

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 25th June, 2024

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor
Councillor Hart (Chair)
Councillor Corcoran (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Cavanagh
Councillor Hinde
Councillor Killen
Councillor McGinnity
Councillor McKee
Councillor Morris
Councillor Sammon
Councillor Webster

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor Murphy
Councillor Neary
Councillor Williams
Councillor Grace
Councillor Parker
Councillor O'Brien
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Sir Ron Watson
Councillor Lloyd-Johnson
Councillor Richards

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

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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

Minutes of the meeting held 5 March 2024

4. Council Housing Programme (Pages 13 - 22)

Report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)

5. Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan (Pages 23 - 46)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

6. Cabinet Member Reports - March 2024 to June 2024 (Pages 47 - 64)

Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 5TH MARCH, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Dowd (in the Chair)
Councillor Corcoran (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Harvey, Ian Maher, McKee, Catie Page
and Webster

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Howard

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Lloyd-Johnson, Christine Maher and Sir Ron Watson (and his substitute member Councillor Prendergast).

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

45. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

46. HOUSING STANDARDS TEAM - DAMP MOULD AND CONDENSATION

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that updated on the work of the Housing Standards Team in response to issues of damp and mould in residential properties in the borough.

The report indicated that following the death of a two-year old child, Awaab Ishak, from a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home in Rochdale, and the subsequent Coroner's inquest, the Chief Executive of the Regulator for Social Housing wrote to all registered providers of social housing requesting information on the provider's response to managing damp and mould cases in their homes.

The report advised that the Housing Standards Team (HST) was responsible for housing enforcement activity, including on vacant homes, and managing the Council's mandatory, additional HMO and selective landlord licencing schemes and that this was primarily based on the

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Housing Health and Safety Rating System, and that the majority of the damp and mould caseload managed by the HST related to privately rented properties; and detailed how action could be taken to alleviate problems, including the use of the Council's Landlord Licensing Scheme. In the Social Housing Sector, the legal duty and responsibility for resolving complaints was imposed by the Regulator of Social Housing direct onto social landlords (i.e. not with the Council in the first instance).

The report detailed that in response to the Awaab Ishak case, a number of actions were carried out relating to the Council's management of damp and mould cases in the borough via:

- Housing Enforcement Policy
- Website updates
- Communication campaign
- Staff training and equipment
- Data analysis
- Staff guidance
- Engagement with registered providers

The report concluded that the death of Awaab Ishak had raised awareness of the dangers of mould in residential properties and that the reaction within the housing sector, particularly the social housing sector, had been significant; and that although the approach to damp and mould issues in the Sefton had been subject to review, both by senior managers, and through internal audit, the HST continues to look for improvements and opportunities to supplement the current approach.

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

- The inspection and enforcement regime employed by the Council, under the terms of the Housing Act 2004, to combat the Category 1 and Category 2 hazards associated with damp and mould in properties; and problems experienced due to differing expectations of landlords and tenants as to the satisfactory resolution of such hazards
- Concern was expressed at the Category 2 damp and mould hazards being found in in 30% of privately rented homes in Sefton; and how this figure compared with other comparable local authorities
- the legal duty and responsibility placed on the social housing sector for resolving complaints, as imposed by the Regulator of Social Housing direct onto social landlords, was acknowledged and data was sought on the satisfactory resolution of complaints
- in respect of the Communication Campaign around the issue of damp and mould, using the Council's communications channels over the winter period when damp and mould issues were at their most acute, was referred to; and questions were asked on the format of the

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campaign, and whether an evaluation/feedback exercise had been undertaken to gauge the campaign's success

- it was noted that the approach to damp and mould issues in the borough had been subject to review, both by senior managers, and through internal audit, and that the service continued to look for improvements and opportunities to supplement the current approach; and information was sought on whether Sefton had collaborated with Liverpool City Region or other north west local authorities on this matter and on efforts to identify additional funding to continue to make a sustained impact in this area
- the use of case management systems to enable housing officers to spend more time on inspection and enforcement duties in the field rather than having to continually return to their office base
- the use by landlords of Section 21 notices to evict tenants from their homes to enable extensive renovations of property to be undertaken; the implications of this to the Council when families then presented themselves as homeless; and what type of accommodation was available for rehousing families in such circumstances
- the success of the multi-agency approach whereby council and public health had a number of staff members who regularly visited resident's homes (for example health visitors and social workers) to ensure that the opportunity to identify damp and mould cases was maximised.

RESOLVED:

That the approach in response to issues of damp and mould in residential properties in Sefton be endorsed.

47. SEFTON ECONOMIC STRATEGY UPDATE (MARCH 2024)

Further to Minute No. 33 of 16 January 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that updated on the refresh of the Sefton Economic Strategy (the Strategy); and the production of a Sefton Inward Investment prospectus.

The report indicated that the Strategy refresh would ensure that it remained fit for purpose in terms of its objectives and alignment with the emerging Liverpool City Region Economic Opportunities framework that would serve as a sounding board to help drive, amongst other economic activities, new inward investment activities across the city region. The report also identified the base review and analysis, the first phase of which being the methodology and review of the strategic context, examining current and developing strategies and frameworks; an analysis of sector specialism in Sefton and skills analysis.

The report also identified that the production of a Sefton Inward Investment prospectus, to assist in promoting the borough as part of LCR Combined Authority national and international investment activities and events, would also assist the council in its own inward investment and

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regeneration led activities; and set out list of sites identified for the prospectus; and the alignment of sites with sector opportunities.

The report concluded that the completed work would enable the Council to have a full suite of key investment opportunities which could be easily updated and added to; and that the intention was for them to be used for both strategic events such as the International Market for Real Estate Professionals and the UK Real Estate and Investment and Infrastructure Forum amongst others, while officers would also have access to 'off shelf material in response to business growth and new inward investment enquiries.

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

- The comparison of figures for Sefton's hospitality sector with other comparable areas of the country
- The methodology used to estimate the increase in visitor numbers (both day and staying) to Southport
- The strategic objective of "Employment and Opportunities for Work" contained in the action plan was referred to and in particular, the success of Sefton should be acknowledged regarding the Rate of NEET and Not Known in the borough across our 16 and 17 year olds being the best in the City Region for this period and being ranked 3rd in the country out of 150 LAs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress with the Sefton Economic Strategy refresh and production of a Sefton Inward Investment prospectus be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Place be requested to provide information on the methodology used to estimate the increase in visitor numbers (both day and staying) to Southport.

48. SOCIAL VALUE AND THE GROWTH AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director (Place) on the Social Value Outcomes from the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme (the Programme) that comprised a range of projects across all parts of Sefton, of a wide range of types, sizes, funding sources and delivery models. The report indicated that the objectives of the Programme, and the projects therein, were consistently intended to balance economic, financial, social and environmental outcomes; that each project was developed with wider aims to support with delivery against strategies and policies in other areas of the Council beyond regeneration; that the aim of the report was to provide visibility of the work that had been undertaken, was being undertaken, and was planned, on projects across the Council's Programme that demonstrated "social value",

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which for the purposes of this report, was defined as the wider value created by capital projects beyond the economic and financial.

The report also provided information on the Caring Business Charter, launched in 2022 and operated through Sefton@work, which recognised that many young people who had experience of being looked after may have additional barriers to address when they were looking to starting their lives as adults and enter the world of work; the establishment of the Child Friendly Sefton methodology to ensure that all programmes and projects had children and young people at the heart of their development and implementation; and future opportunities and action areas for 2024 and beyond to ensure continued incorporation of social value into the Growth and Strategic Investment programme, and the inclusion of particular emphasis on children and young people, ensuring they were at the heart of everything the Council did.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

1. The Strand – Social Value Report 2023 (published December 2023)
2. Marine Lake Events Centre – Social Value Report December 2023 (published March 2024)
3. Vinci Social Value Plan for Strand demolition and construction project 2024 (published March 2024)
4. Safer School Streets project overview (January 2024)
5. Sefton Council, Social Value (Employment and Skills) from development, Supplementary Planning Document (published May 2023)
6. The Sefton Beacon (published February 2024)
7. Safer School Streets – Child Friendly Projects Analysis (February 2024)

The report concluded by seeking feedback on key issues and opportunities arising from the Programme, and on areas of potential interest for further review and focus in future years.

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

- The active consideration of employment related opportunities for local care leavers and the emphasis placed on this by the Council's Employment and Learning Team
- The appearance of Tom Jones at the Salt and Tar Music Weekender in August 2024 was referred to and suggestions were shared about how best to showcase how Sefton was successful in securing such an international artist to appear at the festival; and how this would help not only with one of the Council's leading priorities for the regeneration of Bootle, but to the wider Sefton area
- The importance of the Strand acquisition for regeneration purposes and the current repurposing of the shopping centre as another investment project with a strong emphasis on social value and the positive impact this would have on the local community

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- The importance of the establishment of the Child Friendly Sefton methodology to support ensuring that all programmes and projects had children and young people at the heart of their development and implementation
- A statement was made that employers engaged wholly or mainly in construction industry activities (in other words, when construction activities took up more than half of the total employees' time (including subcontractors)) should be encouraged to join the Construction Industry Training Board levy programme; and that CITB provided grants for construction industry employers who provide training for their workforce
- The engagement with young people to seek and use their views in Growth and Strategic Investment Programmes, including the Sefton's Borough of Culture programme

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the social value outcomes from the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Place be requested to submit future annual reports on the social value outcomes from the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme.

49. REFUSE AND WASTE RECYCLING

Further to (Minute No. 5. (2)) of the meeting held on 27 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking approval of recommendations arising from an informal meeting of the Committee, in respect of refuse and waste recycling.

The report indicated that the Committee had previously agreed that a review be undertaken on the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter, that a visit be arranged to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre); that an informal meeting of the Committee be held following the visit; that the visit and informal meeting took place on 15 January 2024; and that the informal meeting made a number of recommendations.

The report concluded that the informal meeting of the Committee had no formal decision-making powers and, accordingly, for decisions of the informal meeting to be actioned, formal approval was required by this Committee.

A Member commented that any proposals for the introduction of communal bins should be given careful consideration as public opinion on this matter was mixed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be

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requested to investigate measures that could be introduced as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes to compel landlords to have a level of control over their tenants to alleviate the anti-social actions of littering and dumping rubbish in rear entries;

- (2) the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) be requested to investigate the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals; and
- (3) the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues.

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

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the Work Programme for 2023/24; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S).

In respect of the membership of the LCRCAO&S the Committee was updated that at its meeting held on 29 February 2024 the Council had appointed Councillor Robinson to serve as Councillor Howard's replacement and Councillor Hart had been appointed as the new Scrutiny Link.

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

- The role of registered social landlords in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 2029
- Information was sought on the opportunity, through collaboration with colleagues in Children's Social Care, for a focus on care leavers as part of the Council Housing Governance and Management Arrangements
- Information was sought on the role of registered social landlords to help meet the capacity challenges associated with the procurement of temporary accommodation
- Potential topics of care leavers and housing; and the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-

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led) proposals to be the subject of reviews at informal meetings of the Committee

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) in respect of the selection of topics for review at informal meetings of the Committee:
 - (A)
 - (i) an informal meeting of the Committee be arranged to consider the topic of the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers;
 - (ii) an invitation be extended to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) to take part in the informal meeting;
 - (iii) representatives of care leavers, the Corporate Parenting Board and registered social landlords be invited to the meeting; and
 - (iv) the informal meeting take place on either the 15 or 19 April 2024 and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to liaise with Members to secure the most mutually agreeable date and time for the meeting; and
 - (B) an informal meeting of the Committee be arranged in the new municipal year to consider the topic of the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals;
- (3) the briefing notes in respect of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029; Council Housing Governance and Management Arrangements; and Procurement of Temporary Accommodation be noted; and
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

51. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - JANUARY 2024 TO MARCH 2024

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

Councillor Howard, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills referred to Sefton@Work's relocation to new premises in Bootle Strand; that planning was underway to host a celebration event on 14 March 2024 to mark the official launch of the new premises and celebrate 20 years of delivery of employment programmes to Sefton residents; and invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend the event.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (2) Members of the Committee be invited to the celebration event on 14 March 2024 to mark the official launch of Sefton@Work's relocation to new premises in Bootle Strand; and
- (3) Councillor Howard be thanked for her attendance at the Committee.

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	25 June 2024
Subject:	Council Housing Programme	Wards Affected:	All
Report of:	Assistant Director Economic Growth and Housing		
Is this a Key Decision?	No	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	No
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To update the committee on the Council's Housing Programme.

Recommendations:

That the committee:

- (1) notes the contents of this report and endorses the approach which is being taken

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To ensure overview and scrutiny of this area of work.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

A number of alternative options were considered and these are outlined in the body of the report.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. There are financial implications from the delivery of the programme of work outlined in this report, however, these are all considered separately and presented for approval as required.

Implications:

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

Financial: Financial implications relating to this work are considered separately by members	
Legal: Legal implications relating to this work are considered separately by members	
Human Resources: None – this work is currently delivered through existing staff resources.	
Equality: None	
Impact on Children and Young People: This work will have a positive impact on Children and Young People through the provision of affordable and stable housing.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Yes
Have a neutral impact	No
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. The programme of work outlined here will have a positive impact as the housing developed through this programme will have high levels of energy efficiency compared to the average property in the borough.	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable: Council housing will provide high quality, affordable and stable housing for those that need it in the borough.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Good quality housing is a basic requirement of a confident and resilient community
Commission, broker and provide core services: Once operational Council Housing will be a service provided by the council.
Place – leadership and influencer: None
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: Rental income will be generated by this project.
Cleaner Greener: The properties developed through this programme will have high standards of energy efficiency compared to the average property in the borough.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7690/24). The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5790/24) have been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the meeting

Contact Officer: Lee Payne

Tel: 07812 776372

Email: lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In January 2021 Cabinet considered a Strategic Business Case proposal to re-enter the Social Housing market through the acquisition of properties from Sandway Homes, at their site at Buckley Hill Lane for use as affordable housing.
- 1.2 At the January 2021 meeting Cabinet agreed:
 - (1) the strategic case for Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market through the provision of council housing for rent set out in this report;
 - (2) give authority to negotiate the terms to acquire one block, comprising nine apartments, as the start of its future stock of council housing from Sandway Homes, as part of Sandway's development at Buckley Hill Lane Netherton;
 - (3) give approval to register Sefton Council with the Regulator of Social Housing as a social housing provider;
 - (4) give authority to apply to Homes England to become an Investment Partner;
 - (5) instruct officers to develop a Business Plan for council housing provision which sets out greater detail for the operational requirements, including financial modelling and management arrangements;
 - (6) give authority to pursue the procurement of a suitable housing association to provide the required housing management services, and delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing to appoint a management agent;
 - (7) to the procurement and appointment of suitable consultant(s) to assist undertake associated tasks set out in this report and arising from the recommendations in this report. The costs will be met from within the existing budget for the Economic Growth and Housing Service. Delegate

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the appointment of the consultants to the Head of Economic Growth and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing; and

(8) that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet setting out the terms to acquire the council housing stock from Sandway Homes, and which sets out the Business Plan and proposed operational arrangements.

1.3 The Council currently has approximately £5m of capital available to fund the acquisition of Council Housing as a result of the Right to Buy Receipts Sharing Agreement with One Vision Housing and from commuted sums secured via S106 agreements. It is made up as follows: uncommitted receipts and S106 commuted sums.

1.4 In December 2021 a Workshop was held with Cabinet to sketch out the plan the approach which was to be taken to this work.

The key conclusions from the Workshop session were as follows:

- There is a strong corporate commitment among Councillors and Senior Officers to take forward Council housing in Sefton. It is important that we continue to move forward with this and move forward positively;
- It is important to understand what we want to achieve and how we are going to achieve it and be clear on the aims and objectives of a programme;
- It was recognised that Sefton are not setting out to achieve a large development programme but will rather start small, take a cautious approach and grow slowly ensuring that housing need is at the heart and centre of a programme;
- Financial resource is finite and will determine the scale and pace of a programme with grant funding opportunities to be maximised;
- The relationship with Sandway Homes offers the lowest risk option including opportunity to target housing need through early identification of homes required and this unique position should be prioritised;
- Ensure that the programme connects to wider corporate objectives including that of the housing management requirements;
- Commit to Social Rent tenure being the starting point ensuring true affordability but consider the use of Affordable Rent on a scheme-by-scheme basis;
- Consider structures that could reduce the financial risk of Right to Buy.

Strategic Rationale

1.5 Over the past few years there has been a growing acceptance in Government that councils need to play a greater role in meeting new build housing targets. Although very little additional council housing has been developed in the last 50 years the active participation of local councils acting as developers and landlords is something that government are actively encouraging. Sefton

Council has already partly responded to this through the establishment of Sandway Homes, its wholly owned private housing development company.

- 1.6 As is the case with other Local Authority areas the Council is currently experiencing significant homeless pressures due to the 'cost of living' crisis and changes to the structure of the housing market, particularly rent increases in the private sector. There are currently approximately 200 households living in Temporary Accommodation in the borough, at significant financial cost to the council, and to the lives of those affected. The direct provision of social housing will help meet the needs of those who need affordable and stable housing in the borough. The programme supports one of the key themes of our Housing Strategy 2022- 2027; to meet peoples housing needs.

2. Progress to Date

- 2.1 Since the Cabinet resolution of January 2021 a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to establish a new Council Housing Programme (CHP):

- *Buckley Hill Lane (recommendation 2 and 8)* – Cabinet considered a report in November 2023, approving the acquisition of 18 apartments for social rent at Buckley Hill Lane.

Agreement has been reached with Sandway for the purchase of these properties which are expected to be handed over to us in April 2025.

In May 2024 a grant application was submitted to Homes England for the scheme. The application includes our application to be a Homes England Investment Partner (recommendation 4)

- *Regulator of Social Housing (recommendation 3)* – In November 2021 the Council successfully registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as approved by Cabinet in January 2021.
- *Development of a CHP Business Plan (recommendation 5)* – Ark Consultants were appointed in July 2022 to help officers prepare a Business Plan as instructed by Cabinet in January 2021. Cabinet approved this Business Plan in April 2023.
- *Procurement of a Management Agent (recommendation 6)* – A local Registered Housing Provider has been selected for this role following a procurement exercise.
- *Consultant Team (recommendation 7)* – in order to help develop the CHP external consultants have been procured and used where necessary to provide specialist advice to officers.

3. Phase 1 Business Plan

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Delivery Model Option Appraisal

- 3.1 Specialist housing consultancy Ark Consultants were appointed to prepare the Business Plan and with reference to the conclusions of the December 2021 Workshop event followed a process agreed with officers to complete this commission. In preparing the Business Plan Ark carried out a number of interviews with key officers as well as speaking to Cabinet Member Housing and Communities. The initial stage of the Business Planning process was the preparation of an options appraisal study evaluating a number of different delivery models. Following approval of the preferred option following the Option Appraisal stage they began work on the Council Housing Business Case.

Options Appraisal – Business Plan Part A

- 3.2 Four delivery models were appraised as part of the Option Appraisal process:

- A) Direct Delivery via the Council's General Fund
- B) Establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (or expanding the role of Sandway)
- C) A Joint Venture with a Private Developer/Contractor
- D) A Joint Venture with a Registered Provider (housing association)

- 3.3 Each of the delivery models were assessed against 14 criteria:

- Strategic Fit
- Council Control
- Capital Cost/Viability
- Start Up Costs
- Operational Revenue Costs
- Retained Equity
- Legal Implications
- Tax Implications
- Right to Buy Implications
- Skills/Experience
- Flexibility
- Resilience
- Social Value
- Balance of Risk

- 3.4 The delivery models were scored against each of the above criteria and the full analysis is contained within the Option Appraisal report appended to this paper at Appendix I and summarised below:

Option	Strategic Fit	Council Control	Capital Cost	Start Up Cost	Operational Revenue Cost	Retained Equity	Local Implications	Tax Implications	RTB Implications	Skills/Experience	Flexibility	Resilience	Social Value	Risk	Total
Direct Delivery	8	7.5	4.5	1	6	7.5	4	2.5	1	2	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	61.5
SPV/Sandway	6	4.5	3	1	6	6	2	1	4	3	6	3	3	3	51.5
JV with Developer	4	3	6	1.5	8	3	3	1.5	2	3	3	4.5	3	4.5	50
JV with an RP	4	3	6	4.5	6	3	3	1	3	4	4.5	3	3	6	54

3.5 As can be seen the direct delivery option scored the highest of all of the options.

3.6 Under the direct delivery model homes will be in the legal ownership of the Council and the programme under the Council’s direction, control is at a high level. Because the Council has already registered with the Regulator of Social Housing an application can be made to access Homes England grant on eligible schemes. The Council will also make an application for Homes England Investment Partner status alongside our first grant application for the Buckley Hill Lane site. We do not anticipate any issues with this process and extensive discussions have already taken place with Homes England over an extended period about our Council Housing Programme and they are very supportive. The control environment will need an appropriate level of policy, process and authorisation procedures and these are in development.

3,7 The strengths and weaknesses of the direct delivery model are as follows:

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STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Straightforward and deliverable</p> <p>Enables the Council to retain ownership of assets</p> <p>Most rented homes developed will be social rented</p> <p>Tenants have high security of tenure</p> <p>The Council will have an additional tool in its box to support affordable housing development in Sefton</p>	<p>There is less flexibility with tenure than in some other models</p> <p>Over 199 homes will require HRA re-establishment</p> <p>Tenants of social rented homes will have the Right to Buy</p> <p>Outsourced services for development and management will be required</p> <p>There is an additional scheme viability gap for the Council to bridge</p> <p>Achieving an effective governance and organisational model can be difficult</p>

- 3.8 As detailed in the table above future Council Tenants will have the Right to Buy their homes. However, this would have to meet what is known as the 'Cost Floor Rule':

A special limit on the amount of discount may apply if the property is newly built or acquired, or where there have been improvements, repairs or maintenance work on the property. This is known as the 'cost floor rule'.

If a total of £5,000 or more has been spent in the 10 years (15 years for properties built or acquired by the landlord on or after 2 April 2012) before the right to buy application, the discount must not reduce the sale price below the amount that has been spent.

Ongoing repairs and maintenance work to existing properties (as opposed to work on recently acquired dwellings) can only be counted if the cost of the work exceeds £5,500.

- 3.9 As part of their commission Ark Consulting considered an Exit Strategy of selling the portfolio of stock to an existing Registered Provider should RTB sales undermine the Business Plan. Any sale of the portfolio to an existing Registered Provider will ensure that it is retained as affordable housing.

Business Plan Overview

- 3.10 The Phase 1 Business Plan for the Council Housing Programme is outlined below:

Site	Units	Timescales	Progress
Buckley Hill Lane	18 x 1 & 2 bedroom apartments for	Handover April 2025	The scheme has started on site and the 18 apartments

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	social rent		are expected to be handed over in April 2025
Bootle High	8 – mix tbc	TBC	Pre-development
Benthams Way	11 – mix tbc	TBC	Pre-development

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	25 June 2024
Subject:	Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Regeneration, Economy and Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for 2024/25; to 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; to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; to seek a potential date for an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers; and to ascertain whether the Committee wishes to pursue, at an informal meeting of the Committee, the topic of the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals.

Recommendation: 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) consideration be given to the selection of a topic(s) for review by informal meetings of the Committee;
- (3) consideration be given to a date to hold an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers;
- (4) consideration be given to whether the Committee wishes to pursue, at an

Agenda Item 5

informal meeting of the Committee, the topic of the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals; and if so, then the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills, be requested to submit a report or presentation to the meeting that supports the aims of the review;

- (5) the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above; and
- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

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: (including any Risk Implications)

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
Legal Implications: None
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.
Impact on Children and Young People: No

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. However, the report makes reference to the selection of a date to hold an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the topic of the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers. Any recommendations arising from this informal meeting may have a positive impact on children and young people.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

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

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. However, the report makes reference to the selection of a date to hold an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the topic of the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers. Any recommendations arising from this informal meeting may have a positive impact on children and young people.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report.

Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; and Green Sefton Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan.

Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.

Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of a report in the Work Programme relating to the Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth

Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.

Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; Green Sefton Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan.

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What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5754/24/24) and the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7654/24/24) have been consulted and have no comments to make. 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 Place
Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services
Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)
Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)
Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services)
Assistant Director of People (Communities)
Assistant Director of Place (Commercial Development)

(B) External Consultations

Chief Executive of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2024/2025
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

- 1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2024/25 is set out in **Appendix 1** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.

- 1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.4 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.

2. **Informal Meeting Reviews**

2.1 In previous years it has been the usual practice for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.

2.2 However, last year the Committee agreed to adopt a new approach by arranging informal meetings to undertake short reviews of services rather than establishing formal Working Groups.

2.3 The Committee's views are therefore sought on topics for review at informal meetings of the Committee.

2.4 For the information of Members, a criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix 2**. This is used to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

2.5 **Provision of Housing for Former Looked After Children who are now Care Leavers**

2.6 At its meeting held on 5 March 2024 the Committee considered the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee. In this respect, the Committee resolved (Minute No. 50 (2) A) that:

- (i) an informal meeting of the Committee be arranged to consider the topic of the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers;
- (ii) an invitation be extended to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) to take part in the informal meeting;
- (iii) representatives of care leavers, the Corporate Parenting Board and registered social landlords be invited to the meeting; and
- (iv) the informal meeting take place on either the 15 or 19 April 2024 and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to liaise with Members to secure the most mutually agreeable date and time for the meeting.

2.7 Unfortunately, a mutually agreeable date could not be found for the meeting.

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Following discussion with the former Chair of the Committee (Councillor Dowd) it was agreed to wait until the new municipal year to hold a further consultation exercise to agree a date for the meeting. Accordingly, the views of the Committee are sought on potential dates to hold the informal meeting of the Committee for consultation with Members.

2.8 **Engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council**

2.9 At its meeting held on 5 March 2024, the Committee also agreed that an informal meeting of the Committee be held about the formal and informal processes for engagement between officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) and at Sefton Council, relating to the review, approval, funding, development and implementation of strategies, policies and projects. This relates to both regionally-led (LCR CA-led) and locally-led (Sefton Council-led) proposals.

2.10 If it is agreed to proceed with this informal meeting later in 2024/25 then the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills, be requested to submit a report or presentation to the meeting that supports the aims of the review.

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

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

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

3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.

3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at **Appendix 3** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.

3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

3.6 The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.

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

4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 22 October 2019 (Minute No. 20).

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

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

4.4 **Role**

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

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

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

4.5 **Membership**

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

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

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 will be reported to Members at the next meeting.

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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.

4.8 **Meetings**

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link
<https://modern.gov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

Latest Meeting - 28 February 2024

The last meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 28 February 2024 and considered the following matters:

- Verbal Update from Mayor Steve Rotherham
- Progress Update on the LCR Combined Authority Five Year Climate Action Plan
- Work Programme Update 2023-24

4.9 The next meeting of the LCRCAO&S will be held on 3 July 2024. At the time of the preparation of this report the agenda for the meeting has not been published. Matters discussed at this meeting will be reported to Members at the next meeting of the Committee.

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


OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Tuesday, 25 June 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Council Housing	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
2.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
3.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 17 September 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Southport Market Update	Stephen Watson/Stuart Barnes/Mark Catherall
3.	Domestic Abuse Report	Mel Ormesher/Janette Maxwell
4.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
5.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 5 November 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report	Michelle Williams/Paul Wisse
2.	Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan	Peter Moore
3.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth	Stuart Barnes/Mike Mullin
4.	Sandway Homes Limited - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephan Van Arendsen
5.	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephen Watson
6.	Methods to increase Sefton's recycling rates; the introduction of communal bins; and wider waste containment issues	Michelle Williams/Gary Brennan
7.	Investigation of measures that could be introduced as part of the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes to compel landlords to have a level of control over their tenants to alleviate the anti-social actions of littering and dumping rubbish in rear entries	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
8.	Investigation of the inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals	Stuart Barnes/Derek McKenzie
9.	Inclusive Growth	Stephen Watson
10.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
11.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 21 January 2025, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Presentation from Liverpool City Region Strategic Waste Partnership Manager about the changes in waste legislation and what that will mean due to the statutory requirement for the collection of food waste in 2026;	Paul Fraser to liaise with LCR
3.	Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts
4.	Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services	Michelle Williams
5.	Green Sefton Annual Review 2024	Michelle Williams/Mark Shaw
6.	Serious Violence Duty Review - provide an opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny members to take an active part in the review	Mel Ormesher/Steven Martlew
7.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
8.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

Tuesday, 11 March 2025, 6.30 p.m., - Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth	Stuart Barnes/Mike Mullin
2.	Social Value and the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme	Stephen Watson
3.	Public Engagement and Consultation Panel Annual Report 2024	Jayne Vincent
4.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
5.	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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APPENDIX 2

SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

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

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

APPENDIX 2

KEY QUESTIONS

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

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

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 JULY 2024 - 31 OCTOBER 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agenda Item 5

APPENDIX 3

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:-

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

APPENDIX 3

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Procurement of Temporary Accommodation	Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk
Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842
Southport Pier	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk
Eastbank (Enterprise Arcade) Business Case	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Procurement of Temporary Accommodation To seek approval for the procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless households.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	25 Jul 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 20/06/2024 to 25/07/2024. Reason: Work is continuing on the procurement specification and pack			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of People (Communities)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Customer Services (Strategic Support).			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails and Phone Calls.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Procurement of Temporary Accommodation			
Contact Officer(s) details	Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan Approval of the Phase 1A Business Plan outlining future housing development by Sandway Homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	25 Jul 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 23/05/2024 to 25/07/2024. Reason: There is a delay in the preparation of the Business Plan due to information, notably tenders for future schemes being late			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	None			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

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APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Pier Update relating to Southport Pier, following progression of pre-construction work (and in advance of any award of the required capital funding, at the time of adding to the forward plan)			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	25 Jul 2024 12 Sep 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Cambridge			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	potential external funding bodies; other key stakeholder groups such as Southport Pier Trust			
Method(s) of Consultation	external communications activity			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Pier			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Eastbank (Enterprise Arcade) Business Case Business case for Eastbank project (formerly Enterprise Arcade)			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Sep 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Cambridge			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Southport Town Deal Board			
Method(s) of Consultation	via Southport Town Deal consultation process held in 2019-2021			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Eastbank (Enterprise Arcade) business case			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk			

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	25 June 2024
Subject:	Cabinet Member Reports – March 2024 to June 2024		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cleansing and Street Scene Communities and Partnership Engagement Housing and Highways Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Regeneration, Economy and Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period March 2024 to June 2024.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

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

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

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

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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

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(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):								
Legal Implications:								
Equality Implications: There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. Any equality implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
Impact on Children and Young People: No There are no direct impacts on children and young people arising from this report. Any implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will <table border="1"><tr><td>Have a positive impact</td><td>No</td></tr><tr><td>Have a neutral impact</td><td>Yes</td></tr><tr><td>Have a negative impact</td><td>No</td></tr><tr><td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td><td>Yes</td></tr></table> There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.	Have a positive impact	No	Have a neutral impact	Yes	Have a negative impact	No	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
Have a positive impact	No							
Have a neutral impact	Yes							
Have a negative impact	No							
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes							

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Dowd's, Doyle's (Green Sefton element), Harvey's, Lappin's and Veidman's portfolios during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to their portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose.

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

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

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

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Cabinet Member - Cleansing and Street Scene
- Cabinet Member - Communities and Partnership Engagement – to follow
- Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways
- Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element)
- Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills – to follow

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.2 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, are the most recent Cabinet Member reports for the Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills portfolios.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Peter Harvey	Cabinet Member Cleansing & Street Scene	June 2024

Operational In-House Services

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

The service continues to investigate options regarding the electric charging infrastructure capacity with a view to increasing the amount of charging points we have across our depot sites boroughwide. As the EVC market expands it has resulted in some of the electrical charging points across our buildings and depots becoming outdated and now require removal and/or upgrading. The only 2 that have continued to be maintained remain at Hawthorne Road Depot, Bootle, and Tulketh Street Depot, Southport. Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in H&S to determine the best approach.

The Transport & Vehicle Maintenance Service remain compliant regarding legal obligations to the Traffic Commissioners Office in line with our obligations for the Authority's Operator's Licence. The service has continued to maintain our Operator Compliance Risk Score at the highest level, due to the continuous preventative maintenance programme for the whole of Sefton's fleet.

The service is looking to fill a vacancy for a fitter within the workshop at Hawthorne Road Depot. Recruitment is challenging given the current employment market and external wage gaps. There has been recent recruitment of 2 new apprentices within the service. The first being within the Administration Office and the second is working in the workshop garage and will work alongside our experienced fitters with an aim to be fully qualified within 3 years. The service remains committed and fully invested in the Council's apprenticeship programme.

The MOT testing facility continues to be successful, current operating targets are above the national average for testing. Plans are in place to implement a training programme of current fitters to ensure greater resilience within the MOT facility with an aim to provide the necessary training to ensure a wider cohort of the workforce are qualified MOT testers.

Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in Waste Services regarding fleet, given the potential food waste collection implementation date of 2026.

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Specialist Transport Unit – Operations

Following discussions with colleagues in Travel Support & Commissioning, the service has made progress to incorporate additional Adult Social Care (ASC) passengers onto existing SEND routes.

STU have now assessed routes and are awaiting a decision from ASC regarding an implementation date. By incorporating the additional ASC passengers, it would result in a significant saving to ASC as current in-house transport arrangements could be extended and utilised, reducing the cost of a full external route being commissioned.

The service continues to progress procurement of its fleet renewal programme and information has been passed to colleagues in ASC and SEND regarding fleet renewal to progress this matter.

Discussions continue with the Transport Manager to assess options with particular attention to decarbonisation of the vehicles and all EV options.

The current Operations Manager of the service plans to retire at the end of July 2024. The service will be undertaking recruitment for a replacement as soon as possible, to ensure business continuity.

School Crossing Patrol Service

At the commencement of March 2024, the School Crossing Patrol Service recruited an additional 6 patrol staff. There are now 4 remaining vacancies within the service, and we are hopeful to continue to recruit and fill these posts. The latest recruitment drive has been extremely successful as it is always challenging to attract individuals to this role given its unique criteria.

The service is currently undertaking supervisory visits on all established crossing sites in Sefton. The service has completed 60% of eligible sites so far this term. It is on target for 100% by the end of July 2024. The service has provided 97% cover for all established crossings during Quarter 4 2024/25.

As part of the Department for Education's new minimum expectation of a 32.5 hour school week with a deadline for implementation of September 2024, many schools are planning to implement changes to the structure of their school day from September 2024.

Any change of this nature will directly impact the School Crossing Patrol Service, particularly patrols that cover more than one school. If schools alter the opening and closing times it could result in an increase of hours required for the patrol staff. Any increase to daily operating times will need further discussion as this will place a financial pressure on the current revenue budget. The service is looking at requests and will provide updates on cost implications for the service.

Thank you to all patrol staff for the hard work and commitment they have demonstrated past and present, and continue to do so, in keeping the children and pedestrians safe whilst crossing the busy roads in Sefton.

Building Cleaning

The service continues to perform well, both financially and operationally.

The service made a budget surplus in 2023/24 which contributed to the overall financial outturn position of Operational In-House Services.

All schools have re-signed up to SLA's for 2024/25 despite increased costs and the fact school budgets are under significant pressure. Some schools have indicated that they are considering testing the market by putting their service out to competitive tender.

Recruitment of staff remains challenging in certain parts of the borough with some posts receiving no applications, causing operational difficulties.

Catering

Financial Position

The service had to increase charges to schools during 2023/24 as it was set for a large overspend. Understandably, the charges were met with some resistance by schools, especially as they were increased mid-year at a time when school budgets are stretched. However, the service achieved its budget target for 2023/24 which would not have been possible without these increased charges.

All contracts with schools have been retained for 2024/25 but some schools have raised the possibility of putting their service out to competitive tender during the next 12 months.

The price of a school meal to parents was increased in April 2024. This followed consultation with schools and the Cabinet Member for Locality Services as part of the Council's budget setting process. Whilst schools have the freedom to set the price of meals, most follow the recommended Sefton price.

The Council's Obesity Strategy

The catering section is continuing to support the Council's Obesity Strategy. The Service Manager chairs the Live Well subgroup, which is tasked with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

Sefton ARC

Sefton ARC has recently reviewed all of its school SLA's which are now available for schools to purchase via the School Education Portal. The SLA's and associated costs have been fully revised offering greater transparency and a much easier purchase route. The new SLA's began on the 1st April 2024 and will be on a rolling annual contract.

We continue to monitor and work closely with the education services daily to maintain service delivery. Since the introduction of the new transparent SLA's the feedback from school governors has been encouraging and complimentary.

One of the biggest changes to the SLA's is the removal of the patrol service. With wider interventions for security, such as CCTV being high on the list of most schools across the borough, the requirement for a physical patrol service has reduced. Sefton ARC will now provide a response service, which has been welcomed by the schools and has allowed the

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service to significantly reduce the cost and pass this saving directly onto the schools. The Patrol Service can still be purchased separately if required.

This has been a huge success for the team at Sefton ARC who have worked closely with the Sefton Education team and has been met with positive feedback from the educational services with the new SLA offering options of value for money whilst continuing to provide a comprehensive service. The service has now managed to secure a total of 118 school SLA's, an increase of 25 compared to the previous financial year.

Whilst a number of new town-centre cameras have recently been upgraded, further exploration of funding opportunities continues to secure maintenance agreements.

Our electrical team are currently recruiting for 2 apprentice electricians, through education studying at Hugh Baird College, following the previous apprentices gaining full qualification and moving into full time roles within the Sefton ARC team. This has proved a huge success in providing career opportunities.

We are currently working with North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and ASC to explore the potential option of introducing a welfare response service and a lifting service for residents throughout Sefton. This will mean fewer people requiring emergency service response and going to hospital.

We have introduced a new 12-hour rota pattern for our ARC responder roles. This has helped the service improve, with each responder now working alongside an ARC operator for a full shift to enable greater efficiency and consistency. Staff have also welcomed this change to help achieve a better work/life balance.

Sefton Careline:

Careline call response time for 99.3% calls answered within 60 seconds

In this period, the Careline answered a total of 16,563 calls, of which 99.3% were answered within 60 seconds, exceeding the TSA accreditation target (97.5%)

Referrals and installations

A total of 324 referrals were received by the Careline over the last quarter with an average of 68 installations per month. This figure is inclusive of requests from social services, hospital discharges and OT's (Occupational Therapists) and includes additional appointments for visits to test, replace and review equipment.

Lone Worker option

Following a two-week trial, the Lone Worker option for Sefton employees is now available for across the council.

Analogue to Digital Switchover A2D

The analogue telephone network will cease to operate by the end of 2027 when all telephone lines across the UK will switch to a digital network. The A2D switchover will have an impact on all Telecare Services across the UK. It is essential that we transition our existing service users onto digitally enabled Lifeline products.

This will also impact our Public Realm CCTV. Meetings have taken place with the current provider BT and an increase for the line rental is expected in April 2025. A scope has been

drafted and meetings held regarding transitioning from legacy fibre cables onto new digital WI-FI to bring the ARC and its infrastructure up to current standards. External funding is currently being explored and eventually the market will be explored through procurement to carry out the project requirements.

To date, the service has successfully secured £135,000 from the DFG Fund and expects to secure further funding this year. The equipment will be distributed to our existing Careline Service Users to replace their analogue lifeline. Lifeline equipment is provided on a rental basis and, as such, equipment is continually re-purposed. Existing service users are currently being reviewed and equipment is being replaced as required.

New equipment

Testing with two new suppliers of TECS equipment is now complete and the service will now start to distribute new digital devices as part of the Careline packages currently available. This is a significant step forward for Careline who are now able to work with four market leading suppliers.

The service will continue to keep abreast of any new technical developments within the TECS (Technology Enabled Care Service) industry to ensure we continue to provide our residents with the best equipment to suit their individual needs.

Public Conveniences

A contract for a further 6 months is now in place for DANFO LTD to continue to provide the service, maintenance and reconciliation of coinage for the public convenience facilities within the borough. Sefton ARC are currently working with the procurement team to put in place a long-term contract for the service maintenance offering value for money to the council through a framework. The new specification will also take into consideration the requirement to upgrade current facilities where required, and the necessity for disabled public toilet provision.

Burials and Cremations

Business as usual within the service in terms of day to day operations. Investment opportunity is still progressing and an update will be provided in due course.

Waste Management

The service is continuing to move in the right direction, and it has recently undertaken a recruitment drive with vacancies on the collection teams going out to advert. This will continue to build resilience within the service and has enabled resolution of long-standing issues around staff holidays.

On-going project work to look at wider waste containment options for properties that still receive a sack collection are ongoing. Possible solutions to challenges regarding infrastructure and storage issues continue to be explored .

Strategically, the Assistant Director continues to attend the LCR Strategic Waste Partnership for future planning regarding the implementation of the waste related aspects of the Environment Act 2021 such as the implementation of weekly food waste collections scheduled for 2026. DEFRA have also announced the requirement for councils to collect a

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wider range of dry recycled material and all authorities across the LCR are working with MRWA to ensure that future disposal facilities will be in a position to accommodate the wider range of waste streams.

The service will shortly be recruiting for a Waste Minimisation Officer to join the team. The main focus of this job role will be education and behavioural change with the aim of increased recycling across the borough - with specific targeted campaigns on areas of low participation in addition to supporting the wider service with waste related projects.

Street Cleansing

The weed control programme is now in the second of four sprays for the season. There is also a programme of high-speed road weed clearance (dual carriageway locations that require traffic management) which will receive three visits during the growing season from April – September.

Officers carry out sample inspections to ensure evidence of 'die back' of weeds approximately 10-14 days following scheduled spray. If the weeds remain green, this is reported back to the weed control contractor for re-visit. It has proved to be a successful process in the previous 2 seasons and ensures the 3rd party contractor is appropriately performance managed.

Rear entries continue to cause concern across the borough. The service is working closely with colleagues from the Environmental Enforcement service to clear fly-tipped waste. The service is currently undergoing a recruitment drive which will see a number of vacancies filled over the next few weeks and will add much-needed resilience to the current operation.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Highways and Housing	25 June 2024

The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council’s regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land. The report looks at key areas of activity and successes over the past 3 – 6 months and challenges for the few months ahead.

A Planning Services Charter was published in May 2024 [Planning Services Charter 2024 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk). This sets out our values, our service standards, our priorities and how we are accountable.

1. Development Management

- Numbers of planning applications have settled at just below pre-Covid levels
- 100% of major and minor applications we determined ‘in time’ between January – March 2024, and 98% of ‘Other’ applications (mainly householder)
- This high level of performance is dependent on staff agreeing ‘Extensions of Time’ which the Government is proposing to severely restrict
- Without using EoTs, our performance would be 24% of Majors (national target 60%), ‘Minors’, 39% against a target of 65%, ‘Other’ applications 61% against a target of 80%.
- The number of complaints received by the Enforcement Team in 2023-24 has increased to 697. Most have been dealt with without resorting to formal action.

Challenges

- If the Government’s reforms are introduced this will limit then opportunity to negotiate improvements to schemes and is likely to lead to more refusals. This could damage our reputation with agents as agents they would either have to appeal our decision (which is time-consuming) or submit a fresh application
- We regularly receive proposals for children’s homes which are often difficult to resist purely on purely planning grounds but pose challenges corporately. We are working closely with colleagues in Children’s Social Services to improve how we respond to these proposals.
- Securing fast responses from statutory consultees, in particular some of our internal consultees

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2. Building Control

- The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking, carrying out of site inspections and percentage applications given full or conditional approval.
- The Team's market share remains just above the national average for local authority building control teams.
- In June 2024, the Building Control Team is to hold interviews, for a vacant permanent Senior Building Control Officer position. A further vacancy has arisen for a Building Control Officer and it is hoped that this post will be advertised and filled in July/August 2024.

Challenges

- The Team is struggling to meet its locally set plan-checking targets due to long-term staff absence and dealing with on-going staffing vacancies. Over the last 12 months, market share has reduced with the recent loss of some key members of staff to private sector and taking key clients with them.
- The biggest challenge is the implementation of the Building Safety Act, which requires all Building Control Bodies and their individual team members, to undergo an assessment of competency, which needs to be completed by 6th July 2024.
- Sefton's Building Control Team is due to be assessed by the newly established Building Safety Regulator, sometime in mid-2024, in order to confirm they can continue to operate as a Building Control Body.

3. Local Planning

- The Council, in its recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), have been able to demonstrate a 8.7 year supply of deliverable housing land significantly exceeding the Government's required 5 year supply.
- Sefton have also recently passed the latest Housing Delivery Test (published December 2023), having had 142% of the required homes completed over the previous 3 years.
- A number of Supplementary Planning Documents are currently being progressed:
 - Developer Contributions to Southport Tourist Infrastructure
 - Nature (update)
 - Boundary Treatments
 - Short Term Holiday Lets
- The Combined Authority have recently published a draft Spatial Development Strategy. The policy team co-ordinate a Sefton response which was submitted to the Combined Authority in February.
- Bootle Area Action Plan - The policy team is assessing all comments submitted and will use these to help update the final draft of the Bootle AAP which is planned to be taken to Council for approval in July.
- The Local Plan team have recently completed its second Movers' Survey. This looks at where people moved **Page 58** built homes in Sefton and why.

Key challenges

- Getting the Bootle Area Plan finalised, approved for publication, submitted to the Secretary of State and examined in public
- Taking account of the various government guidance in relation to planning and plan-making.

4. Heritage and Conservation

- 10 Listed Buildings were removed from the Listed Buildings at Risk register through enforcement, repair and restoration as part of development proposals.
- Site surveys of 152 Listed Buildings and Heritage at Risk Assessments were carried out - this amounted to 27% of the total Listed Buildings within the Borough, exceeding the target of 20% per year.
- The capital build part of the Southport Townscape Heritage project is progressing - 509-515 Lord Street, a long term vacant grade 2 Listed Building, has been restored and repaired and removed it from the Council's Buildings at Risk Register. The second project has now been completed at 4a Bold Street including a new traditional shopfront and tidying up the verandah

Challenges

- The key challenge is to unlock difficult Heritage at Risk development sites and facilitate their sustainable future.

5. Technical Support

- Performance in completing searches has been consistently above target throughout the year until a slight reduction in performance in quarter 4 here due to staff availability in other feeder departments
- Performance in validating major applications in quarter 4 is below target. This shortfall is due to the retirement of a key member of staff. We are currently in the process of recruiting for this post
- A key success has been consistently in the HMLR gold standard of best performing Local Authorities for maintaining the Local Land Charges register.

Challenge

- The key challenge for the Technical Support team over the next 12 months are ensuring adequate staff levels and training.

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
<i>COUNCILLOR</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>DATE</i>
Mhairi Doyle	Public Health and Well Being	June 2024

Green Sefton update

Overview

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

It is clear that several areas of the service are struggling to meet expectations / basic standards within resources available and efforts are being made to address this. This has resulted in further increase in complaints, and negative press coverage for several areas of the service into the peak season of 2023/24.

To start to address this, an increase in revenue budget was approved by Full Council as part of the budget setting process for an additional £200k into the management of play areas / facilities from 2022/23 onwards (increasing the budget from £45k per year), and for several of the actions from the Coast Visitor Action Plan for the delivery of those actions on a permanent basis with a further £300k annual uplift – to include additional daytime and evening ranger staff, a full time Community Ranger for the Coast, increased litter management at key gateways, ongoing provision of temporary toilets at beach entrances, and a communications plan to encourage appropriate visitor behaviour. Further, the unachievable income targets were removed from April 2023, which allowed the service to present a balanced budget for 23/24. Further, the replacement of machinery and equipment tender has been concluded during this quarter, with the anticipated shortfall being met with the ring fencing of fees and charges increases (including those of the Burials and Cremations service, see later) – this has all been approved by Cabinet Members for Health and Well Being, and at Cabinet and Budget Council also.

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

- the 500k Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier funding for conservation works over the next 5 years along the coast was accepted in February 2022, and the first two years work have proved successful attracting regional media attention
- a major bid for Botanic Gardens is in early development, with a Task Group set up (chaired by Cabinet Member, and with ward councillors and community reps),

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and approval to consult publicly given at the Consultation and Engagement Panel in March 2022. Further, a successful pre-development bid to the HLF has provided resource and capacity to lead and deliver this consultation from Winter 2022 to Summer 2023, and to undertake the required surveys and analysis etc, all in order to be able to make a bid some time afterwards (whenever match funding has been secured). In late 2023, this consultation has completed and design workshops have taken place with the Task Group to develop and understand the scale and scope of the project, with the outcome of the consultation in mind – the formal report to note this and agree next steps with Cabinet Member has been published for a decision by Cabinet Member at the time of writing

- consultation has been completed for the allocation of 'legacy' monies left for Hesketh Park in a residents will, and cost estimate / details for priority projects have been developed and a contract has now been signed with the trustees to formalise this suite of projects to be developed and delivered. Officers are now going the through the process to confirm the appointment of a part time, fixed term, project manager. The fixed term gardener posts have been appointed, with the Ranger 3 (lead) gardener, and new apprentice post, commencing in April 2024 and already making a positive impact on the ground. A contractor has been commissioned to undertake the Sensory Garden improvements, and these should be complete in early Summer 2024 also.
- the Ainsdale Beach gateway schemes reached various blockages, and so a paper was presented in June 23 which agreed to pause all, and to seek resources for development of an overall 'vision' document for the area instead. A consultant has now been appointed, stakeholder engagement is ongoing, and a new 'vision' for the area should be published later in 2024
- Cabinet gave formal approval to seek tenders for the future investment in Southport Golf Links in March 2022. The White House Café reopened in May 23 (with SHOL operating), and the course tender itself remains in abeyance, awaiting capacity and resources to proceed. Meanwhile, it has been noted that a local private golf course is developing an investment plan for their site with a very similar model – a watching brief is to be adopted to learn lessons from their efforts
- An unsolicited Expression of Interest has been received by a group of golfers at Bootle Golf Course who are interested in seeking external funding to renovate, and then operate, the clubhouse building at Bootle Golf Course. Officers are assessing their proposal at the time of writing, and which will be discussed with/ reported to Cabinet Member in due course
- the FCERM team continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partner agencies on seeking capital monies to reduce flood risk. Public consultation on the 'Making Space for Water' project in Churchtown/ Crossens commenced in September, and has now concluded – this will lead to a Planning Application to be submitted shortly, together with a funding bid to the Environment Agency early in 2024.
- The FCERM team are also leading on the development of the major Crosby Coastal Defence scheme – although the funding model requires that the main works cannot start until at least 2027+, monies have been allocated for interim works, on which consultation has begun in March 2024, with an intention that works may commence later in the year.
- A review and audit undertaken on our approach and resourcing for tree management has given rise to funding being allocated for an additional two tree officers to be appointed from 24/25 (one permanent and one fixed term, offers have been made, we are awaiting formal confirmation and start dates at the time of writing). This will add much needed capacity to meet HSE standards on regularity of inspection regimes, responding to recent court rulings also, and will

also allow officers to explore and understand the tree management of land owned by the Council, but not in the Green Sefton portfolio. This 'discovery' work will undoubtedly lead to more practical management works needed in time, and discussions will need to assess the resourcing of such.

What is performing well

The 2023 Annual Review was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny (regeneration and skills) committee at the November 2023 meeting. This was well received, and outlined some of the successes for the service in the last year, and also explained some of the challenges. A narrated version of the presentation has been uploaded on the website here: www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton

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

This has then flowed into revisiting the Service Plan, which was adopted by Cabinet Member in October 2023, and officers now continue to develop the suite of Key Performance Indicators which will flow from this.

What requires improvement and what action is being taken

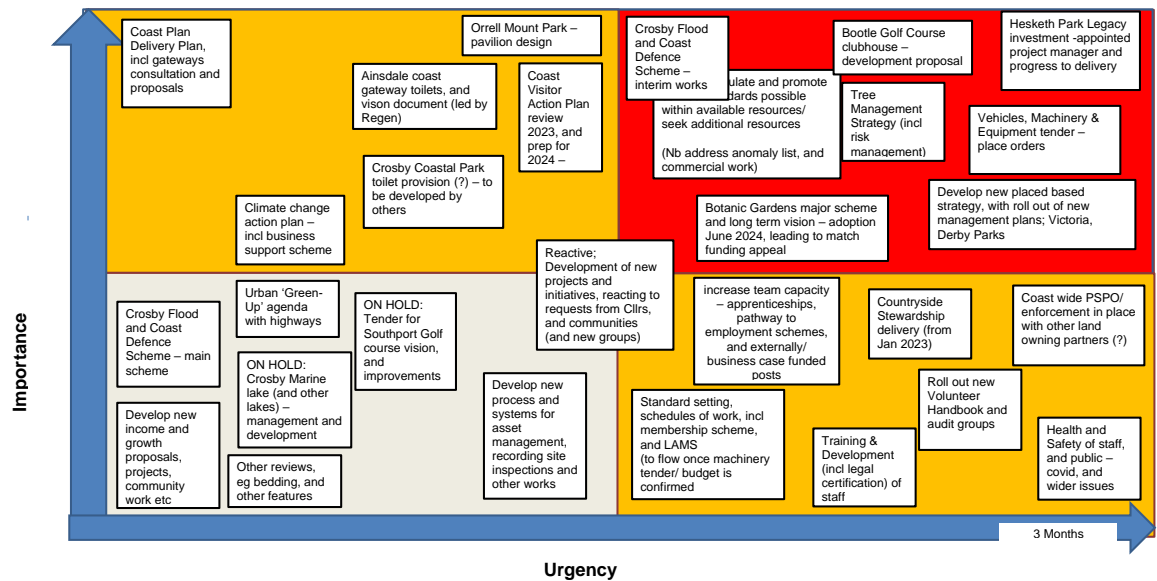
Overall work programming

The Annual Report highlighted the tracking of the services overall performance against the actions contained within the previous Service Plan which was RAG rated over the previous two years. This clearly showed that many actions slowed down or stalled since the pandemic started due to a reduced staffing capacity to deal with developmental issues, and new operational demands being placed upon services as the 'staycation' phenomena resulted in massive increases in visitor numbers and other pressures on our sites. The approach of tracking progress will be replicated moving forwards, measuring progress against the newly adopted Service Vision, and Service Plan

The action taken to address this has been to develop a more sophisticated work programming approach for the service, with an 'urgency / importance' matrix developed, as below. This was presented to O&S Committee within the Annual Review, but has also led to each sub-team within Green Sefton creating their own version, with updates being discussed at team meetings, and individual monthly 1:1's. The overall team matrices now also form part of regular updates.

Agenda Item 6

GREEN SEFTON STRATEGIC WORKLOAD MATRIX – as presented to O+S Oct/ Nov 22, and updated 25.11.22, 10.2.23, 10.3.23, 25.7.23, 15.9.23, 19.3.24, 30.5.24
(to be reported to Cabinet Member on a regular basis, and updated through the year)



Working with Volunteers

A specific challenge in recent times has been ongoing issues arising with some of our volunteer groups. Probably symptomatic that the service no longer undertakes land management and maintenance to the standards previously seen, and that there is less officer capacity available to respond to complaints, nurture groups, and pro-actively keep them aligned – several groups have become dissatisfied with the Council and / or have suffered from internal issues leading to corporate complaints being raised.

The action taken to address this is to refresh the Volunteer Handbook – this guiding document introduces volunteers to setting up a group, however it also now goes much further in terms of setting out expectations to be placed on volunteers about their Policies and Procedures expected of a group, including Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, and overall Code of Conduct – both in terms of the way volunteers treat each other, and also about how they deal and interact with Council officers.

Following discussion with Cabinet Member during 2022, and comments received (including those from CVS, legal and personnel colleagues), the final version was approved in September 22. This has since been shared with all volunteer groups, with a request that the sign up to the updated document, and expectations contained therein.

Defining Standards

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