children and young people directly impacted, and to engage with all communities and business across Southport to enable the town to recover and thrive.
- 4.2 Over the next 8 weeks, working with people directly impacted, local communities and with the right external support, the council will facilitate community impact assessments to co-produce a recovery plan, underpinned by the voice and priorities of those directly impacted and the wider community. In the meantime, a number of key pieces of work have already started:
- Delivering psychological support immediately and setting up a new and dedicated Health and Wellbeing team to ensure the people directly affected and those in the immediate vicinity get personalised and responsive physical, emotional and mental health needs support in the long term.
 - Supporting schools as pupils come back in September, delivering a trauma informed response at the Children's Services front door and through the Linaker Family Hub.
 - Additional practical and frontline capacity to tackle violence against women and girls, racism and Islamophobia, hate crime and anti-social behaviour, including a programme of small grants to deliver hyper local community activity and events.
 - Business Support to those business directly impacted by the events.
- 4.3 The financial cost to deliver these actions and support are currently being refined and the Council is currently engaging with all partner agencies and respective government departments on how the final costs will be funded. Future budget monitoring reports will provide updates on this to Cabinet.

5. Council Tax Income – Update

- 5.1 Council Tax income is shared between the billing authority (Sefton Council) and the three major precepting authorities (the **Page 44** Rescue Authority, the Police and Crime

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Commissioner and the Combined Authority – Mayoral Precept) pro-rata to their demand on the Collection Fund. The Council's Budget included a Council Tax Requirement of £169.759m for 2024/25 (including Parish Precepts), which represents 84% of the net Council Tax income of £202.200m.

5.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2024 is a surplus of £0.162m. This variation is primarily due to: -

- The surplus on the fund at the end of 2023/24 being higher than estimated (-£0.312m).
- Gross Council Tax Charges in 2024/25 being higher than estimated (-£0.757m).
- Exemptions and Discounts (including a forecasting adjustment) being higher than estimated (+£0.907m).

5.3 Due to Collection Fund regulations, the Council Tax surplus will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2024/25 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

5.4 A forecast surplus of £1.548m was declared on the 16 January 2024 of which Sefton's share is £1.299m (83.9%). This is the amount that will be recovered from the Collection Fund in 2024/25.

6. **Business Rates Income – Update**

6.1 Since 1 April 2017, Business Rates income has been shared between the Council (99%) and the Fire and Rescue Authority (1%). The Council's Budget included retained Business Rates income of £65.692m for 2024/25, which represents 99% of the net Business Rates income of £66.356m. Business Rates income has historically been very volatile making it difficult to forecast accurately.

6.2 The forecast outturn for the Council at the end of July 2024 is a deficit of +£1.116m on Business Rates income. This is due to:

- The surplus on the fund at the end of 2024/25 being lower than estimated (+£2.620m).
- Increase in the gross charge on rateable properties (-£1.555m).
- A number of reliefs announced for 2024/25 were assumed in the NNDR1 return with the loss of income as a result of these reliefs covered by Section 31 grant payments. It is now forecast that the value of these reliefs will be more than anticipated (+£0.340m).
- Adjustments relating to prior years (-£0.287m)

6.3 When taking into account the change in Section 31 grants due on the additional reliefs, a net deficit of £1.030m is forecast.

6.4 Due to Collection Fund regulations, a Business Rates deficit will not be transferred to the General Fund in 2024/25 but will be carried forward to be recovered in future years.

6.5 A forecast surplus of £11.119m was declared in January 2024. Sefton's share of this is £11.008m. This is the amount that will be distributed from the Collection Fund in 2024/25. Any additional surplus or deficit will be distributed in 2025/26 and future years.

7. **High Needs Budget**

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- 7.1 Cabinet and Council have agreed to receive regular reports from the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education and the Assistant Director of Children’s Services (Education) with regard to the High Needs budget and the changes that are proposed, details of sufficiency planning, the Council’s engagement on the Delivering Better Value Programme and the current high needs deficit and the risk around future central government decision making in respect of this deficit.
- 7.2 A separate report on the High Needs funding position of the Council was presented to Cabinet in July 2025.

8. Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27

Capital Budget

- 8.1 The Capital Budget and profile of expenditure for the three years 2024/25 to 2026/27 is as follows:

2024/25	£87.235m
2025/26	£58.598m
2026/27	£33.476m

- 8.2 The following updates have also been made to the capital programme budget since the initial budget report to Cabinet in July:

- **Children’s Social Care**
 - £2.000m has been added to the programme for Children’s Social Care Transformation, as approved by Cabinet and Council in February.
- **Corporate Resources**
 - £0.090m has been rephased into 2025/26 for ICT Equipment Refresh due to the timing of orders.
- **Education Excellence** – the following schemes have been rephased into 2025/26:
 - £0.045m Newfield (St. Theresa’s) – Conversion to Special School for KS1&2
 - £0.090m St. Philips Litherland – Roof Repairs
 - £0.078m St. John Crossens – Upgrade Emergency Lights

- 8.3 The following block capital grant allocations were approved by Council following recommendation by Cabinet for inclusion in the Capital Programme 2024/25:

<u>Capital Grant</u>	2024/25 £
Adult Social Care	
Disable Facilities Grant	5,261,093
Education Excellence	
Schools Condition Allocation	2,241,878
High Needs Provision Capital Allocation	4,740,380
Highways and Public Protection	
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	10,766,000

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- 8.4 Authority has been delegated to Cabinet Members to assign funding to individual capital schemes up to a value of £1m for Adult Social Care, Highways and the Schools block allocations listed above. The list of schemes for 2024/25 is being fully developed and will be presented to the individual Cabinet Members for approval noting that schemes in excess of £1m have already been approved by Budget Council in February 2024. A full list of the approved capital schemes will be presented in future reports to Cabinet.

Additional Capital Schemes

The Northern Forest Grow Back Greener Programme

- 8.5 Sefton Council has been awarded grant funding as part of The Northern Forest “Grow Back Greener” scheme for the planting and establishment of 400 standard trees of a large species variety. The Northern Forest has already established over 3 million new trees since 2018 and is transforming the landscape from coast to coast and in and around cities such as Liverpool, Chester, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, York, and Hull.
- 8.6 The Grow Back Greener programme is led by the Woodland Trust, in partnership with Mersey Forest, City of Trees (Greater Manchester), White Rose Forest and Humber Forest, with funding from the Government’s Nature for Climate Fund. The Fund aims to improve landscape connectivity outside woodland, increase natural colonisation where appropriate and provide benefits to ecosystems and society, such as carbon absorption, flood protection and support for biodiversity.
- 8.7 The Northern Forest grant does not require match funding by the Council. An offer of funding from The Mersey Forest has been received for the amount of £347,200. Cabinet has therefore been requested to approve a supplementary estimate to include the scheme in the capital programme for 2024/25.

Budget Monitoring Position to July 2024

- 8.8 The current position of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of July 2024 is shown in the table below. It should be noted that budgets are profiled dependent upon the timing of when works are to be carried out and the anticipated spend over the financial year. The budget to date in the table below reflects the profiles of each individual scheme.

	Budget to July	Actual Expenditure to July	Variance to July
	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>			
Adult Social Care	1.268	1.268	-
Children’s Social Care	0.138	0.138	-
Communities	0.220	0.146	-0.074
Corporate Resources	5.017	5.015	-0.001
Economic Growth & Housing	2.144	3.131	0.987
Education Excellence	1.053	1.251	0.198
Highways & Public Protection	2.658	2.658	-
Operational In-House Services	2.191	2.174	-0.017
<u>Total Programme</u>	14.689	15.781	1.092

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Capital Programme Forecast Outturn 2024/25

8.9 The current forecast of expenditure against the budget profile to the end of 2024/25 and the profile of budgets for future years is shown in the table below:

	Budget 2024/25	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Services</u>					
Adult Social Care	7.593	7.473	-0.120	1.850	-
Children's Social Care	0.298	0.298	-	-	-
Communities	1.767	1.767	-	0.101	-
Corporate Resources	8.750	8.750	-	2.590	2.387
Economic Growth & Housing	19.423	19.371	-0.052	45.861	27.947
Education Excellence	12.867	12.843	-0.025	0.259	-
Highways & Public Protection	24.566	24.566	-	5.955	1.616
Operational In-House Services	9.969	9.969	-	1.982	1.525
<u>Total Programme</u>	87.235	87.038	-0.197	58.598	33.476

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

8.10 The current 2024/25 budgeted spend is £87.235m with a budgeted spend to July of £14.689m. The full year budget includes exceptional items such as £13.604m for Growth and Strategic Investment projects, £3.377m for new Council Housing schemes, £9.773m for major Highways projects, a £2.707m project for Southport Pier Decking, a one-off budget for a major property acquisition (£4.775m), new funding for refuse recycling and collection (£2.644m), a scheme to upgrade to LED Street Lighting (£3.809m), and £2.000m for Children's Social Care Transformation.

8.11 It should be noted that based on evidence from previous years, it is likely that further reprofiling of spend into 2025/26 will occur as the year progresses, as £87m of capital expenditure would be a significant programme delivered in year- it is therefore essential that all projects are reviewed in a robust manner in order that informed decision making in respect of financial management and member decision making can be undertaken.

Programme Funding

8.12 The table below shows how the capital programme will be funding in 2024/25:

<u>Source</u>	£m
Grants and Other Contributions	60.253
Prudential Borrowing	17.972
Capital Receipts	8.496
Revenue Contributions	0.513
<u>Total Programme Funding</u>	87.235

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- 8.13 The programme is reviewed on an ongoing basis to confirm the capital resources required to finance capital expenditure are in place, the future years programme is fully funded, and the level of prudential borrowing remains affordable.
- 8.14 The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial will continue to manage the financing of the programme to ensure the final capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council.

2. Financial Implications

All financial implications are reflected within the report.

3. Legal Implications

None

4. Corporate Risk Implications

This report highlights the financial position of the Council in 2024/25, which supports its Financial Sustainability in 2024/25 and future years.

5 Staffing HR Implications

None

6 Conclusion

Based on current forecasts, the Council is again faced with a challenging financial environment during 2024/25 as a result of pressures within Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

A revenue overspend of £4.144m is currently forecast. Within Children's Social Care a comprehensive review of all the additional residential placements and all agency staff continues to be undertaken in order to inform a revised forecast that will be reported as at end of August 2024. Should an overall forecast overspend remain following completion of the August 2024 monitoring position, a remedial action plan to meet the residual balance will need to be produced and will be presented for Members' approval.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.
Impact on Children and Young People: None
Climate Emergency Implications:

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The recommendations within this report will have a **Neutral** impact.

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

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial is the author of this report (FD7768/24).

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5868/24) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision:

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

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Email Address:	Paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

Background Papers:

None

APPENDIX A – Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

Capital Scheme	Budget		
	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Adult Social Care			
Disabled Facilities Grants	3,500,000	-	-
ICT Development & Transformation	730,316	2,708	-
ICT Connectivity in Care Homes and Support Living	86,546	-	-
Care Home Improvements	262,589	-	-
Integrated Health and Wellbeing on the High Street	400,000	-	-
Short Term Assessment Unit	1,661,222	1,847,000	-
New Directions Programme	270,329	-	-
Technology Enabled Care	335,401	-	-
Changing Places	36,071	-	-
Falls Prevention Schemes	45,000	-	-
Digitising Social Care	136,393	-	-
Community Equipment	128,963	-	-
Children’s Social Care			
Support for Fostering Placements	194,509	-	-
Community Equipment	9,999	-	-
Springbrook Works and Vehicle	93,849	-	-
Communities			
Atkinson Arts Centre – Infrastructure & Windows	169,555	-	-
Local Authority Housing Fund	1,297,000	-	-
Leisure Centres – Essential Works	151,011	-	-
Libraries Projects	124,999	100,807	-
Neighbourhoods Schemes	12,030	-	-
Corporate Resources			
Acquisition of Magdalen House	4,775,400	-	-
Council Wide Essential Maintenance	524,070	-	-
Council Wide Essential Maintenance Phase 2	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,387,372
ICT Development & Transformation	1,040,664	-	-
Economic Growth & Housing			
Cambridge Road Centre Redevelopment	170,983	-	-
Strategic Acquisitions – Ainsdale	170,000	454,303	-
Marine Lake Events Centre	5,651,282	37,866,796	21,280,701
Enterprise Arcade	1,230,977	35,418	-
The Strand – Maintenance & Improvements	120,330	-	-
The Strand – Repurposing Programme	6,097,159	6,666,667	6,666,666
Changing Places Facilities	109,168	-	-
Brownfield Housing Fund	1,032,281	-	-
Council Housing Early Acquisitions Scheme	-	750,000	-
Council Housing at Buckley Hill Lane	2,080,462	1,150	-
Southport Pier	2,706,736	86,580	-
Town Centre Vacant Sites	54,016	-	-

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	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Education Excellence			
Early Years	534,202	-	-
General Planned Maintenance	58,933	-	-
Schools Programme	8,523,281	-	-
Sporting Betterment of Schools	1,321,388	-	-
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	2,685,140	-	-
Highways and Public Protection			
Accessibility	551,287	-	-
Healthy Lifestyles	190,141	-	-
Road Safety	74,956	-	-
A565 Route Management and Parking	214,035	-	-
A565 Northern Key Corridor Improvements	96,369	-	-
A59 Route Management Strategy	2,549,802	3,299,000	-
Strategic Planning	7,528,511	-	-
Traffic Management & Parking	36,560	-	-
School Streets Schemes	96,510	-	-
Highway Maintenance	4,519,560	-	-
Bridges & Structures	2,060,143	-	-
Drainage	115,930	-	-
Street Lighting	23,394	-	-
Street Lighting LED Upgrade	3,809,462	-	-
Urban Traffic Control	1,070,204	250,000	-
Highways Capitalisation	1,616,000	1,616,000	1,616,000
Transport Growth Programme	-	789,813	-
Completing Schemes	13,491	-	-
Operational In-House Services			
Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management	2,101,240	1,003,961	1,430,273
Countryside Stewardship	1,740	-	-
Parks Schemes	408,671	602,989	-
Tree Planting Programme	226,872	94,879	94,879
Golf Driving Range Developments	2,197	280,280	-
Ainsdale Coastal Gateway	543,739		
Green Sefton – Vehicles, Plant & Machinery	1,996,237		
Refuse Collection & Recycling	2,989,182	-	-
Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,659,104	-	-
Total Programme	85,567,591	58,248,351	33,475,891

Report Title: Here Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work and Sickness Absence

Date of meeting:	10 th September 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All Wards		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

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

Recommendation(s):

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

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

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1** This report provides Members with an update on the levels of disciplinary, grievance, dignity at work and sickness absence within the Authority (excluding schools).
- 1.2** The management of the workforce is an important activity to ensure outcomes for our communities are achieved and to ensure that the workforce is appropriately managed and motivated.

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1.3. Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work

The organisation enjoys a comparatively good level of cases and this reflects on the whole, both the good overall industrial relations environment, the partnership approach that is undertaken and also the work undertaken within department. HR has a business partner model that is industry best practice and HR works across departmental management teams to facilitate this partnership working. The Council has clear and agreed processes in place for consistency across the Council.

A lot of effort is taken to avoid formal procedures where possible, i.e., through discussion with senior managers and trade union representatives.

1.4 Suspensions

In the period January – July 2024, 10 employees were suspended from duty within central Service Areas, but not including schools.

Suspension takes place in order to facilitate an investigation into matters which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. Some investigations will also include a potential referral to a professional body such as the Health Care and Professionals Council. Personnel continue to press departments to resource investigations appropriately.

Whether a suspension is appropriate will be a decision taken by a Senior Manager with the advice of the Personnel Department.

1.5 Disciplinary

During the period January – July 2024, there have been 24 disciplinary investigations as per the table below:

Department	No. of Investigations	Outcome
Adult Social Care	5	On-going
Children's Social Care	3	On-going
Communities - (Leisure)	3	On-going
Corporate Resources – (Procurement)	1	1 st Written Warning
Economic Growth & Dev (Sefton @Work)	3	2 x 1 st Written Warning 1 on-going
Operational In House Services : Cleansing (3) Catering (1) Burials & Crematoria (1) Green Sefton (2) School Crossings (2)	9	1 Dismissed 4 x 1 st Written Warning 1 Informal Reprimand 3 on-going

1.6 Grievances

During the period January – July 2024, there have been 3 Grievances as follows:

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Department	No.	Outcome
Children's Social Care	1	Not upheld
Communities	1	On-going
Operational In-House Services	1	On-going

1.7 Dignity at Work Complaints (DAW)

During the period January – July 2024, there have been 5 DAW complaints as follows:-

Department	No.	Outcome
Children's Social Care	2	1 not upheld 1 on-going
Operational In-House Services	3	All not upheld

1.8 Council Sickness Absence – Q3 & Q4 – 2023/2024

This report contains statistical data for Q3 and Q4 2023/2024 (01.10.23 – 31.12.23 and 01.01.24 - 31.03.24). The information details 'Short Term', 'Long Term' and 'All Absence' data along with previous year's figures for comparison purposes. Sickness percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total FTE days available. The current year's figures are shown in bold if the percentage is above the Council's Preferred target.

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

1.9 Short Term Sickness Absence Q3 & Q4

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

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q3 2022/23	SHORT TERM SICKNESS Q3 2023/24
Adult Social Care	2.64%	3.03%
Children's Social Care	2.05%	2.14%
Communities	3.27%	2.03%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	1.79%	1.28%
Economic Growth & Housing	2.49%	1.26%
Education Excellence	1.84%	1.10%
Highways & Public Protection	1.52%	2.07%
Operational In-House Services	3.58%	3.26%
Public Health & Wellbeing	4.49%	2.13%
Strategic Support	2.23%	1.88%

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SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q4 2022/23 %	SHORT TERM SICKNESS Q4 2023/24 %
Adult Social Care	2.59%	2.90%
Children's Social Care	1.51%	2.33%
Communities	2.55%	1.86%
Corporate Resources & Customer	1.30%	1.70%
Economic Growth & Housing	1.36%	1.73%
Education Excellence	1.73%	1.25%
Highways & Public Protection	0.66%	1.43%
Operational In-House Services	3.15%	3.51%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.41%	0.00%
Strategic Support	0.96%	0.73%

All but two service areas, based on recordings input into the system, remain under the Council's long-standing target of 2.2% for short term absence for Q3 in the year 2023/24. All departments are issued with sickness reports each quarter and these are reviewed at departmental management meetings with HR Business Partners to identify problem areas/cases and to take appropriate action.

Three service areas (based on recordings input into the system) exceed the Council target of 2.2%, whilst six service areas remain under the target for short term sickness absence for Q4 in the year 23/24. As stated above, regular discussions take place between management and HR Business Partners to review absences, discuss trends/reasons, and agree appropriate action.

1.10 Long Term Sickness Absence Q3 & Q4

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

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q3 2022/23	LONG TERM SICKNESS Q3 2023/24
Adult Social Care	4.97%	3.73%
Children's Social Care	3.74%	4.36%
Communities	4.61%	2.50%
Corporate Resources & Customer Services	2.69%	2.20%
Economic Growth & Housing	1.42%	1.60%
Education Excellence	2.86%	1.23%
Highways & Public Protection	1.49%	2.55%
Operational In-House Services	2.90%	4.14%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.00%	0.00%
Strategic Support	0.60%	3.18%

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7 of the 10 service areas have a long-term sickness percentage rate exceeding the Councils target of 1.8% for Q3 of 23/24. Similarly to comments above for short term absences, long term absences are discussed and HR support provided to managers in line with Council policy and procedures to address problem cases. The majority of long term absence involve formal action being taken.

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q4 2022/23	LONG TERM SICKNESS Q4 2023/24
Adult Social Care	3.94%	2.64%
Children’s Social Care	3.31%	5.36%
Communities	3.63%	1.20%
Corporate Resources & Customer	1.61%	1.79%
Economic Growth & Housing	0.53%	1.20%
Education Excellence	4.62%	1.50%
Highways & Public Protection	1.56%	0.77%
Operational In-House Services	3.46%	4.00%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.00%	0.00%
Strategic Support	0.00%	5.62%

Q4 2023/24 did show an improvement in the long-term sickness absence rates, with just 4 of the ten service areas exceeding the 1.8 % long term sickness target down from 7 in Q3 2023/24. There is ongoing HR support provided to Service Areas to address long term absence, with focus placed on the application of policy in long term cases and targeted issues addressed.

1.11 ‘All’ Sickness Absence Q3 & Q4 – Short and Long Combined

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

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q3 2022/23	“ALL SICKNESS” Q3 2023/24
Adult Social Care	7.61%	6.77%
Children’s Social Care	5.79%	6.51%
Communities	7.87%	4.53%
Corporate Resources & Customer	4.49%	3.49%
Economic Growth & Housing	3.91%	2.87%
Education Excellence	4.70%	2.33%
Highways & Public Protection	3.01%	4.62%

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Operational In-House Services	6.48%	7.40%
Public Health & Wellbeing	4.49%	2.13%
Strategic Support	2.83%	5.06%

The 6 service areas with a percentage above the 4% Council target, these are indicated in bold, with the remaining 4 areas being under the 4% demonstrating the fluctuating nature of sickness absence.

SERVICE AREA	COMPARISON Q4 2022/23	"ALL SICKNESS" Q4 2023/24
Adult Social Care	6.53%	5.54%
Children's Social Care	4.82%	7.70%
Communities	6.18%	3.06%
Corporate Resources & Customer	2.91%	3.49%
Economic Growth & Housing	1.89%	2.93%
Education Excellence	6.36%	2.75%
Highways & Public Protection	2.23%	2.20%
Operational In-House Services	6.61%	7.55%
Public Health & Wellbeing	0.41%	0.00%
Strategic Support	0.96%	6.35%

Q4 shows 4 service areas with a percentage above the 4% Council target for long term absence, with the remaining 6 areas being under the 4%. The comparison of figures demonstrates the fluctuating nature of long-term (and short term) sickness absence.

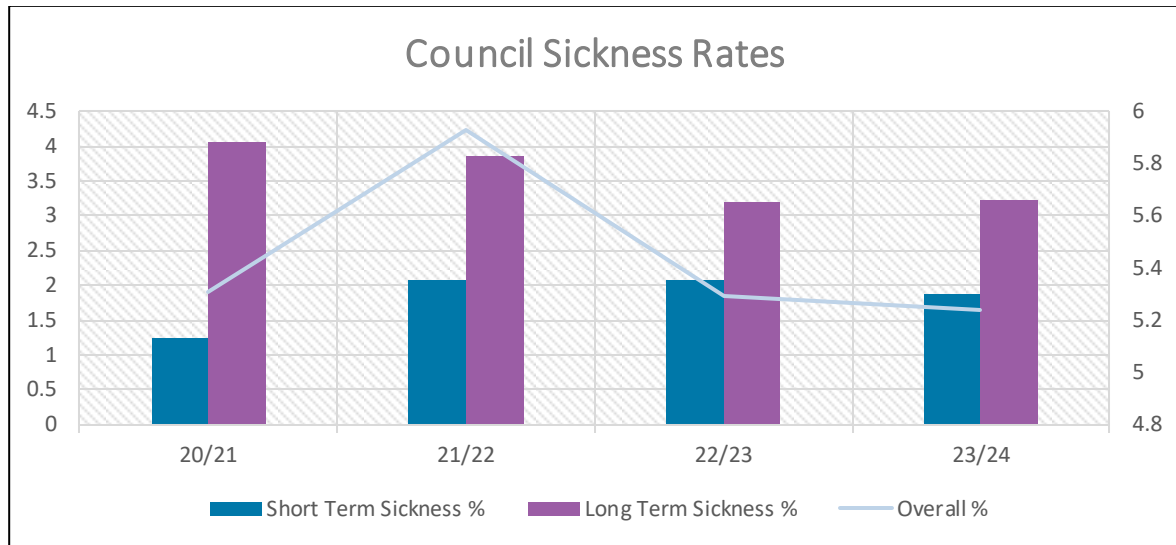
It is noted that the highest rate of sickness can be seen across Adults and Childrens Social Care and Operational In House Services. These services often have significantly higher levels of absence which can often be the case in frontline departments. Further consideration of the overall target rates should take place to review the potential of benchmarking specific services rather than using the same percentage rate for all areas.

OIHS personnel are particularly susceptible to muscular skeletal issues derived from repetitive strain. To address these matters, a 3-month trial is being created whereby the OH Unit provides a site-based provision at Hawthorne Road Depot where we can fast track staff, particularly those within the Waste Service, to either a Doctor or Physiotherapist on-site in an attempt to support staff to return to their role.

1.12 Year End Data for 2023/2024

The year end position for individual service areas for comparison are as follows:

Council All Service Areas Combined (excluding schools)	Short Term Sickness %	Long Term Sickness %	Overall %
23/24	1.87	3.22	5.24
22/23	2.08	3.21	5.29
21/22	2.08	3.85	5.93
20/21	1.25	4.06	5.31



Future consideration of the overall target rates should take place to review the potential of benchmarking specific services, rather than using the same percentage rate for all areas. This would enable departments to identify their different pressures.

It should be noted that any omissions to recording system will impact these figures. In addition, the increased use of agency workers will impact on the figures provided for the departments concerned as agency workers sickness absence is NOT recorded on the Councils Sickness Absence figures.

1.13 Sickness Absence Submissions

Sefton's absences are submitted via a separate system. Service areas teams and schools are expected to submit a monthly record of all absences, this authorises their inclusion onto the feeder file which is then uploaded into ITrent. This report includes the reason for and the period of absence.

The absence submission window opens the 2nd Sunday of the month to 7 days after the window opened and until the absences are submitted, there is a visual indicator to remind users to submit their records in a timely manner ranging from amber in the first week turning to red on the 8th day, returning to green once completed. Regular submissions are important to ensuring that individuals are paid correctly and to maintain the accuracy of our sickness reports.

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Following efforts made to bring all teams up to date, we are currently in a good position, with just 50 out of 340 teams being 22 days late for submissions.

1.14 Occupational Health Referrals

Excluding schools, the reasons for referral to occupational health during Quarter 3 and 4 of 2023/24 were as follows:

	Q3 2023/2024	Q4 2023/2024
Mental Health	40.35%	40.29%
Musculoskeletal	20.18%	14.03%
Medical Illness	30.70%	31.29%
Post Operative Recovery	2.63%	3.96%
Reproductive	0%	2.16%
Bereavement	3.07%	5.76%
Accidents	1.75%	1.08%
Infections	1.75%	1.44%

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

1.15 Initiatives undertaken by the Council

- The Strategic Leadership Board continues to monitor and encourage the reduction of levels of both short and long-term absence.
- Sickness reports are provided to Assistant Directors on a quarterly basis and on an ad hoc basis on request.
- Managers are encouraged to manage absence in accordance with Council policy and procedures and to use the online testing package to fill any knowledge gaps. Briefing sessions and targeted training is arranged, as required, following the results of online testing.
- Targeted support continues within departments to help with the management of sickness absence.
- The Personnel Team work closely with departments providing information and advice and appropriate levels of support, advising managers on informal processes, and assisting managers with the more complex and formal levels of sickness absence management.
- The Personnel team continue to monitor sickness absence and report to the Chief Personnel Officer any issues or trends that are cause for concern.

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- The Occupational Health Unit provide Counselling and CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) on a face-to-face basis. In addition, a specific type of CBT known as Eye Movement Desensitisation, is also available if declared appropriate by the OH physicians. Telephone and video call appointments can be arranged if that is preferred method for individual.
- Physiotherapy appointments are also arranged through the OH Unit as are pension assessments for ill health, ill health pension appeals and deferred pension cases.

1.16 Managing Absence

The Council has a Sickness Absence Policy which operates in a partnership with trade unions. Long term absence is being dealt with in accordance with overall business need and short-term absence is operated in accordance with recognised and agreed trigger points. All policies, where applicable, are subject to modification in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Trade unions and management recognise the need for correct management of sickness absence to provide appropriate support to lessen the demands on employees who remain at work.

2. Financial Implications

N/A

3. Legal Implications

N/A

4. Risk Implications

N/A

5 Staffing HR Implications

N/A

6 Conclusion

That the contents of the report be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

N/A

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

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(Please note that Council have agreed care experience should be treated like a protected characteristic.)

Impact on Children and Young People:

N/A

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD.7761/24.) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5861/24....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision:

With immediate effect.

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

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

N/A

Cabinet Member Report – June 2024 to September 2024

Date of meeting:	10 September 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Corporate Services report for the period June 2024 to September 2024 relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation(s):

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

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

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

1.2 The most recent Cabinet Member report for Corporate Services is attached.

2. Financial Implications

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

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

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3. Legal Implications

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

4. Risk Implications

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

5. Staffing HR Implications

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

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This report has therefore been submitted to comply with the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

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

Equality Implications:

There are no direct equality implications. Any equality implications arising from the consideration of any decisions contained in the update would have been/will be reported to members at the appropriate time.

(Please note that Council have agreed care experience should be treated like a protected characteristic.)

Impact on Children and Young People:

There are no direct children and young people implications. Any children and young people implications arising from the consideration of any decisions contained in the update would have been/will be reported to members at the appropriate time.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of any decisions contained in the update would have been/will be reported to members at the appropriate time.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

With immediate effect.

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

Appendices:

Cabinet Member - (Corporate Services) update report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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CABINET MEMBER REPORT		
Overview & Scrutiny		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Christine Howard	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	August 2024

Financial Management

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

The overall Budget Report (and associated supporting reports) were approved at Budget Council on 29th February 2024, when the budget for 2024/25 was set along with the Council Tax for the year.

Work continues to work with services to set individual budgets, especially in complex areas, including Adult Social Care and Children’s Social Care. The first monitoring position as at the end of June 2024, was reported to Cabinet at the end of July. The second report showing the July position is currently being finalised and will be reported to Cabinet on 4th September.

Work is also being undertaken on updating and expanding the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 – 2027/28.

The Council’s revenue outturn position for 2023/24 has been finalised and was reported to Cabinet at the end of July 2024.

The audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 and 2022/23 by EY is currently in abeyance as the firm considers the latest Government proposed legislation and guidance on how audits for years prior to 2023/24 can be completed. The intention from the Government is for a “backstop” date to be introduced for early December 2024 by which time audit certificates will need to be issued for all outstanding audits. As the audits for 2021/22 and 2022/23 will not have been fully completed, the audits opinions will be qualified on that basis.

The production of the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was finalised and published by 31st May 2024 in line with the statutory deadlines. The Council’s new auditors, Grant Thornton from the 2023/24 financial year, have been undertaking the audit since then, including work for informing the Council’s Value for Money assessment. Significant progress has been made and the main work on auditing the Statement of Accounts is expected to be completed in mid-September.

An update on the position with the various audits will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee on 3rd September 2024. A special meeting of Audit and Governance is currently scheduled for 25th September to consider the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 and the audit findings to date. However, given the position with the 2021/22 and 2022/23 the audit for 2023/24 won’t be able to be finalised – it is anticipated that a special meeting off Audit and Governance Committee will be required in January 2024 to approve the final, fully audited, Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 in advance of the “backstop” date for that year.

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Customer Centric Services

The service continues to deal with high workloads but has made great progress in recent months to reduce both outstanding volumes and customer response times.

National Collection Performance 2023/24

In June, the Government released the data on all English councils' Council Tax and Business Rates collection performance for 2023/24. The data analysis shows that Sefton is performing very well in relation to other metropolitan councils, and the councils in the Liverpool City Region.

The tables below shows Sefton's performance compared to both the national average for all English authorities, and the average for metropolitan authorities:-

- Sefton is the best performing Metropolitan authority for Non-Domestic Rates collection at 2.1% above the Met average, and 1.6% above the national average.
- Council Tax collection is 1.3% above the average for Metropolitan authorities and has consistently remained 1% below the national average for the past 5-years.

Council Tax	Sefton	National	Metropolitan
2019-20	95.8	96.8	95.0
2020-21	95.0	95.7	93.8
2021-22	94.8	95.9	93.8
2022-22	95.0	96.0	93.7
2023-24	94.9	95.9	93.6

NNDR	Sefton	National	Metropolitan
2019-20	98.3	98.0	97.4
2020-21	96.4	93.0	91.6
2021-22	97.3	95.5	95.4
2022-22	99.4	96.8	96.2
2023-24	98.8	97.2	96.7

Customer Services

The Council's Customer Services Contact Centre continues to answer approximately 16,000 calls each month. The salutation message that is relayed at the start of each incoming call continues to encourage customers to use the online Council services if they can, allowing staff to handle calls for Sefton's prioritised services, i.e., Social Care and the Councils' Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS).

Enquiries relating to Cleansing issues, e.g. the availability of brown bins, missed bin collections, bulky item collections, remain consistently high. Various telephony messages are prepared and relayed to inform customers when their revised collection is due to be made, however a number of customers insist on staying on the line to speak to a Customer Service Advisor.

As expected, calls relating to Elections significantly increased in the lead-up to the General Election with enquiries generally following similar themes: i.e. not received postal vote, registration requirements for proxy vote, location of Polling station and identification documents that would be accepted to vote in person.

My Account Portal - Council Tax / Business Rates

Since the Council Tax and Business Rates online account portal went live in October 2023, there has been a month-on-month increase in the volume of registrations with around 16,800 households and businesses now successfully signed-up for My Account, and around 21,500 households and businesses signed up for paperless billing.

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Since go-live approximately 19,500 work items have been submitted via the Council Tax portal, e.g. new requests /amendments for discounts, Direct Debits, contact details etc. with approximately 57% of those work items automatically updating Council Tax records instantly upon receipt and without manual intervention; with the remaining items being manually processed within two-weeks of receipt due to level of checks required. Both the Customer Services and the Communications teams continue to promote and publicise the portal to encourage further sign-up.

Demand continues to be high at the One Stop Shops, with approximately 2,500 customers attending Bootle One Stop Shop each month. Consistently, the team deal with a high volume of taxi license applications and related enquiries, Council Tax, Parking or benefits enquiries, with the remaining customers seeking general council-related advice at reception.

At Southport, approximately 500 customers attended the Atkinson each month, booking an appointment to discuss their Council Tax and/or benefit, with others seeking general council-related advice at reception.

Taxi-Licensing

The new Taxi Licensing system consisting of an online portal went live at the beginning of April 2024. The new system allows taxi drivers, vehicle owners and operators to upload various evidence documents as well as pay all licensing fees via an online portal.

After some initial difficulties in the first couple of weeks, staff and customers are now more familiar with the new way of working. At present, there are no delays to the business-as-usual workloads, such as the processing of vehicle plates and the renewal of driver's badges, with all work being completed within two-days of receipt.

It is taking longer to deal with applications for new drivers; however, for drivers who upload all the required evidence in a timely manner and pass their knowledge test first time, they can expect to be licensed within 4 – 6 weeks of submitting their application via the portal. It is evident that a number of drivers are experiencing issues accessing the portal and creating an e-mail account. Technical support remains available at Bootle One Stop Shop and a Frequently Asked Question section has been uploaded onto the Council's website. Weekly Knowledge tests are now being offered at Bootle One Stop Shop and these will increase as more drivers provide all the required evidence and are ready to be licensed

Weekly internal meetings between Customer Services and Taxi Licensing continue and the trade are given regular updates on progress. The Council's website continues to be regularly updated, and this can be accessed at [Taxi licensing \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk)

Risk and Audit

The **Internal Audit** team are continuing to work on delivering the 2024/25 internal audit plan with a current focus on reviews of:

- Review of number of Schools.
- Fuel Cards
- Procurement New Legislation
- ASC – Inspection Preparation
- Sefton New Directions 22/23
- Risk Management Health Check
- Tree Management (External Review)
- Code of Conduct
- Credit and Debit Cards
- ASC recruitment and retention
- CSC Procurement
- Marine Lakeside Event Centre

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- Bulky Waste
- Planning Financials
- Sundry Debtors
- Council Tax
- Children with disabilities
- Home to School transport
- Out of Area Placements- ASC
- Home to School Transport

We have recruited two temporary internal auditors one of whom started in April 2024 and the other in May 2024.

Following a re-structure a Trainee ICT Auditor has been appointed and is due to start in September 2024 and a Principal Auditor post is currently being advertised.

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

- We are currently working on the insurance renewal for September 2024. The insurance market is much more benign this year although there remains pressure in motor insurance premiums which reflects cost of claims increases, supply chain issues and repairs affecting electric vehicles.
- We have used some of the "free days" as part of the insurance programme risk bursary to undertake a review of the Council's risk management framework as well as arranging a horizon scanning session for ELT.
- We are working with insurers and the Council's liability insurers to robustly defend claims and in limited circumstances will pursue through the Courts claimants to recover Council costs where the claims are proven to be exaggerated.
- To assist with risk management, the Team have developed a pilot report for Highways detailing claims numbers, values and outcomes, and areas where the concentration of claims is the highest. This has now been rolled out to other teams and have received positive feedback.
- The Team assisted in arranging material damage cover for 25 Catholic schools where the Diocese was unable to offer terms from their existing insurer. Currently consulting on a re-valuation of the schools to ensure that the properties have accurate re-building costs which will help to prevent under insurance and potential restrictions of cover in the event of a claim.
- Team continues to work extensively with Service Teams including Highways on car parking, to improve the management of insurable risk in areas where there are high numbers of claims or areas of concern.

The Risk and Resilience Team.

We have developed a Corporate Business Continuity Plan using the existing Service Area Business Continuity (BC) Plans which is currently with the Executive Leadership Team to approve. Following the exercise of the Council's BC arrangements in March 2024 which we have subsequently received feedback on we are currently implementing the recommendations from the review. We are currently facilitating the refreshing of a number of Business Continuity Plans that are being updated by Assistant Directors.

The **Risk and Resilience Team** have completed the training on the Council's Risk Appetite which was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2023 to all Service Areas as well as facilitating the updates of the Council's Corporate Risk Register for Audit and Governance Committee in September 2024. Other work includes:

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- Working with the Merseyside Resilience Forum
- Development of a Shoreline Pollution Plan
- Review of the Council's emergency facilities
- Review of approach of volunteers
- Training for loggists and planning an exercise to enhance their experience
- Working on Sefton events

For the **Health and Safety Team** there will be a continued focus during the next quarter of delivering the Health and Safety Improvement Plan.

- Continue to review, update and monitor the Health and Safety Standards and Policies, with focus on working from home, display screen and workstation assessments and stress risk assessments.
- Continue to develop the Council-wide training needs assessment which will eventually build into the health and safety training plan and provision.
- Completing a planned review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- Completing a review of the Council's grey fleet driving standards to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory responsibilities to ensure that staff are eligible to drive and have vehicles that are insured and safe to be on the road.
- Assisting Property Services in the review of management of asbestos in both schools and other Council owned properties.
- Focus on improving the accuracy of incident reporting across the Council will continue to ensure incidents of threatening and abusive behaviours towards staff are reported.
- Continue to deliver a health and safety management audit and inspection regime across the Council, to schools with a Service Level Agreement with the Council and those schools where the Council retains responsibility for the health and safety as the employer. This will provide assurance that health and safety management systems are suitable and effective.
- A new staff member started in March 2024.

ICT

- The ICT Service continues to work on a number transformation programmes as well as delivering the BAU ICT Service alongside Agilisys. Key projects currently in flight relate to support for the Children's Improvement Programme, Customer Services (CXP), Data Centre relocation and the Website upgrade. Further developments are underway to improve Sefton's Cyber Security capabilities and the team has also initiated an improvement programme to upgrade and refresh the corporate Wi-Fi across the estate over the next 18-24 months.
- Data centre rationalisation and right sizing is now completed within the existing Data Centre at St Peters ready for relocation to a new site. Due to the complexities associated with move to Bootle Town Hall the move of the existing comms capacity to Magdalen House is well underway, this includes the reconfiguration of all dark fibre connections in Bootle and

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the installation of new air conditioning and UPS systems. The Agilisys team will move out of St Peters House and into their new office location within Magdalen during August. Plans are also in progress to move the remaining small data centre footprint within St Peters to a purpose-built data centre in Liverpool, all the new equipment is ordered with the only outstanding piece being a firm timeline for the connectivity from Virgin, which is being actively chased.

- The Cloud telephony project is now closed, the team has completed the identification of telephony lines commissioned by departments directly and work is underway to transfer these to the corporate system (less than 30 lines). In addition, the team have completed a positive a proof-of-concept in relation to Teams Telephony to inform the strategy moving forwards, a further report will be made available regarding this during Autumn.
- The Council's CXP solution continues to be developed. A new internal data breach process is due to go live mid-August. A new ELAS process is in development. Work continues on making Contact Centre-only processes available online, with the first of these (Traffic) currently in UAT. Work on the configuration of the new FOI process is progressing well, with testing projected to commence over the new two months. Phase 3 of the eforms migration will commence in September. New processes have been requested for Registrars, Trees & Sefton Arc amongst others. Regular changes and improvements to existing processes are ongoing.
- The upgrade of the Umbraco content management system used to manage www.sefton.gov.uk is due to go-live on 23 August 2024, the go live was delayed from June due to the General Election and then recent events in Southport. The web governance board, chaired by the Communications Team, continues to meet to evaluate and prioritise new requests; current projects in flight include sites for Public Health, Sefton@Work and Active Sefton.
- The ICT Procurement team continue to be busy; work has completed on several key procurements including the network connectivity for schools, the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for all licencing and GIS with Leisure also nearing completion. A forward plan has been developed in partnership with central procurement colleagues and work has now started on procurement for Payroll and HR, Fleet Management and Egress (secure email).
- The ICT client is working in partnership with Agilisys colleagues to deliver a refresh programme for desktops and laptops that will not meet the requirements of Windows 11 next year (approximately 600 devices are impacted). Windows 10 will be end of life in October 2025 and the team is already testing Windows 11 deployments with a view to migration of all staff prior to this date. As part of this project, we are taking the opportunity to upgrade the standard specification for laptops and desktops purchased by the authority to ensure that our devices are fit for purpose over the next 3 – 5 years.
- The threat level in relation to Cyber Security remains high and the team are working hard to implement new technologies and tools to stay one step ahead of the risk. A Cyber Security briefing was completed for Full Council during July.
- The new Digital Strategy for Sefton is now out for external consultation, which closes on the 18th of August. Responses will then be reviewed, and a final version of the strategy will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet during Autumn.
- Due to the Agilisys contract ending on the 30th of September 2025 work is underway to procure a Managed Service provider for ICT from October 2025. The tender documents

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were released to suppliers in July this year with a deadline of the 8th of August for bid submissions. Evaluation of bids will take place during August/September with a report recommending preferred bidder due to Cabinet in December this year.

Legal Services

Legal Services continue to busy providing support across a range of areas including: Childrens' and Adults' Social Care; Contracts and Commercial; Property and Planning and Prosecutions and Regulations and Employment Law. In addition to business as usual there follows some highlights:

- School academisations : The Legal Team have assisted colleagues across the legal department in the negotiation of Commercial Transfer Agreements and Property Agreements relating to the academisation of a number of schools within the borough.
- The Principal Lawyer has led on a project to ensure compliance with HMRC's off payroll working rules.
- The Contracts and Commercial team assisted with the procurement and appointment of 15 law firms to the Northwest Legal Consortium. This consortium provides a framework under which various public bodies can appoint law firms across the Northwest region. The Contracts and Commercial team has also been assisting the procurement department in preparing for the implementation of the new Procurement Act which is due to come into force in October of this year and has led on a project to redraft the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The Team continues to assist colleagues with a range of projects including the Marine Lake Events Centre, the Strand Transformation Project and in relation to the delivery of new Council housing.
- The Property team continue to handle a wide and varied caseload of instructions from the Councils estates team for disposals, acquisitions and other property related matters; including the large number of schools transferring over to Multi-Academy Trusts, and the recent re-acquisition of Magdalen House.
- The Planning team continue to progress a large number of legal 106 agreements as well as all the work required to progress all the new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legal agreements that will soon be required by the implementation of the Environment Act 2021, making BNG applicable to all new planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) since Q2 2024.
- The Childrens' Social Care legal team - the cases being managed by the team continue to be complex in nature, often involving several parties and international elements where the team must liaise with Central Authorities worldwide. The team have recently successfully defended a Judicial Review in the high Court on behalf of Children's social Care.
- The Lawyer designated to supporting the Special Educational Needs department with a rise in cases before the Special Educational Needs tribunal seen during this academic year.
- The Prosecution team have had some great success in obtaining some convictions for failing to comply with school attendance orders, with quite large fines and costs of £1,000 per parent. The team also worked in partnership with the Police in order to obtain a warrant to enter a hotel that was suspected run as a House in Multiple Occupation and as a result the police have pursued prosecutions after drugs and other offences had been committed.

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- The Prosecution team has also issued proceedings for orders of removal of travellers on 18 occasions across the Borough. They have successfully resisted an appeal against the revocation of a taxi drivers licence , the outcome was reported in the Liverpool Echo. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/mum-knew-exactly-what-uber-29105770>. The team had also provided training for the licensing and regulatory committee and advised on various licensing sub committees in relation to the grant and review of premises and personal alcohol licences.
- The Debt Recovery team has recovered £436, 251.00 since April (£136,000) since the beginning of August. A debt recovery lawyer has now been appointed within the team and it is anticipated that the recovery figures will reflect the new resource from when they are in post in early October.

Democratic Services Team – Overview

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

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 18 June 2024. Details of items considered at the meeting are set out below:

- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside – Sefton Place Update
- Health Provider Performance Dashboard
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Cabinet Member Update Reports
- Work Programme Update

The next meeting of the Committee, the first of the new municipal year, will be held on 3 September 2024.

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

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 4 June 2024. Details of items considered at the meeting are set out below:

- Cabinet Member Update Reports
- Children’s Services Improvement Programme
- Summary of Recent Audit Activity
- Petition FASD
- Petition – Complaints
- Petition – Views of Voice of the Families
- Family Hubs
- Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

The next meeting of the Committee, the first of the new municipal year, will be held on 24 September 2024.

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

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 25 June 2024. Details of items considered at the meeting are set out below:

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- Council Housing Programme
- Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan
- Cabinet Member Report – March 2024 to June 2024

The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting to consider the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers; and that it was agreed that the informal meeting be held using Microsoft Teams. At the time of writing this report it is anticipated that the informal meeting will be held in late August.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 17 September 2024.

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

The last ordinary meeting of the Committee was held on 11 June 2024. Details of items considered at the meeting are set out below:

- Changes to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and Potential Impacts on Service Users in Sefton
- Annual Progress Report Climate Emergency
- Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan
- Cabinet Member Report – February 2024 to June 2024

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 10 September 2024.

At the meeting of the Committee held on 11 June 2024 it was agreed to hold an informal meeting to review the topic of “Customer Journey/Channel Shift”. This related to the review of statistical data showing trends in contact by each channel over the past several years; how this could be compared to show how the situation had changed as more services offered online options; and to identify improvements to the service.

During production of the scoping document for the meeting it became apparent that the Committee would be duplicating work, as the work programme, agreed at the meeting in June 2024, included an item that the Committee, at its meeting to be held on 10 September, receive a presentation about Customer Contact Centre Activity. The information to be considered at both the informal meeting and the meeting on 10 September 2024 would be very similar.

Following consultation with Councillor Bradshaw, Chair of the Committee, it was agreed to defer the arrangement of the informal meeting pending the meeting of the Committee on 10 September; and that it be recommended that the topic for review of “Customer Journey/Channel Shift” be no longer pursued.

A report and presentation regarding Customer Contact Centre Activity will be included on the agenda for the meeting to be held on 10 September 2024.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

The Management Board does not have any formal decision-making powers. Accordingly, any recommendations suggested by the Management Board must be submitted to the appropriate decision-making body for consideration.

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A meeting of the Management Board was held on 18 June 2024. Details of items considered at the meeting are set out below:

- Terms of Reference for the Management Board
- Executive/Scrutiny Protocol
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report to Council
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny - Annual Survey of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government in 2023/24
- Liverpool City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Link - Councillor Hart
- Update on Informal Meetings and Working Groups
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny - Newsletters
- Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network
- Scrutiny Training for Chairs and Vice-Chairs 2024/25

The next meeting of the Management Board will take place on 12 September 2024.

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

Since the last Cabinet Member update of the LCRO&S has met twice and details of matters considered at the meetings are set out below:

3 July 2024

- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair Councillors Steve Radford and Pat Moloney were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively
- Work Programme Update 2024-25
- Appointments of Scrutiny Members to the Audit & Governance Committee 2024/25

31 July 2024

- Verbal Update from Mayor Steve Rotheram
- Uk Shared Prosperity Fund – Update
- Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Interim Report
- Work Programme Update 2024-25

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 Hinde. Councillor Hart is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

The next meeting of the LCRO&S will be held on 11 September 2024.

School Appeals

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

The school appeal 'high season' started on 08 May and ended in July 2024 (possibly subject to some late appeals in September). In this period over 200 appeals have been listed and heard. The

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number of appeals is lower than in recent years, with more applicants being offered schools from their initial preferences.

The Section hosted a training event for new and existing Panel Members in March, and a few new Panel Members are enlisted at these events.

Civic and Mayoral Services

The Mayor's Charity Sweepstake for Euro 2024 raised £240.00 for the Fund, congratulations to all the prize winners.

Tickets will shortly be on sale for the Mayors Charity Cabaret Night on 19th October 2024 and the Burns Night on 25th January 2025.

Member Development

Mandatory Committee Training

A mandatory training session for the Licensing and Regulatory Committee took place on 10 June 2024 and was well attended. A mop-up session took place on 27 June 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

Member Development Steering Group

The Member Development Steering Group was established in November 2022. The Group is comprised of 6 Members and last met on 27 June 2024. The next meeting is scheduled for 23 October 2024.

The Members of the Steering Group act as Member Development Champions for their respective political groups and are responsible for providing feedback on the Member Development Programme.

Regulatory and Other Committees:

Audit and Governance Committee

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 19 June 2024 and the Committee considered the following items:

- Annual Report and Opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor
- Corporate Risk Management
- Risk and Audit Performance
- External Audit Plan 2023/2024
- Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/2024
- Financial Management Code
- Treasury Management Position to May 2024
- Sending / Discussing Personal Information Policy
- Unreasonably Persistent and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- Work Programme Update Report

Health and Wellbeing Board

The last meeting of the Board was held on 5 June 2024 and the Board considered the following items:

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- Children and Young People's Respiratory Improvement Plan
- Health Inequalities Investment Fund Summary
- Sub-Group Updates

Licensing and Regulatory Committee

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 10 June 2024 and the Committee considered the following items:

- Taxi Licensing Annual Report 2023/2024
- Local Licensing Annual Report
- Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders – Southport Town Centre – Receipt of Objections
- Hastings Road and Windy Harbour Road Southport, School Street Traffic Regulation Order
- Birkdale, Weld Road Accessibility Improvements
- Southport Eastern Access Highway Improvements

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Children's Services – Human Resources Operational Support Team

A Business Partner Model continues to support Children's Services, including all maintained schools, with all People matters. Authorisation has been given to temporarily increase the team by 1 FTE Senior HR Business Partner until the turn of the year to support the delivery of all priorities for the Children's Social Care.

In addition to business-as-usual there are clear focus on the following priorities.

- Children's Social Care Whole Service review and restructure. The team has supported the Executive Director (ED) with all the HR elements to this process, which was approved by Cabinet on 23rd May 2024.

All permanent Assistant Directors have been assimilated into posts, along with Service Managers. There are 3 FTE Service Manager posts to be recruited to permanently, 2 of which are covered currently by interim workers. Decisions on recruitment will be taken once the DCS returns from leave. Currently on Assistant Director position remains covered by an interim worker and decisions will be taken with regards to recruitment activity for this post, once the DCS returns.

The next stage of implementation will focus on posts graded J, K, L within **Early Help, Youth Justice, MYSPACE & VAS (consultation meetings with staff 22nd August)** and all posts within **Support & Protect teams, TAB and Court Advisory (Consultation with staff between 28th – 30th August).**

A number of teams within Support and Protect will temporarily remain vacant with some social worker posts temporarily transferring to other teams temporarily. The teams to remain vacant are Teams 3, 5 and 10, this will allow focus to be maintained on filling all posts in teams where Team Manager assimilation is anticipated to occur.

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Following consultation and assimilation, recruitment will take place for vacant posts with the aim to fill them permanently.

- Onboarding events were arranged and took place for Agency Social Workers within Children's Social Care. Unfortunately, we did not see any positive impact from our efforts. However, we have managed to onboard a number of Early Help Workers who were initially engaged as agency workers which will see salary costing reduce.
- A Recruitment Campaign commenced for Social Workers within Children's Social Care. The campaign centered around 'growing our own' and focuses on the success of the Academy. Whilst previously Academy Social Workers have been additional to the establishment, under this approach, they will make up part of the establishment and will be placed as Academy teams in the service area that holds vacancies. With 15 Applications being received.

The Assistant Director of Education Excellence commenced employment on 1st August and support was given surrounding her induction.

- Academisation of 18 Maintained Schools remains on track with once school converting on 1st August 2024 and 11 due to convert on 1st September 2024. The team continues to support the Education Excellence department and the individual schools with the process of academisation including TUPE.
- A report/presentation will be presented to Children's Services SLT in September on the proposals and agreements surrounding Collaborative Working between Children's Services (excluding Schools) and Corporate Resources. The team working with Corporate Leading and Development colleagues is working on the design and delivery of a training passport for managers for delivery to Children's Social Care Managers as a pilot.

Pay & Grading, Job evaluation, policy and projects.

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

Officers in this team review safeguarding checks held against posts e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service, Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) etc.

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

The team undertakes the review of HAY graded positions for new posts and the evaluation of HAY posts stemming from any revised proposals to the HAY grading structure. Recent Hay reviews include HAY positions associated with the Children's Services Review.

The team are responsible for the production of the Council's Annual Pay Policy and publication of the Gender Pay GAP reporting.

Officers are involved with Employment Tribunal claims (approx. 580) relative to employees seeking backdating of amendments to Term Time Only salary calculations. Consultations are

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ongoing in relation to the potential settlement of these claims following a Court of Appeal case. Officers have settled the GMB legitimate claims via COT 3 agreements. (which covers a small proportion of the 580 claims). In March 2024 the Council and UNISON reached agreement to take forward an overarching settlement process to enable individual settlement offers to be calculated. Unisons officers are seeking instructions on the offers and terms from individual claimants. It is anticipated that it will be possible to conclude matters without the need for a full Employment Tribunal.

The team includes a Policy Officer responsible for undertaking reviews of policy, procedures and guidance and introduce new policies as required in line with current legislation. The officer is also involved in Corporate Equalities initiatives, staff support groups, responding to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests, and assistance with mandatory training for managers. The policy officer is involved in the implementation of a staff survey which went live on 15.4.24 with a closing date of 3.5.24. Following this the officer will be involved in the insight meetings, analysis of data and review and feedback of information to ELT/SLB.

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

Service Development, Establishment Control, Transactional HR Payroll & Pension (THRP) Services

There are still some issues with Monthly Data Collection (MDC) for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which we are working with Midland HR (MHR) to resolve. Sefton continue to press Midland HR (MHR) for improvements to the reports provided and fortnightly meetings continue with MHR to address issues. These have now been escalated within MHR and further meetings are scheduled.

Teachers Pensions Monthly data collection (MDC) moves to Monthly Contribution Reconciliation (MCR) has been postponed until further notice as the iTrent software has several known issues. Sefton have engaged with MHR to ensure the system is configured correctly for testing and go live and this work is ongoing

There are backlogs in the teams due to process, reporting and resource issues. Additional temporary resource has been taken on within the Recruitment team and THR to address the backlog and a plan is being put in place to ensure this is being brought up to date within the next 6 months. This plan will sit alongside business as usual work which is being prioritised.

The 1st April 2024 pay awards for NJC staff, Councillors, Coroners and Chief Executive have not yet been agreed.

The 1st April 2024 pay award for JNC Chief Officers was agreed and processed in August 2024 pay

The role of Establishment Control has expanded to include the management and control of the temporary end dates relative to all fixed term contracts. The Recruitment Team and Establishment Control Team have also taken on management of the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of Agency workers. Agency recruitment continues to be at an all-time high relative to social worker and associated positions especially within Children's Services

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Cleaning staff had an inhouse ICT database to provide a payroll file to payroll for changes to pay required and this has been replaced by an alternative solution which has been welcomed by the Cleansing Officers. This has been subject to a parallel run and has gone live Monday 6th May 2024. There have been a number of teething issues with the payroll file and these appear to have been addressed.

Development work for automation of the DBS process using the robotics blue prism software has been completed and this has been live since June 24.

Reusing positions has been in place 6 months plus and this has provided improved data accuracy within iTrent. NB: Data cleansing remains outstanding for CSC as this service is still under ongoing a full structural review.

Development work to relaunch Managers Self Service is planned by the end of September to enable managers to see more information about their own teams and to be more proactive when managing future expected changes.

Development work to start at the end of August on an electronic Establishment Control form, this is expected to take around 6 months to scope, build, test and roll out across the business using Granicus CXP.

Scoping to record and maintain annual PDR's and monthly 1:1/supervision meetings has commenced with MHR with the intention to develop and build electronic forms into employee self-service and Managers self-services to enable greater accessibility and reporting using the iTrent platform. The build and test period will overlap with the PDR schedule this year, therefore it is expected that PDR forms will be completed outside of the system but managers will be able to upload these and report on their teams objectives and completion dates.

Workforce reporting is being maintained as BAU, a review of existing Payroll Q&A reports is ongoing to enhance and speed up final accuracy checks before each Pay date. Financial workforce data reporting is ongoing to enhance data sharing between iTrent and collaborative planning.

Requests have been made to ICT to enable use of the MS power platform applications (power apps/power automate and Azure functions) this future development work plan will allow us to review processes across Employee support, Recruitment, HR, and Establishment Control to enable automation and bring efficiencies across services. ICT have been working on a Service framework for this functionality to ensure Security within the system.

Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)

Apprenticeships

We continue to procure new apprenticeship standards via the YPO portal to support succession planning. The latest standards procured include the **Fraud Investigator Level 4** and we are looking into options to deliver a new apprenticeship called **Artificial Intelligence for Business Value Level 4**.

We have 3 cohorts of staff enrolled on the **Level 6 Social Work Apprenticeship Degree** – all are progressing well with their studies, and we are planning to recruit a further 6 apprentices (3 staff from Adult Social Care and 3 from Children's Services) who will commence their studies in January 2025.

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Staff enrolled on **Level 6 Occupational Therapy Degree** are progressing well and 3 Senior Managers will undertake the new **Public Management and Leadership Level 7 Apprenticeship** at the University of Birmingham from 1st October 2024. The 2 year programme aims to support Senior Managers/Leaders to gain the practical knowledge and skills required to be an effective and dynamic leader across the public sector.

8 Managers are enrolled on the **Level 5 Operational/Departmental Manager Apprenticeship standard** and are making good progress. We have agreed a second cohort with LCR colleagues and 2 managers will commence the programme in September 2024.

We have 1 member of staff from the Public Health Team enrolled on the **Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner Degree** and they are continuing to make good progress.

Training delivery

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

- **Me Learning Implementation** – we are in the process of implementing an upgraded version of the Me Learning training booking system. The estimated go live date was scheduled for Monday 8th July 2024 but due to system issues out of control, the revised go live date is now Monday 16th September 2024.
- **Corporate Mandatory Training** – this includes Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Adults Awareness, Safeguarding Children & Young People Awareness and Climate Change. Monthly reports have recently been updated to include the mandatory courses for managers. Additional courses include Sickness Absence and Equality and Diversity for Managers eLearning, Recruitment and Selection, Managing Capability and Managing Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work virtual classroom sessions. The reports are shared with ELT/SLB to highlight compliance and to encourage staff to complete these courses.
- **Introduction to Management eLearning Refresh** – The current Introduction to Management eLearning programme is being updated and will include 11 bite sized modules that aspiring managers/managers can complete to support their on-going CPD. Modules include:
 1. The Role of the Manager
 2. Management Styles
 3. Managing Teams
 4. Managing Change
 5. Communication
 6. Motivation
 7. Delegation and Allocation.
 8. Time Management
 9. Managing Workload
 10. Managing Performance
 11. Understanding your organisation (a review of Sefton's structure).

The revised programme should be ready to go live early January 2025.

- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** training delivery is going well. To date, we have trained 269 Sefton Council and schools' staff. An increase of 17 since the last report.

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- **LCRCA Race Equality Training** – we delivered a further four Race Equality Training sessions for staff and managers in May, June and July 2024. We have two further manager/non manager sessions planned for September 2024. The LCR Race Equality Hub are continuing to explore options for the delivery of bespoke and targeted sessions for different cohorts of staff e.g., those who are hard to reach and/or require more flexible sessions early morning or late evening.
- **Oliver McGowan (OMMG) Training** – We are continuing to roll out OMMG Tier 1 eLearning to ALL staff across Adult and Children's Services. A total of 301 staff have completed to date. The next phase of the training will be to deliver Tier 1 (3 hour training) and Tier 2 (1 day training) to back office and front line staff and to assist with this, we have produced an options paper which includes different delivery options to be presented to Adult Social Care and Children's Services Senior Leadership Teams for review and signoff.
- Staff have been supporting **Adult Social Care** to prepare for CQC inspection since we were informed the inspection is imminent. We provided all relevant evidence to support the self-assessment process, and this included supporting the development/sign off of the ASC Workforce Strategy and the four pillars of the HR/Workforce delivery plan. We worked closely with colleagues in HR to ensure evidence was provided to support elements of the delivery plan which focused on recruitment, retention and data.
- A meeting is planned with **Children's Services** on Thursday 22nd August to review their CPD offer and training priorities going forward.

Strategic Support

Performance & Business Intelligence

The Business Intelligence team is continuing to support many work streams across the Council including Economic Regeneration, Education Excellence, SEND, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Public Health Services. The team continue to work closely with Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care services to develop their performance reporting, using the new Data Warehouse and Power BI, including adding 'drill-through' functionality into new Power BI reports to access client level information. The team continue to support the detailed analysis financial data for ASC, Children's Social Care and SEND, aligning client numbers and financial spend to aid financial forecasting and change linked to the new transformation programme. Work is ongoing with the Chief Executive to review our capacity and capability to deliver better quality information and analysis as part of the wider transformation programme, under the banner of 'Set up to Succeed.' This project aims to build on the work of recent years to ensure that the Council continues to improve performance management, has the required skills in the organisation and that there is a clear vision and approach agreed. One of the first deliverables for this project is a new planning and performance framework for the council.

The team had recently supported the development of the new Corporate Performance framework (aligned to the new Corporate Plan) and is developing the data collection and analysis for the first performance report to be presented to Cabinet in November 2024.

Consultation & Engagement.

The Service continues to support consultation and engagement activities, respond to complaints and subject access requests in a timely manner and provide information, advice, and guidance across the Council on matters relating to information governance and data protection. The findings of the extensive consultation and engagement on the refresh of the Children & Young People's Plan will be presented to the next meeting of the Children & Young People Partnership Board to inform the next version of the Sefton Children and Young People Plan. The team continues to service the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, and support the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnership Engagement, in their role as Chair.

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Information Governance, Complaints and Subject Access.

The Service continues to provide comprehensive support, information, advice, and guidance across the Council on all matters relating to information governance, data sharing and data protection and managing data security breaches. The team continues to co-ordinate and provide timely advice and guidance relating to the responses to information requests covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The team also continues to respond to request from individuals who wish to access and receive a copy of their personal data as held by Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care; and other supplementary information that the Council holds, diligently and sensitively along with disclosure requests from the Police, NHS partners, solicitors and other Local Authorities.

Despite recruiting to a vacant post in the team, there remains considerable challenge with capacity in the Complaints team, consequently this is increasing the risk of not responding to ASC, CSC and SEND complaints within standards. The Chief Executive and Executive Directors for ASC and Childrens Services are considering the arrangements for administering complaints in these areas specifically, with a view to improving performance, improving the number of complaints resolved first time, increases satisfaction amongst complainants, and improving staff engagement with the complaints process.

The project to digitise the Council's historic paper records continues at pace and is nearing an end. All legacy records stored at disparate third-party locations have now been moved to the Council's preferred secured storage provider, taking opportunity to destroy legacy records and digitise those that are not required to be kept in original paper format. The team has now completed processing legacy records stored at the former Thomas Gray School site and has begun to review records at Southport Coroner's Office, the former Bootle Play Centre and Beford Road Community Centre. Colleagues in this team have also provided support to the Access to Files Officers. Once their contracts end in December of this year, capacity within Access to Files team may be challenged, resulting in delays with meeting statutory deadlines.

Strategic Support

The team continues to provide support across the various services with policy & strategy development, service reviews and transformation activity, but most of the resource continues to be directed to support children and young people, particularly Children's Social Care improvement/Ofsted readiness and SEND. The team also provided support to Adult Social Care, identifying gaps in processes and mapping end to end pathways. This work contributed towards CQC readiness.

Officers in the team have been aligned to provide project support to each of the six key transformation projects identified under the theme of 'Better outcomes, sustainable services' including 1) SEND, 2) H2S transport, 3) CSC, 4) Better at Home, 5) Housing and 6) Operational In-House Services. Officers have supported the development of the Project Initiation Documents (PIDs), clearly defining project scope, rationale, objectives/deliverables, key stakeholders, timescales and finances, and have been heavily involved in analysing financial savings, mitigations and costs to deliver change, informing the development of the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2027/28.

Additionally, linked to the project support outlined above, the team have developed an overarching Transformation Plan aligned to the Corporate plan and Council's priorities. The plan clearly outlines the Council's objectives, financial sustainability and provides a breakdown of the programme of work – particularly focussed on the four pillars of change (Everyday Excellence, Better Outcomes, Sustainable Services, Setting us up to Success and Growth – Redefining Place. The team has recently supported the development of the new Corporate Plan, which sets out the Council priorities for the next four years, 'What we want to see' (Our Ambitions aligned to the 2030

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Vision), 'So Far We Have' (Our Progress over the last 12 months), 'Next We Will' (Our Priorities for the next 4 years), Performance (Our measure of Success).

Good service planning is a cornerstone of effective performance management, and a great service plan provides a solid foundation, keeping priorities and principles firm, even in times of change. The team is currently supporting the development of new Service Planning Guidance and Templates to be used across the Council.

Finally, the team are supporting the production of the next iteration of the Sefton Children and Young Peoples' Plan, using the extensive information gathered through the consultation and engagement activity to shape the priorities for all agencies delivering services to children, young people and their families.

Corporate Communications

In the last period the team's work has largely focussed on supporting the response to the tragic incident in Southport and the team is now heading up one of the recovery subgroups to help the community during what has been a very difficult time. The team dealt with dozens of media enquiries from across the world, supported live news reports, helped organised press events and ensured timely and accurate information was shared with the community. We have also supported schools with their messaging to families and will continue that support as the new term begins.

Prior to that the team had been supporting the development of the new corporate plan, has played a part in supporting major events such as Southport Air Show and the Salt and Tar Music Weekender and has continued the communications around major projects such as the Southport Town Deal, the Marine Lake Events Centre and Bootle Strand.

We have also helped the preparation of key documents for the Care Quality Commission assessment and will continue that support throughout the next quarter,

Procurement

The Procurement Act 2023 implementation is currently scheduled for 28 October 2024. The Procurement and Legal Teams have been working closely to ensure we are prepared for the step changes being implemented by the new legislation. Good progress is being made by staff on the Government Commercial College training programmes with several members of both teams already confirmed on the final specialist training course known as the "Deep Dive". We are also engaged with DLA Piper to support the Council with significant changes and updates to our Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and Financial Procedure Rules (FPR) to ensure we are fully compliant and on time.

Procurement have been working closely with Legal, Finance and ICT to rollout DocuSign to increase efficiency in the process of signing and storing documents to significantly reduce the amount of labour and printing required. There continues to be technical and annual leave issues which we are working through with an anticipated rollout late August through September 2024.

Procurement and Finance now have a contract in place with Oxygen Finance to enable them to carry out a financial recovery audit at Sefton using specialist software. While we believe our finance systems are robust this will be a test of the financial controls in place at nil cost to Sefton.

While Sefton have a Social Value Policy which we are compliant to, we are not receiving the level of uptake we had anticipated on the offer we are facilitating to our suppliers and contractors. Working with Social Value Portal, a market leader in this specialist area, we are currently

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conducting a trial in anticipation we will gain a higher level of support for the Social Value programme. The results of this trial will be available from October 2024.

Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

Date of meeting:	10 September 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services Communities and Partnership Engagement		
Wards affected:	All		
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 2024/25, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, 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 presentation on the Corporate Communications Strategy be made to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 22 October 2024;
- (3) the topic for review, at an informal meeting of the Committee, relating to “Customer Journey/Channel Shift” be no longer pursued;
- (4) consideration be given to the selection of a topic(s) for review by either a Working Group or at informal meetings of the Committee as detailed in section 2 of the report;
- (5) consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any

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agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above; and

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

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

1.1 Work Programme 2024/25

- 1.1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2024/25, as approved by Committee in June 2024, is set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme had been produced in liaison with the appropriate Executive Directors/Assistant Directors, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.1.2 The Work Programme was produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.1.3 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 2024/25 to provide Members with the opportunity to add items to the Programme.
- 1.1.4 The Work Programme indicates that a presentation would be made to this meeting of the Committee on the Corporate Communications Strategy. It is now recommended that this presentation be made to the next meeting to be held on 22 October 2024.

1.2 Scrutiny Review Topics 2024/25

- 1.2.1 It has been usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 1.2.2 However, over the last number of years the Committee agreed to hold informal meetings to consider topics for review rather than establishing Working Groups.
- 1.2.3 The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial has submitted the following comments on a suggested topic for review:

The Council actively monitors its sickness statistics and trends both across the organisation and within each directorate. This is reported through the Council and to the Overview And Scrutiny Committee,

The Council recognises the diverse nature of its services and has had a long standing benchmark of 4% to monitor performance. It is considered that this benchmark should be regularly reviewed to ensure it recognises industry best practice that can in turn help the Council to manage its workforce as effectively as possible. It is therefore suggested that the new Head of HR and workforce work with the Committee to review this benchmark and make recommendations that can be considered by senior officers.

- 1.2.4 The Committee's views are therefore sought on topics for review by informal meetings of the Committee.

1.2.5 Customer Journey/Channel Shift – Informal Meeting

At the last meeting of the Committee Page 88 agreed to hold an informal meeting to

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review the topic of “Customer Journey/Channel Shift”. This related to the review of statistical data showing trends in contact by each channel over the past several years; how this could be compared to show how the situation had changed as more services offered online options; and to identify improvements to the service.

During production of the scoping document for the meeting it became apparent that the Committee would be duplicating work, as the work programme, agreed at the meeting in June 2024, included an item that the Committee, at its meeting to be held on 10 September, receive a presentation about Customer Contact Centre Activity. The information to be considered at both the informal meeting and the meeting on 10 September 2024 would be very similar.

Following consultation with Councillor Bradshaw, Chair of the Committee, it was agreed to defer the arrangement of the informal meeting pending this meeting of the Committee; and that it be recommended that the topic for review of “Customer Journey/Channel Shift” be no longer pursued.

A report and presentation regarding Customer Contact Centre Activity is elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

1.2.6 The Committee’s views are therefore sought on topics for review by informal meetings of the Committee.

1.2.7 For the information of Members, a criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix 2**.

1.3 Pre-Scrutiny of Items in the Key Decision Forward Plan

1.3.1 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.

1.3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

1.3.3 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.

1.3.4 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.

1.3.5 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.

1.4 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance

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produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 22 October 2019 (Minute No. 20).

1.4.2 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.

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

1.4.4 **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.

1.4.5 **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 Hinde. Councillor Hart is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

1.4.6 **Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2024/25 are Councillors Steve Radford and Pat Moloney respectively.

1.4.7 **Quoracy Issues**

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

1.4.8 **Meetings**

Information on all meetings and minutes of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained

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using the following link

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

Since the last meeting the LCRO&S has met twice and details of matters considered at the meetings are set out below:

3 July 2024

- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair Councillors Steve Radford and Pat Moloney were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively
- Work Programme Update 2024-25
- Appointments of Scrutiny Members to the Audit & Governance Committee 2024/25

31 July 2024

- Verbal Update from Mayor Steve Rotheram
- Uk Shared Prosperity Fund – Update
- Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Interim Report
- Work Programme Update 2024-25

1.4.9 The next meeting of the LCRCOA&S will be held on 11 September 2024.

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

2. Financial Implications

2.1 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/informal meeting review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

3. Legal Implications

3.1 None. Any legal implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group/informal meeting review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

4. Risk Implications

4.1 None. Any risk implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group/informal meeting review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

5. Staffing HR Implications

5.1 None. Any staffing/HR implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group/informal meeting review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

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6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2024/25 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

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

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications. Any equality implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group/informal meeting review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(Please note that Council have agreed care experience should be treated like a protected characteristic.)

Impact on Children and Young People:

There are no direct children and young people implications arising from this report. Any 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 Neutral impact.

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.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets
Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection
Executive Director - Corporate Services and Commercial
Assistant Director - Strategic Support

Chief Personnel Officer

(B) External Consultations

None.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

With immediate effect.

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 2024/25
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) WORK
PROGRAMME 2024/25**

Tuesday, 11 June 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones/Helen O'Reilly
Homes for Ukraine Scheme (potential changes to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and impacts this would have on service users in Sefton)	Mel Ormesher/Allan Glennon
Climate Emergency Annual Report	Stephanie Jukes
Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 10 September 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Financial Performance Monitoring - Finance, Performance and Risk	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Customer Contact Centre Activity - Presentation	Stephan Van Arendsen/Diane Turner
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring	Paul Cunningham/Marie Lambert
Corporate Communications Strategy	Andrew Daniels
Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones/Helen O'Reilly
Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 22 October 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Financial Performance Monitoring	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset -Management Strategy	Stephan Van Arendsen/Dom Ellis
Update on Progress of LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts
Transformation Programme Update	Stephan Van Arendsen/Jan McMahon
Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 14 January 2025, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Financial Performance Monitoring	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Stephan Van Arendsen/Diane Turner
Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones/Helen O'Reilly
Air Quality Monitoring	Peter Moore/Greg Martin
Armed Forces Covenant	David McCullough
Annual ICT Update Report (Performance of Agilisys)	Helen Spreadbury
Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 11 February 2025, 6.30 p.m., Budget Meeting - Town Hall, Bootle	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Budget Report 2025/26 to 2028/29	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Financial Performance Monitoring	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Prudential Indicators	Stephan Van Arendsen/Graham Hussey
Treasury Management Policy and Strategy	Stephan Van Arendsen/Graham Hussey
Capital Strategy 2025/26 and Future Years	Stephan Van Arendsen/Andrew Bridson
Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy – Update Position	Stephan Van Arendsen/Dom Ellis
Robustness of the 2025/26 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – Local Government Act 2003 – Section 25	Stephan Van Arendsen

Tuesday, 4 March 2025, 6.30 p.m. Town Hall, Southport	
Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring	Paul Cunningham/Marie Lambert
Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update	Margaret Jones/Helen O'Reilly
Financial Performance Monitoring - Finance, Performance and Risk	Stephan Van Arendsen/Paul Reilly
Unmet Demand Survey of Hackney Carriages – Update Report on Results of Survey	Mark Toohey
Public Engagement and Consultation Panel Annual Report 2024	Jayne Vincent
Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
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 OCTOBER 2024 - 31 JANUARY 2025

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
Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Major Schemes - Land Acquisition	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk
Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – October Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Corporate Mobile Telephone Contract Retender	David Harris david.harris@sefton.gov.uk
Counter Fraud Strategy	David Eden david.eden@sefton.gov.uk
Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – November Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Treasury Management Position to September 2024	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100
Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – December Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Gas Supply Contract Renewal	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552
ICT Managed Service Contract	Helen Spreadbury helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk
Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – January Update	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106
Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Base 2025/26	Diane Turner diane.turner22@sefton.gov.uk

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Major Schemes - Land Acquisition This report seeks Cabinet Members approval to progress with the acquisition of land necessary to complete works associated with the above highway improvement schemes including the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order for both scheme. Whilst every effort is being made to acquire the land and other interests by negotiation it is considered necessary to make a compulsory purchase order to acquire those areas which are necessary to achieve the works should negotiations not be successful			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	3 Oct 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Dukes; Kew; Litherland; Molyneux; Netherton and Orrell; Norwood; St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	All affected landowners.			
Method(s) of Consultation	All landowners have received visits and e-mails.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Major Schemes - Acquisitions			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton To seek approval to the provisionally agreed Heads of Terms for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in part of the former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	3 Oct 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/09/2024 to 03/10/2024. Reason: negotiations on the disposal are still ongoing			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Part 3)			
Wards Affected	St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member and Senior Officers			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – October Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	3 Oct 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – October Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Corporate Mobile Telephone Contract Retender To procure a new contract to replace the expiring contract for the ongoing provision of mobile telephony including handsets, SIM cards and associated products for use by Council staff to conduct their duties			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Nov 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 03/11/2024 to 07/11/2024. Reason: Work on the tender is ongoing			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	ICT Staff; Helen Spreadbury, Stephen O'Brien, Jamal Aslam. Highways and Public Protection Staff; Paul Scott			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings held with ICT Staff and Highways and Public Protection staff who currently use SIM cards in Traffic Signals as part of the Councils current mobile phone contract			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Corporate Mobile Telephone Contract Retender			
Contact Officer(s) details	David Harris david.harris@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Counter Fraud Strategy Provide a Counter Fraud Strategy for decision detailing the proposed activity to improve the Council's approach to detect and prevent fraud.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Nov 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/09/2024 to 07/11/2024. Reason: Work is ongoing on the production of the Strategy			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Leadership Team, Cabinet Member – Corporate Services			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Counter Fraud Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	David Eden david.eden@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – November Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Nov 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – November Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Treasury Management Position to September 2024 This report provides Members with a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 30th September 2024.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	7 Nov 2024 14 Nov 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	N/A			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Treasury Management Position to September 2024			
Contact Officer(s) details	Graham Hussey graham.hussey@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4100			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – December Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Dec 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – December Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Gas Supply Contract Renewal procurement of the corporate gas supply contract for the period 2025/26 - 2029/30			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	5 Dec 2024 16 Jan 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services; Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support); and Framework providers			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails; meetings; and Framework providers via formal interviews and written documents/responses			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Gas supply contract renewal			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552			

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Details of Decision to be taken	ICT Managed Service Contract To review and make a decision in relation to the award of a new contract for an ICT Managed Services Contract to commence 1st October 2025.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Dec 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Stephan Van Arendsen - Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services; Richard Clegg, Principal Lawyer; Mark Woodward , Procurement Category Manager; Marie Lambert, HR Manager , Operations; and Paul Reilly, Service Manager, Finance			
Method(s) of Consultation	The procurement team includes representation from Legal , Finance, HR and the Central procurement team, therefore consultation and engagement will take place on the proposed decision via this Procurement teams regular board meetings chaired by the Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Customer Service, Consultation with the Cabinet member will be completed via a Cabinet Member briefing session. which are schedule on a fortnightly basis.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	ICT Managed Service Contract			
Contact Officer(s) details	Helen Spreadbury helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – January Update Financial updates and Policy decisions relating to the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including the monthly Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	9 Jan 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – January Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Paul Reilly paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4106			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Base 2025/26 The report provides a review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the current year 2024/25 and a proposed scheme for 2025/26. An updated Council Tax Base for 2025/26 is also provided.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	9 Jan 2025 16 Jan 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Precepting authorities - Merseyside Fire & Rescue, Police and Crime Commissioner and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Details of the proposed local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Base for 2025/26 are provided to the precepting bodies, Merseyside Fire & Rescue, Police and Crime Commissioner and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Base 2025/26			
Contact Officer(s) details	Diane Turner diane.turner22@sefton.gov.uk			

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