

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 21st January, 2025

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Southport

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 McNabb
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 5 - 16)

Minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2024

4. Food Waste Collection - Legislative Changes

To receive a presentation from Rosie Sleep, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Partnership Manager, on changes in waste legislation and what that will mean due to the statutory requirement for the collection of food waste in 2026.

5. Update on Progress of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy

To receive a presentation from Andrea Watts, Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships

6. Operational Activities delivered via Operational In-House Services

(Pages 17 - 24)

Report of the Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services

- 7. Zero Tolerance Policy** (Pages 25 - 58)
Report of the Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships
- 8. Domestic Abuse Update** (Pages 59 - 90)
Report of the Assistant Director - Communities.
- 9. Serious Violence Duty**
Presentation by Mel Ormesher, Assistant Director - Communities
- 10. Work Programme 2024/25, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 91 - 122)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
- 11. Cabinet Member Reports - November 2024 to January 2025** (Pages 123 - 174)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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THIS SET OF MINUTES IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN"

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON 25 NOVEMBER 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor Hart (in the Chair)
Councillor Corcoran (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Cavanagh, Hinde, McKee, Webster and
Lloyd-Johnson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Doyle, Dowd and Lappin

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Killen, Morris, Sammon, Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member – Cleansing and Street Scene and Councillor Veidman, Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Corcoran	Minute No. 27 – Cabinet Member Communities and Partnership	Member of the advisory board of the organisation "At the Libraries"

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

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19. SELECTIVE AND ADDITIONAL LICENSING SCHEMES - ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIONS OF LITTERING AND DUMPING RUBBISH IN REAR ENTRIES

Further to Minute No. 49 (1) of 5 March 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Housing advising that the council currently operated a Selective Landlord Licencing scheme in Bootle and Additional (HMO) licencing schemes in Seaforth, Waterloo and Southport; that these schemes placed obligations on the landlords to ensure that their tenants were aware of how to properly dispose of refuse from the property; and the exploration of whether additional licencing conditions could be placed on the landlord to prevent fly-tipping in rear entries by their tenants.

The report advised that as part of HMO licencing schemes, requirements were already in place relating to the external areas and refuse; but that the Committee wished to explore whether the licencing schemes could be used to compel landlords to have additional control over their tenants.

The report identified that robust proof was required to successfully prosecute tenants who breached the rules; that the Council was currently 20 months into a 5-year Licencing scheme and therefore was unable to add additional licencing requirements to the current scheme; and that additional requirements could be added to specific properties of concern, however, blanket changes to licencing conditions could not be introduced until 2028 when the current scheme ended.

The report concluded by detailing that the Council was currently working with several registered social housing providers who owned properties in the 'Poet Streets' area of Linacre Ward to look at issues relating to fly-tipping in rear entries; that regular joint inspections of the area had recently re-started to identify fly-tipping issues and ensure that this was cleared up as soon as possible, and that where evidence existed that was sufficient to take action against perpetrators that this happened; and that it was hoped that this approach could be rolled out in other fly-tipping 'hotspot' areas.

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

- concern was expressed at the limited resources currently available to deal with irresponsible landlords
- context was sought on why people fly-tip
- information was sought on the enforcement rates of people fly-tipping
- praise was given for work done around Poet Street and Officers were encouraged to roll the scheme out borough-wide
- lessons learned from good landlords and training offered

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Housing Standards Manager be requested to provide members of the Committee with additional information on enforcement rates of fly-tipping; and
- (2) the report on whether additional licencing conditions could be placed on landlords to prevent fly-tipping in rear entries by their tenants be noted.

20. RECYCLING & WASTE CONTAINMENT

Further to Minute No. 49 (3) of 5 March 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services that updated on the current Waste and Recycling Collection Service and waste containment and which included project work underway; and that outlined impending national changes within the waste industry and the subsequent impact those changes would have upon the service within Sefton.

The report indicated that Sefton Council collected approximately 118,602 tonnes of household waste from approximately 120,000 properties across the borough on an annual basis; that this was a combined total from all waste streams; that approximately 98,000 properties participated in the garden waste collection service delivered on a 3-weekly basis; that Sefton's 2021/22 recycling rate was 33.2% and each household in Sefton generated on average 614.9 kgs of waste that year; and that in comparison to the rest of the Liverpool City Region (LCR), Sefton ranked around mid-table but was significantly below the national average for recycling performance which was about 45%.

The report also detailed the environmental, financial and local drivers for change relating to the way waste was collected both in Sefton and as part of a wider LCR approach to improve performance and environmental impacts as well as driving down costs; legislative changes introduced by DEFRA which made it mandatory for councils, from April 2026, to provide a kerbside food waste collection on a weekly basis and additional requirements to collect a wider range of recycle; and the LCR Strategic Waste and Resources Partnership, which aimed to harness the benefits of working collectively and that Sefton was one of 7 partners in the Partnership, comprising the 6 LCR Local Authorities and MRWA.

The report provided information on the Sefton specific Corporate Transformation Project within the Waste Management Service, the purpose of which was to review current resource utilisation such as vehicles and staff to ensure well balanced and efficient schedule creation and that rounds would also be developed with sufficient capacity for any pre-approved housebuilding sites within the Borough that were due to commence over the next 3 year period; indicated that wherever possible, standardised collection arrangements would be implemented boroughwide but that in the future, any location that required a bespoke collection

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arrangement / presentation point would be assessed on a case-by-case basis; that Sefton had recently appointed a Waste Minimisation Officer and detailed the main duties of the post; and the corporate risks associated with the procurement of products (food caddies and vehicles) in a saturated market as all local authorities that didn't currently offer a food waste collection service would be undertaking the same steps.

The report concluded that there was considerable change on the horizon for residents across the Borough; that significant engagement and communications would be delivered timely and through a variety of forums to ensure a wide reach; and that all partners and stakeholders would have a role to play in disseminating information and promoting consistent messaging as Sefton prepared for change.

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

- communication to residents concerning what currently can and cannot be recycled in Merseyside
- the introduction of food waste collections for properties requiring bespoke collections
- collection crews access to bespoke collection data
- reduced collection service over the Christmas period
- the introduction of a waste minimisation officer
- Members opportunity to update residents while litter picking and operating community skip schemes

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the report be noted;
- (2) the national changes within the waste industry be noted; and
- (3) the impact of national changes within Sefton be noted

21. LOCAL PLAN POLICY – PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RECYCLING FACILITIES IN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Further to Minute No. 49 (2) of 5 March 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Planning Officer on the potential inclusion, within the Local Plan, of the need to provide recycling/community recycling facilities in development proposals.

The report indicated that National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) did not provide guidance on the need for community recycling facilities, but did allow Local Authorities to address non-strategic issues that arose in their area through the Development Plan process; that the Development Plan for Sefton included the Sefton Local Plan (2017) and the Merseyside and Halton joint Waste Local Plan (2013); that the Local Plan did not include

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any requirement for community recycling facilities in new development, but policy WM9 “Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New development” included in the Local Plan did set out that the design and layout of new development must, provide for the “facilitation of collection and storage of waste, including separated recyclable materials”.

The report also detailed the potential for a new Local Plan policy and how this could be achieved, but that in the best-case scenario, a new Local Plan would be unlikely to be adopted for at least three to four years.

The report also detailed issues to be consider for including separate recycling schemes with development; and referred to previous recycling facilities that had been secured on commercial development sites, for example, on car parks of large supermarkets and retail parks; and consideration given to communal recycling facilities within both existing and new residential developments. Problems associated with this were that doorstep collections were already provided by Sefton, which each household could use; and the challenging issue of where the recycling facilities would be sited as the facility both needed to be readily accessible for anyone to use but not situated immediately next to someone’s home. When Operational In-House Services trialed communal bins in 2021 there was significant objection to them being cited near to peoples’ homes.

The report concluded that notwithstanding the issues referred to, the Council would continue to apply existing policies that required that space was included within new premises and homes for the safe and easy storage of recycling material ready for collection, and layouts of new development to allow for the collection of waste and recycling; and that it was not considered justifiable to have a Local Plan policy requiring communal recycling facilities to be provided within new developments. However, it was something that could be reviewed when the next Local Plan /Waste Local Plan was commenced.

Members of the Committee commented on the following issue:

- supporting evidence in the form of quantitative data

RESOLVED:

That it is not currently considered appropriate for the inclusion of a new policy for communal recycling facilities within major new commercial and housing developments in the next Local Plan and/or Waste Local Plan.

22. 2023/2024 FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION ANNUAL REPORT

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The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services that presented the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Annual Report 2023/24.

The report indicated that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 previously required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions; and that following the cessation of this requirement, the Committee had requested that the annual FCERM review be submitted to it instead to ensure that delivery of flood and coastal erosion risk management was undertaken appropriately and that the Committee's views were considered in the future delivery of the Council's FCERM function.

The Annual FCERM review, attached as an appendix to the report, covered the 12-month period September 2023-2024 and detailed the following key areas:

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

The report concluded by seeking any comments on the FCERM review to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing.

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

- concern was expressed at the challenges associated with removing sand from sand dunes along the Blundellsands – Waterloo promenade
- the different bodies/groups set up to deal with flood risk
- flood risk mitigation in Maghull
- making space for water
- thanks was given to the relevant teams following the Bowles Street, Bootle flooding on 30 September
- concern was expressed at possible under-reporting of flooding events
- public consultation with young people and schools

RESOLVED:

That the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

23. SOUTHPORT MARKET UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Housing advising that Southport Market (the Market) was repurposed into a Food and Drink Market and opened in July 2021; and outlining its year 3 performance, particularly in the context of economic conditions affecting the sector and venues including, but not limited to, Southport Market.

The report referred to the importance of the offer at the Market continuing to evolve; that in the third year of trading no changes had occurred in the business mix with all traders still trading, with many of the original traders still operating in the market despite the continuing pressure in the hospitality sector; that two units had changed their trading name to reflect menu changes; and that the Market also had a large events space called The Extravaganza Room that could accommodate 200 people.

The report advised that food traders and the bar paid a turnover rent rather than a set rent measured on square footage; that this arrangement was now common practice in many food markets and allowed the landlord to be rewarded the more successful the operation became; that it also importantly allowed new start-up businesses breathing space to become established and to build up a robust cash flow; and provided information on the financial performance of the Market in respect of:

- Year 2 v Year 3 Food and Drink Sales
- Year 3 Rental Performance v Business Plan Targets
- Year 3 Expenditure v Business Plan Targets
- Year 3 Actual v Business Plan
- Revised Year 3 v Business Plan
- Year 2 Actuals V Year 3 Actuals

The report also referred to the sector pressures in respect of the trading environment for the hospitality sector which continued to see significant changes and challenges due to cost-of-living crisis, inflation and other factors impacting on Southport; and detailed that the events space to the rear of the Market continued to be a success, with multiple sell out events throughout year 3 with thousands of tickets sold for Easter events, themed nights and Christmas extravaganza events and that income from events was up 128%.

The report concluded that as part of the new business plan an extensive review by an independent hospitality expert was taking place, and that the review would look at the full operation including trader menus and sales, market operation including staff training and welcome, capital investments, events and marketing.

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

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- future works planned
- future events planned i.e. extravaganza
- the demographic of the clientele
- how traders were being supported during recent economic challenges

RESOLVED:

That the report on the year 3 performance at Southport Market be noted.

24. SOCIAL VALUE OUTCOMES FROM THE GROWTH AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director - Regeneration, Economy and Assets which advised that the objectives of the Growth and Strategic Investment programme (GSIP), 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; and that the aim of the report was to provide Members with visibility of the work that had been undertaken, was being undertaken, and was planned, on projects across the Council's GSIP that demonstrated "social value", which for the purposes of this report, was defined as the wider value created by capital projects beyond the economic and financial.

The report indicated that the Council's GSIP comprised a range of projects across all parts of Sefton, of a wide range of types, sizes, funding sources and delivery models; and provided an overview of activity and outcomes relating to social value from a number of example projects as detailed below, alongside an overview of the wider approach to incorporation of social value into all projects:

- Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC)
- Southport Pier
- Bootle Strand
- Sound City Course
- Teenage Market Event

A copy of the Bootle Strand Demolition Social Value August 2024 and MLEC Social Value Report August 2024 reports were attached as appendices to the agenda.

The report also provided information on Employment and Learning with particular reference to care experience young people support; that the Invest Sefton and Property teams had been supporting affected local businesses following the unspeakable events in Southport in July 2024 which included support with the relocation of the Hart Space to The White House, Southport, to enable continuity of their good work; and action areas for 2025 and beyond to ensure continued incorporation of social

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value into the GSIP and beyond, that would include particular emphasis on children and young people, ensuring they were at the heart of everything the Council did.

The report concluded by seeking feedback on key issues and opportunities arising from GSIP, 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:

- praise was given for the Sound City Programme
- the possibility of linking up aspiring young musicians with the Royal British Legion for relevant events
- possible expansion of the Teenage Market Event across the borough

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Growth and Strategic Investment programme be noted.

25. SEFTON ECONOMIC STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 47 of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Housing that updated on progress with the Sefton Economic Strategy (the Strategy) Action Plan for the period April - September 2024.

The report indicated that the Strategy set out the Council's framework and delivery for services providing support to the local economy and was aligned with Sefton 2030 Vision; that it was also being aligned with the emerging Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's emerging Growth plan; and that Cabinet approved the framework strategy on 3rd November 2022 and gave authority to the Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing, in conjunction with Cabinet Member - Regeneration, Economy and Skills, to approve the subsequent Action Plans that were reported to this Committee.

In respect of the Strategy the report provided information on:

- Governance and reporting
- Economy
- Business Growth and Employment
- Business Growth and Investment
- Partnership working
- Cross Council activities
- Inward Investment
- Southport Business Recovery Fund

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- Employment and Opportunities for work
- Regenerated Places – Growth and Strategic Investment Programme
- Regenerated Places -Tourism
- Summaries of other Strategy objectives and subsets

The report concluded that the work identified in the Strategy provided a basis for the continuance of the Council's commitment to sustainable and inclusive economic growth for Sefton; and sought feedback on the Strategy.

The Sefton Inward Investment Prospectus summary and the Sefton Economic Strategy performance dashboard July-September 2024 were attached as appendices to the report.

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

- thanks were given for the thorough report
- economic growth across the borough

RESOLVED:

That the update on progress with the Sefton Economic Strategy (the Strategy) Action Plan for the period April - September 2024 be noted.

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

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the Work Programme for 2024/25; the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and that advised of a change to responsibility for consideration of matters associated with asset management.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items be noted;
- (2) the reports about Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies; Sandway Homes Limited - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies; and Domestic Abuse be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 21 January 2025;

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- (3) it be noted that responsibility for asset management issues now rests with this Committee rather than the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) and therefore, future reports/presentations on issues associated with disposal of surplus council owned land/asset management strategy will be submitted to this Committee;
- (4) the items contained in the Forward Plan which fall within the remit of this Committee be noted; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

27. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2024 TO NOVEMBER 2024

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills.

Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member – Cleansing and Street Scene had submitted his apologies for absence and had indicated that he was keen to give Members the opportunity to query his report. Therefore, if Members wished to raise any questions on his report he requested that Members emailed their questions to him.

Councillor Dowd, Cabinet Member - Communities and Partnership Engagement presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Events taking place across Merseyside commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls
- Work done by Sefton's library service

Members of the Committee commented on the following issue:

- Operation Banger

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Sefton@Work's engagement with the wider city region
- Department for Work and Pensions schemes
- Property Services
- Marine Lake Event Centre

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Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- the variety of work being undertaken across Sefton's coastline including but not limited to; invasive species, Southport Beach, sand dunes, tree clearance, sheep / cow led schemes

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

- the use of livestock in the management of the sand dunes.

Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member – Cleansing and Street Scene had submitted his apologies for absence. However, Members of the Committee directed questions/comments on the following issue towards the Assistant Director - Operational In-House Services:

- weed control in residents' rear entries

RESOLVED: That

- (1) 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; and
- (2) Councillors Dowd, Doyle and Lappin be thanked for their attendance at the Committee.

Update Report re:
Operational activities undertaken by Operational In-House Services
 (excluding Green Sefton which will be a separate report to committee)

Date of meeting:	21 st January 2025		
Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Skills)		
Report of:	Assistant Director, Operational In-House Services		
Portfolio:	Cleansing & Street Scene		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan of O&S (R&S):	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

This report provides a synopsis of the operational activities that have been undertaken by Operational In-House Services during 2024.

Recommendation:

- (1) That the committee note the content of the report

1. Operational In-House Services:

Waste Management & Street Cleansing

The Waste Service and Street Cleansing Service operate from 3 depot locations across the Borough. The service provides domestic collections of residual, recycling and green waste streams. Additionally, there is a commercial service offer for residual and recycling in addition to a commercial and community skip service, clinical waste collection service and bulky household waste removal. The service

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currently has 839 commercial waste contracts in place.

As part of the Corporate Transformation Programme, a route optimisation project of domestic collection rounds began on 1st November 2024, within initial draft rounds expected in early 2025 for first review. The aims of the review are to ensure efficiency and best utilisation of all available resources; staff, vehicles, fuel usage etc. There is a significant amount of work required to deliver the change and innovation that is much needed within the service. There are around 9,000 properties in the south of the Borough still receiving a sack collection service. The service aims to deliver a standardised approach where possible and to this end a 'sacks to bins' project is now underway. Unfortunately, due to the infrastructure of some of the properties, it may not be possible to transition all premises over to an alternative weekly collection (AWC) model. Non-standard premises will be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that the full service offer of both residual and recycling collections are in place.

The published recycling rate for 2021/22 for Sefton was 33.2% which falls short of the national average of 45%. The recent introduction of the role of Waste Minimisation Officer will bring a much needed focus to this area, with engagement, education and behavioural change being at the forefront of future campaigns.

December also saw the appointment of the new Service Manager for the Waste Management & Street Cleansing Service. This is a welcome appointment and will bring management stability to a large, high profile, front facing, statutory, core service. The new manager will resume the lead role for the route optimisation project and provide leadership for the service

The Street Cleansing Service have been undertaking a significant amount of work on rear entry clearances, predominately within the south of the Borough. There is a challenging culture of casual fly tipping in some areas and the service have been working with colleagues from Environmental Enforcement to engage, educate and promote behavioural change moving forward. This will be further underpinned by the work of the Waste Minimisation Officer who joined the service in October 2024 and will work across both the Waste and Street Cleansing functions, undertaking a variety of promotional and project work.

The Street Cleansing Service have also undertaken leaf fall collection throughout the Autumn period. The service prioritise locations of heavy leaf fall between October – December.

Burial and Cremation Service

The Burial and Cremation Service provide a sustainable and professional service to the bereaved. The service operate 2 crematoriums at Thornton and Southport in addition to cemeteries at Bootle, Liverpool Road, Duke Street, Thornton Garden of Rest and Southport Crem (cremated remains only). At present, burial and cremation numbers are lower than this time last year within the service however, the national pattern is that they are expected to increase during winter months.

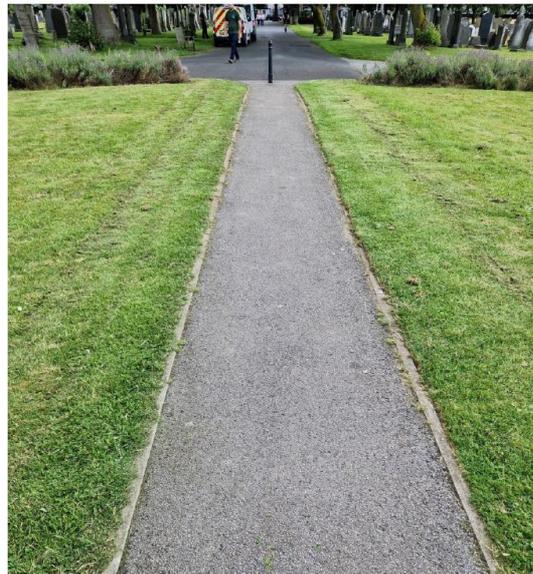
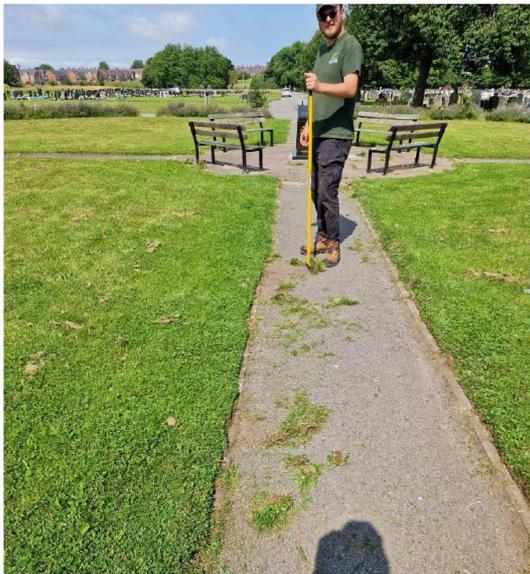
Investment planning continues to progress well, with consultants and architects on

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board, preparing a full business case for the service, including evidence of much needed investment to ensure service continuity for the future. Investment is essential due to upcoming changes in legislation.

Grounds maintenance works continue, with some areas more challenging than others. As in previous years, the service are keen to work with the community payback service to assist with maintenance works in cemeteries. The Natural Alternatives Team within Green Sefton have undertaken much needed improvement works within Bootle Cemetery this year and will continue to provide on-going support as resource allows.

Images demonstrating the tasks undertaken by Natural Alternatives;



Repairs and maintenance continue to be prioritised, including the completion of the much-needed improvements to the canopy at Thornton Crematorium

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recently. Memorial testing on headstone stability continues, to ensure the safety of the public visiting cemeteries is a priority.

A new contractor for the music/media provider for both crematoriums has been implemented. The new contractor 'Obitus' has undertaken training for staff, funeral directors and celebrants to ensure a smooth transition to the new equipment which was installed in both sites during December 2024. This is a welcome improvement on the former provision, with upgrades to sound and visuals, including a large screen in overflow areas and two large screens within chapels.

Catering & Building Cleaning Services

Building Cleaning

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Cleaning Contract

The above MAT put its Cleaning Services out to competitive tender earlier this year. The tender was for two schools. The service currently hold the contract for one of the schools, The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco.

Since the initial tender was released, a further four schools have joined the trust in September 2024. The Trust plans to have up to 28 schools in the MAT in the coming years. Officers from the Building Cleaning service delivered a presentation to the Trust in early October. The result of the tender exercise was initially due in July, but the process has taken longer than expected and the contract has yet to be awarded.

Peterhouse School

Peterhouse School is a non-maintained Specialist School for children and young people aged 5 to 19 who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. The school is located in Southport and is administered by the Autism Initiatives charity.

The service has provided a cleaning provision to the school for a number of years. The school decided to put the contract out to competitive tender, with the new contract due to start in January 2025.

Officers from Building Cleaning gave a presentation to the school in late November and were informed shortly afterwards, that they had retained the contract which is excellent news.

Catering

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust Cleaning Contract

As with Building Cleaning, the MAT has put its Catering contract out to tender. At this stage it only involves one school, Sacred Heart Catholic Academy.

The service currently operate this contract and as with Building Cleaning, with more schools joining the MAT every year.

Officers from the service delivered a presentation to the trust in October. As with the Building Cleaning contract, the tendering process has taken significantly longer than

the trust anticipated, and the contract is yet to be awarded.

Rimrose Hope Primary School

The school currently operate its school meal's service in-house, with the school employing the catering staff directly. The school is exploring the possibility of returning to the Council's service, and positive discussions have taken place to this end.

The Council's Obesity Strategy.

The catering service continue to support the Council's Obesity Strategy.

The Service Manager chairs the Live Well sub-group, which is charged with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

School Crossing Patrol Service

The service has consistently provided 100% cover at all established sites across the borough and is a much valued service within the community. Recruitment does tend to be challenging within this service, both in terms of the commitment level required by staff throughout the day and especially during the winter months due to the demographics of the staff cohort. The service will begin a new recruitment campaign after the Christmas period to seek Patrols for the current vacancies.

Specialist Transport Unit

The Specialist Transport Unit provide home to school and day centre travel for the most vulnerable in our society. The service currently operates 17 x School Routes and 9 x Adult Social Care routes.

The service are working closely with colleagues in ASC regarding the provision of transport for customers to and from Day Centres in the south of the borough. The STU currently provide transport for 131 SEND customers each day and 52 x ASC customers to and from their destination.

The service users are amongst some of the most vulnerable in our society who need the support and extra care that the STU In-House service provides.

The service remained operational throughout the Christmas and shutdown period to ensure ASC service users are accommodated and transported throughout.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

The Transport and Fleet Service have provided a full maintenance and fleet compliance service to all departments within the Authority and continue to do so. The rating from the Traffic Commissioners Office remains green, this is the highest standard on the rating system.

Agenda Item 6

The service continue to provide a full MOT service to both internal and external customers and remains 100% compliant with inspections and services. As part of the services contributing to net zero by reducing carbon emissions within the fleet work continues, the proposal is still to have 1 petrol tank at the main Hawthorne Road Depot.

The Food Waste Collection Vehicle and Food Caddy pre-procurement report has been agreed by Cabinet Member regarding the Councils intent to purchase the new fleet of vehicles for the impending Food Waste Collection service that will become statutory in 2026. Sefton are working closely with all LCR Authorities to establish best practise regarding waste containment and collections as a key role within the LCR Strategic Waste & Resources Partnership.

The T&VM Service remained operational throughout the Christmas / shutdown period as staff ensure the Councils fleet remain operational and legislatively compliant.

Sefton ARC & Sefton Careline

Sefton ARC & Careline, Electrical & Alarms services continue to develop, and grow its current offer in accordance with the Council's vision and core purpose and in alignment with other strategies and policies.

The service has worked closely to support colleagues through across the council through the services provided. Sefton ARC Alarms Section has recently been assessed by NSI for its installation of alarms systems, feedback from NSI was that the assessment was positive and Sefton ARC have sufficiently demonstrated the necessary criteria to retain the award. This is an excellent outcome for the service.

The service currently hold the following accreditations;

- ARC alarm receiving centre - NSI GOLD
- Alarm installers – NSI GOLD Fire & Intruder alarms also BAFE fire safety registered
- Electrical team – Niceic approved contractors
- Careline – TSA Telecare accreditation

The Careline Service continue to focus and support the transition of analogue to digital equipment as part of the national digital switchover. This work is being undertaken daily and numbers continue to fall of replacing the old analogue kit as part of the digital switchover for our clients. Careline are currently working with Procurement on the tender process for the new call monitoring platform to allow competition on the market ensuring the council is receiving value for money and a standard of service delivery through the correct procurement route.

2. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this update report.

3. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this update report.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

There are no corporate risks identified within this update report.

5. Staffing HR Implications

There are no staffing implications within this update report.

6. Conclusion

This report demonstrates the breadth of services and the wide range of activities that are delivered by Operational In-House Services. They are delivered in a high profile, front facing environment to residents, businesses and visitors to Sefton.

There are in excess of 1000 staff within Operational In-House Services and the provision of services are a touch point for a huge range of residents, clients and service users who value the quality of service they receive.

Equality Implications: There are no equality implications
Impact on Children and Young People: N/A
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7914/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD6014/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Agenda Item 6

Non-applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

Non-applicable

Contact Officer:	Michelle Williams, Assistant Director
Telephone Number:	0151 288 6159
Email Address:	michelle.williams@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Report Title: Zero Tolerance Policy

Date of meeting:	21 January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships		
Portfolio:	Communities and Partnership Engagement		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No. The decision by Overview and Scrutiny is not a Key Decision but subsequent decisions of Cabinet will be	Included in Forward Plan:	No. Not in respect of this report but details of subsequent reports to Cabinet will be
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet have agreed that the Council’s Executive/Scrutiny Protocol be updated to include the following paragraph (paragraph 6.13):

“Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fall within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, should seek the views of the Committees on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it is not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committees to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon.

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Zero Tolerance Policy and supporting documents.

Recommendation(s):

That the Committee considers the Zero Tolerance Policy with supporting documents and the submission of views to Cabinet or Council.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

The Zero Tolerance Policy has been created as a whole council message regarding any form of abusive or discriminatory behaviour but also as a guide for staff who might experience this whilst carrying out their duties. The policy acknowledges that certain staff are more at risk of this due to their protected characteristics and seeks to clarify the support that employees should receive. Employee feedback through forums such as the staff networks have made it clear that this message is wanted and an important step towards equity and inclusion within the council workforce.

The Additional Guidance for Managers provides information around providing a supportive work environment and the steps to take in the event of abuse, discrimination or harassment. A key aim of this document is to provide best practice in developing relationships with employees, so that they feel confident and safe in raising concerns should they need to.

The Guidance for Racial Abuse and Discrimination towards Staff is intended to provide specific information around the protected characteristic of ethnicity (race). This document shares the types of discrimination staff could experience, examples and reasons why they might feel reluctant to report incidents. It also describes how a work environment can be developed to ensure Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff feel supported and understood in their workplace. This has been of particular importance following the riots in Sefton this summer (2024). The Diverse Ethnic Background Staff Network have provided their views, feelings and experiences to support the integrity of this document.

The intention is for similar guidance to be developed around other protected characteristics such as disability, gender reassignment, religion and care experience, where in time all marginalised groups will have a similar document that explains their lived experiences and how they best feel supported.

2. Financial Implications

None

3. Legal Implications

Supports the 2010 Equality Act and Sefton's Public Sector Equality Duty.

4. Risk Implications

None

5. Staffing HR Implications

None

6. Conclusion

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This report has been submitted to comply with Paragraph 6.13 of the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None. There is a need to comply with Paragraph 6.13 of the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol.

Equality Implications:

The essence of this policy and its guidance is aimed at addressing equality implications broadly and has been developed in consultation with staff networks.

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

Impact on Children and Young People:

Whilst this policy and its guidance is aimed at the workforce, it should improve understanding of children and young people who identify with a protected characteristic. It also clarifies the council's stance on any abusive behaviour from Sefton residents towards its staff.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact. The policy is about behaviour between staff and residents and how they treat one another.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7891/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5991/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision:

Immediately following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 7

Contact Officer:	Emma Stewart
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Email Address:	emma.stewart@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Zero Tolerance Guidance: Racial Abuse and Discrimination towards Staff
- Manager Guidance

Background Papers:

None

Sefton Council ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Foreword – Cllr Marion Atkinson, Leader of Sefton Council and Phil Porter, Chief Executive

Sefton Council is wholly committed to equality, diversity and inclusion across our organisation and across the borough. In line with our approved strategy and as part of our agreed action plan, the implementation of a policy of Zero Tolerance towards any discriminatory behaviour towards our workforce has been a priority. We are pleased with the robustness of the policy itself, and are committed to ensuring that it is implemented organisation-wide, as comprehensively as required, to ensure support for all members of our workforce wherever necessary. We also believe that the additional guidance accompanying this policy related to specific protected characteristics will also be beneficial from a learning and development perspective, as this is a key area of focus throughout our strategy and action plan.

Alongside this policy and the associated processes, we also recognise the need for an open and transparent culture that enables colleagues to raise queries and concerns wherever and however they see fit, whether that be through line management, one of our workforce groups, through our leadership teams, or elsewhere. As Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer, not only do we keenly endorse this policy, but we support the ongoing work to develop and sustain a culture that reflects these objectives, and that continues to support and to educate our people.

We are pleased with the progress Sefton Council is making in respect of delivery against its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and the associated action plan – but there is much for our organisation to do, and our leadership is determined to ensure that we continue to improve in every respect, as an employer as well as provider and commissioner of services, and as a place leader, to help Sefton to continue to be a borough for everyone.



Cllr. Marion Atkinson
Labour Leader, Sefton Council



Phil Porter
Chief Executive, Sefton Council

Introduction

Sefton Council is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment for all staff. The Council expects staff to treat service users, members of the public and other colleagues with respect, and expects staff to be treated in the same way. Acts of violence or aggression which an employee is subjected to during the course of their duties will not be tolerated.

The Council will deal with all instances of violence, discrimination or abuse against staff in a robust and proactive manner. This Zero Tolerance Policy and associated policies and procedures have been put in place to reduce risk and to enable staff to manage an aggressive or violent situation should it arise.

It is recognised that some employees may be at increased risk of unacceptable behaviour during their normal work routine due to the nature of the services they provide. The Council will therefore endeavour to reduce this risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable, and to respond effectively if incidents do occur.

An act of work-related violence or aggression is defined as any incident in which a person is faced with an aggressive or violent situation, is verbally or physically abused, threatened or assaulted whilst undertaking duties expected of them in the course of their employment, regardless of the location at which it occurs.

These include, but are not limited to:

Verbal Abuse: any verbal abuse issued with the intent of creating distress, fear or intimidation to another individual, or group of individuals.

Physical Abuse: any intentional movement of the body which may include touching, gesturing, pushing, striking, stalking, spitting, any unwanted intrusion of “reasonable space” of an employee or an intentional use of any object towards an individual.

Creating a Hostile Working Environment: any intentional non-physical action that can be considered intimidating or harassing or which involves the explicit or implicit challenge to the safety, well-being or health of an individual.



A Hate Crime: any criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon the victim's disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity. This could include verbal abuse, physical assault, damage to property, threats, intimidation or harassment. If no criminal offence is committed it will be recorded as a hate incident.

The Council will make clear its stance on zero tolerance through prominent information in public places:

- One Stop Shops
- Council Buildings
- Family Wellbeing Centres
- Libraries and Leisure Centres

and will use the full extent of the law to protect its employees and support them in the prosecution of offenders.

To help reduce risk and impact further, all employees are reminded of their responsibilities as made under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 which dictates that they must take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions or omissions and to co-operate with the Council on matters relating to their health, safety and welfare at work.

Staff are encouraged to report all incidents so that robust data can be collected to inform future risk assessments, and so that action can be taken and staff referred for support if appropriate.

Line managers must record incidents that are reported to them, and ensure that staff are provided with appropriate support and any risk assessments updated as necessary.

Associated Policies

Assaults Upon Employees Policy – states that the Council will not tolerate any acts of violence or aggression towards any of its employees

The Dignity at Work Policy – makes a clear statement that unwanted or unaccepted harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination will not be tolerated.

Whistleblowing Policy – provides a confidential route for concerns to be brought to the attention of the Council without any fear of reprisals.

Lone Working Policy - gives guidance on what a manager should do and standards to adopt when staff are carrying out home visits

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers:

Managers should ensure that the Council's policy and agreed procedures are communicated to staff, service-users and visitors, and that they are made fully aware that the Council will take action on any assaults on employees, including reporting the matter to the Police.

Notices to this effect are displayed prominently within service areas.

Key responsibilities:

- Encourage and support staff to report all incidents of abuse
- Create a safe and supportive working environment where staff feel confident and comfortable to raise concerns, in the knowledge they will be listened to, understood and that their views about any further action will be respected;
- Establish a safe system of working and ensure that they have specific guidance for their service areas which is written and communicated appropriately to staff. This should include arrangements for lone/mobile workers;
- Carry out an assessment of the risk of violence /abuse within their working environment;
- Ensure that themselves and staff attend appropriate training;
- Ensure that records are maintained of risk assessments and training and that all reporting documentation has been completed;
- Ensure that staff receive relevant and timely support following incidents;
- Investigate reported incidents;
- Inform staff of the outcome of the investigations;
- Take appropriate action against service users who assault, threaten or abuse staff;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of any measures undertaken.

Employees:

All employees will conduct themselves in such a way as to reduce the possibility of any conflict and will not act in a way that would create a violent, abusive or unsafe workplace environment for themselves and others.

If confronted with a situation that has the potential to escalate into an abusive/violent incident an employee must make a serious attempt to remove him/herself from the situation and report the event to their manager.

All staff have the responsibility to:

- Identify high-risk situations and agree action plans with managers as part of the risk assessment process;
- Report and complete incident reports in an accurate and timely manner;
- Undertake all training identified as appropriate to their role;
- Always work in a professional way and be aware of how their own behaviour might be perceived by others;
- Consider the safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions;
- Make appropriate use of any personal safety equipment and facilities provided.

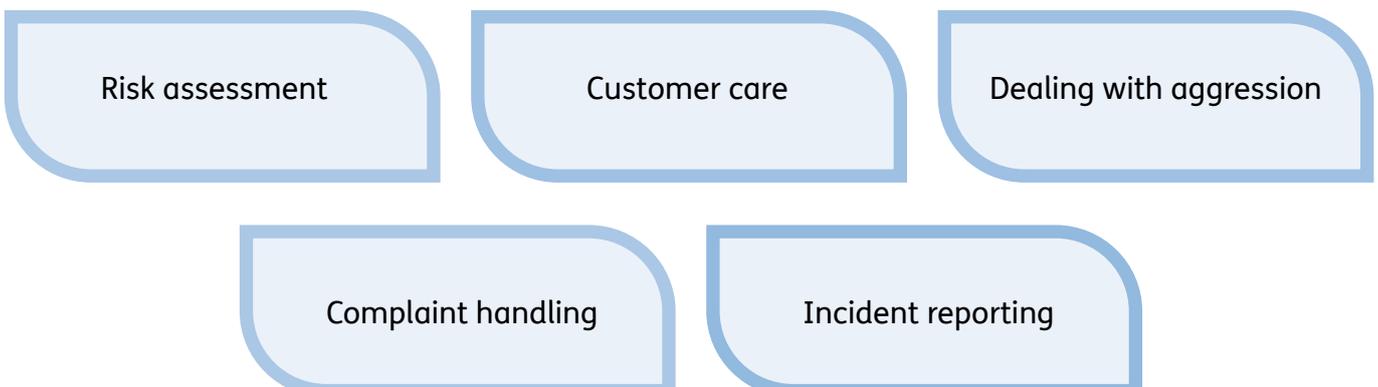
Training

Training is provided for appropriate employees to understand the challenges particular members of the community might face, manage conflict / personal safety aimed at equipping them to handle conflict and understand the issues of personal safety and the need for appropriate risk assessment and control measures.

Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff receive the training appropriate to their needs for their job role as identified in the risk assessment.

The type of training will depend on the area of work and the risk assessments associated to those activities.

Some of the training interventions that may be identified include:



Incident Reporting

Physical Assault, Threat of Physical Violence or Verbal Abuse

In the event of an employee being threatened, receiving verbal abuse or being physically assaulted in the workplace the Head of Service and the Health and Safety Advisor should be contacted immediately.

Consideration will be given in such event to reporting the matter to the police with the agreement of the employee who has been subject to the treatment.

The line manager will ensure that all possible preventive action is taken to minimise the risk of a similar incident occurring.

Actual incidents of violence and near misses will be reviewed as soon as possible after they occur, as a means of assessing whether or not there are any improvements that can be made to the risk assessment.

Police Involvement

Council employees are entitled to ask the police to investigate alleged incidents of assault against them. Management should fully support staff wishing to take this course of action.

Where there has been an act of violence in the workplace and the individual wants to prosecute, the council and the individual concerned would take advice from the police as to whether to proceed or otherwise.

Verbal Abuse

In the case of verbal abuse the Council may need to consider the seriousness of the incident before involving the police. For example, someone swearing at a member of staff could be dealt with administratively through warning letters about their behaviour. However, where the verbal abuse involves threats or the use of a weapon the police should always be informed.

Hate Crime

No hate incident or crime is too minor to report and staff are encouraged to report all incidents as soon as they occur. The hate crime reporting scheme supports people living and working in Sefton who have experienced any form of hate crime.

It offers anybody who has experienced or witnessed an incident the opportunity to report in an alternative location than a police station or to report it anonymously on Sefton's web page. Sefton Council is aware that some victims may wish to remain anonymous and respect their wishes. Fill in the online Hate crime Incident reporting form. It will be emailed automatically to the Sefton Council. The information will be stored and used only for monitoring purposes by the Sefton Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.

Incident Report Form

An [incident report form](#) must be completed by the line manager of the employee subjected to the abuse / assault and forwarded to the relevant Head of Service and the Health and Safety Advisor.

The line manager will also ensure that any necessary support arrangements, such as counselling are offered.

Following a specific violent or aggressive incident by a member of the public/service user/visitor, and after appropriate consultation, the Head of Service will consider the possibility of banning the alleged offender(s) from Council premises.

Legislation – Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 defines discrimination as when a person is treated unfairly or differently because they possess one or more of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Act.

This treatment could be one off or a regular occurrence, direct or indirect and it also doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

The protected characteristics are:

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

Sefton Council have added Care Experienced to this list.

There will be additional guidance covering the protected characteristics following consultation with staff network groups and other stakeholders.

The Equality Act 2010 states that there are four main types of discrimination, these are:

Direct discrimination - Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as their race or ethnicity. Direct discrimination also could include how a person's ethnicity is perceived regardless of whether this perception is correct or not, or the

race of someone they are associated with such as a friend or family member.

Indirect discrimination – Indirect discrimination is usually less obvious than direct discrimination. This can happen when an organisation puts a rule, policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse or negative impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one.

Victimisation - This is when you are treated badly or more unfavourably than others because you have made an allegation, supporting a complaint of discrimination, given evidence relating to a complaint of discrimination or raised a grievance concerning equality or discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Victimisation may also occur if a person is suspected of doing one or more of the above.

Other forms of unacceptable behaviour include:

Microaggressions - is a term used for brief and commonplace daily remarks, questions, or actions whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults, particularly towards groups that are discriminated against or subject to stereotypes.

Macroaggressions - Large-scale or overt aggression toward those with a particular protected characteristic, such as sex, race, or sexual orientation. Macroaggressions are obvious intentional insults where there is no chance of a mistake on the part of the transgressor to be provoking, insulting, or otherwise discourteous.

Gaslighting - gaslighting is related specifically to psychological abuse surrounding the behaviour to which a staff member has been subjected. Gaslighting is when a victim is led to doubt and question their own sense of reality regarding the behaviour they have been subjected to. This can include countering a person's memory of events, withholding "understanding", refusing to listen, "forgetting" or denying that something happened, playing down a person's feelings as unimportant or irrational, questioning the credibility of what the person is saying and victim blaming.

Harassment - Harassment occurs when someone makes you feel humiliated, offended or degraded. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic with its purpose of violating a person's dignity and or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that person.

This policy acknowledges the new duty under the Equality Act 2010 that will require employers to take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.

Equality Impact Assessment and Monitoring

Data will be collected as part of the wider Health and Safety incident reporting and will form part of the normal reporting regime to the Management Team.

The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

Data Protection

In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.

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MANAGER GUIDANCE
(Additional Guidance for
the Zero Tolerance Policy)

Manager Guidance (Additional Guidance for the Zero Tolerance Policy)

This guidance is for managers who are supporting employees within their teams or sectors, identifying with one or more of the protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- cared for & care experienced

By law (Equality Act 2010), all employers must take steps to prevent discrimination.

You should:

- understand what the law says about discrimination, and your rights and responsibilities
- recognise the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workforce
- put policies and procedures in place and keep them up to date
- inform and train your staff and managers
- create ways for staff to be heard
- make it clear how staff can complain if discrimination happens

Taking positive steps to prevent discrimination can:

- reduce the chance of employment tribunal claims and reputational damage
- make people happier and more productive at work

Public sector organisations have an extra-legal responsibility to stop discrimination, under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Managers can help create a supportive work environment by:

- Active listening (particularly during team meetings or staff supervision)
- Engaging with wider workforce initiatives that promote & celebrate diversity
- Using EIAs to review changes in policies or procedures
- Providing an 'open door' approach for staff to feel able to seek support/guidance if needed
- Challenging language or behaviours that are discriminatory within their teams

If a staff member seeks support due to experiencing discrimination, harassment or abuse, managers should:

- Take time to fully understand and listen to what the staff member is explaining (even if you are unsure at the time how the situation can be resolved, you can let them know you will seek further advice later).
- Ensure the staff member has privacy and dignity when disclosing their concern
- Reassure the staff member that they are there to support and address the concern in a way that the staff member feels comfortable with
- Advise the staff member on the different options / next steps they can take and the support that would be offered
- Be aware that this might be very difficult for the staff member to open up emotionally and your support is potentially a key part of the process to avoid further harm
- At the end of the conversation, check with the staff member what further actions have been agreed (where appropriate), who it involves and when they are expected to happen.
- Enquire if the staff member has emotional support outside of the workplace (eg family, friends) and what they might plan to do later that day for their own well-being (eg go for a walk, ring a friend, get a cup of tea)
- Check in with the staff member as to how they are, following the conversation

Managers should avoid:

- Assuming how the staff member feels, instead listen as every person's feelings or situation is unique to them despite parallels to others
- Trying to tell the staff member about themselves, other experiences or situations as the staff member needs time to talk about their own situation
- Giving the impression that the staff member must be imagining what has happened to them. Instead listen and appreciate that the staff member has been worried enough to seek your support and will benefit greatly from you hearing how the situation made them feel and what they would like to happen next (even if their preferences cannot be fully met).

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Manager Guidance (Additional Guidance for the Zero Tolerance Policy)

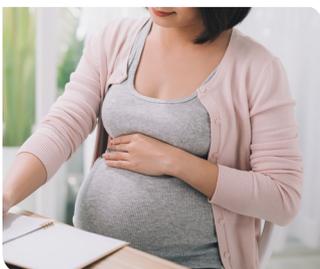
In cases involving a serious issue:

- If an issue is raised that you feel is so serious (for example, sexual or racial harassment, or serious misconduct) then you would need to advise the employee that an informal approach is not appropriate and therefore formal action needs to be taken.
- As soon as possible after an assault or any incident involving threat, verbal abuse, harassment, anti-social behaviour etc., an Incident Report Form must be completed.
- Where there is no police action or private prosecution, or where incidents less than assault occur, the Assistant Director will determine if any action is appropriate (e.g. letter of rebuke) in consultation with the employee concerned and having regard to any possible adverse reaction.

Hate Crime reporting

- The hate crime reporting scheme supports people living and working in Sefton who have experienced any form of hate crime. It offers anybody who has experienced or witnessed an incident the opportunity to report in an alternative location than a police station or to report it anonymously on Sefton's web page. Sefton Council is aware that some victims may wish to remain anonymous and respect their wishes. Fill in the online [Hate Crime Incident reporting form](#). It will be emailed automatically to the Sefton Council. The information will be stored and used only for monitoring purposes by the Sefton Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.

Seek advice from Human Resources even if you are unsure of how seriously, an incident should be dealt with.



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Sefton Council
Zero Tolerance Guidance:
Racial Abuse and Discrimination
towards Staff

Introduction from Phil Porter Chief Executive & Marion Atkinson:

Sefton Council is wholly committed to equality, diversity and inclusion across our organisation and across the borough. In line with our approved strategy and as part of our agreed action plan, the implementation of a policy of Zero Tolerance towards any discriminatory behaviour towards our workforce has been a priority. We are pleased with the robustness of the policy itself, and are committed to ensuring that it is implemented organisation-wide, as comprehensively as required, to ensure support for all members of our workforce wherever necessary. We also believe that the additional guidance accompanying this policy related to specific protected characteristics will also be beneficial from a learning and development perspective, as this is a key area of focus throughout our strategy and action plan.



Marion Atkinson

Cllr. Marion Atkinson
Labour Leader, Sefton Council



Phil Porter

Phil Porter
Chief Executive, Sefton Council

Purpose

This guidance provides additional information to support staff effectively who are at risk of racial abuse or discrimination. Its aim is to clarify how a supportive work environment can be achieved, where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff feel safe and understood by their managers and colleagues, comfortable to report racist incidents at work and their workforce potential is fully cultivated for the benefit of Sefton's community.

It also directly addresses Sefton's EDI Strategy Objectives: 3.1, 3.8, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6. In order to live up to Sefton's commitment within the workplace, racism needs to be explicitly condemned

and challenged, and this is key to providing the foundation for change. This can be achieved by setting out clear expectations for employers, for staff and for the people it delivers services to.

Britain remains a vastly unequal society despite the Race Relations Act 1976 making discrimination on the grounds of race unlawful. In 2004 the Equality Act superseded the RRA and introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty. Inequality continues to manifest itself in all areas of life across the UK including access to employment, educational achievement, becoming a victim of crime, contact with the police, the courts and custody, health outcomes, and, as has become increasingly apparent during the Covid pandemic, life expectancy. Sefton recognises its collective duty to reflect on what part it plays in either perpetuating or redressing the barriers and discrimination faced by people from Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities.

Why specific guidance for addressing abuse or discrimination towards Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is beneficial and needed:

- **INCREASED RISK-** It is recognised that some employees may be at increased risk of unacceptable behaviour during their normal work which includes Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff members. Staff feedback has also indicated that this is an area of adverse experience that is ongoing both in work and society. Racist, abusive and threatening behaviour remains a serious problem across the UK and within Sefton.
- **BENEFITS OF PLANNING & PREVENTION-** Employees benefit from a clear plan of action and support to prevent incidents and experiences where possible but also to instil a sense of confidence about how they will be supported if necessary and avoid long term distress. Employees can then have the skills and confidence to de-escalate the situation and build resilience when working in these circumstances. It also ensures they fully understand any system that is in place for their protection.'
- **CLEAR STATEMENT OF INTENT-** The phrases 'silence is violence' and 'if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem' powerfully capture the call to action for all people and organisations who care about social justice. They compel us all to work together to proactively identify and address all incidents of racist prejudice and abuse. The demand for this statement of intent, defining how as a system we intend to put our 'Zero Tolerance' of racist abuse into practice so that it becomes more than empty words.
- **SUPPORTS WELL-BEING-** The damage racism causes to a person's sense of safety and well-being can be significant but often unappreciated by the victim or those around them. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people can encounter racism throughout their lives, when in work and outside of work. It is not unusual for these experiences to become normalised or dismissed, as a coping mechanism but they can still undermine a person's mental health and well-being. However, Sefton Council is committed to acknowledging the lived experiences of their Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees and providing a safe work environment where support and understanding is consistently provided.

Definitions

Language can be a carrier of unconscious bias and prejudice, so it is important that we are all careful to use terminology regarding race and ethnicity that is sensitive and will engage with and invite input from staff. Following feedback from staff, this document will use the term Black Asian & Minority Ethnic in place of the abbreviations, BME/BAME, which are considered to be unhelpful by staff. BME refers to Black and Minority Ethnic and BAME refers to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. In this context 'Minority Ethnic' has broad meaning that includes but is not limited to the communities that experience oppression such as Eastern European, Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Turkish, Middle Eastern, Arab and Jewish. It is acknowledged that the term 'Global Majority' is an increasingly used term in the UK when discussing issues around ethnic groups, as it acknowledges how the term ethnic minority references a limited geographical context.

Legislation

Equality Act 2010 Racist discrimination is when a person is treated unfairly or differently because of their race. This treatment could be one off or a regular occurrence, direct or indirect and it also doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful. The Equality Act 2010 states that you must not be discriminated against because of your race. The Equality Act 2010 explains that race can mean your colour, or your nationality (including your citizenship). It can also mean your ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as your current nationality. Race also covers ethnic and racial groups. This means a group of people who all share the same protected characteristic of ethnicity or race. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on race which is one of the nine protected characteristics covered within the act.

Different types of race discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 states that there are four main types of discrimination within the protected characteristic of race, these are:

- **Direct discrimination** - Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as their race. Direct discrimination also could include how a person's race is perceived regardless of whether this perception is correct or not, or the race of someone they are associated with such as a friend or family member.
- **Indirect discrimination** - Indirect racism is usually less obvious than direct racism. This can happen when an organisation puts a rule, policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse or negative impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one.

- **Harassment** - Harassment occurs when someone makes you feel humiliated, offended or degraded. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic with its purpose of violating a person's dignity and or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that person.
- **Victimisation** - This is when you are treated badly or more unfavourably than others. This could be because you have made an allegation, supporting a complaint of discrimination, given evidence relating to a complaint of discrimination or raised a grievance concerning equality or discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Victimisation may also occur if a person is suspected of doing one or more of the above.

Other forms of racism include:

Microaggressions - is a term used for brief and commonplace daily remarks, questions, or actions whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults, particularly towards ethnic minority groups or groups that are discriminated against or subject to stereotypes. For example, a person asking if they can compare their holiday tan with a colleague from a mixed-heritage to see if their skin is darker and therefore unintentionally making them feel uncomfortable having their skin colour focussed on in such a way.

Macroaggressions - Large-scale or overt aggression toward those of a certain race, culture or gender. Macroaggressions are obvious intentional insults where there is no chance of a mistake on the part of the transgressor to be provoking, insulting, or otherwise discourteous. For example, an informal conversation amongst employees where a racist term is used to describe someone or a group of people.

Racial Gaslighting - racial gaslighting is related specifically to psychological abuse surrounding racism. Racial gaslighting is when a victim is led to doubt and question their own sense of reality regarding racism. This can include countering a person's memory of events, withholding "understanding", refusing to listen, "forgetting" or denying that something happened, playing down a person's feelings as unimportant or irrational, questioning the credibility of what the person is saying and victim blaming. For example, a professional being told to 'grow a thicker skin' when an incident of racism is raised as a concern, implying the only problem is their reaction.

There can also be a range of abuse and discrimination from unintentional misunderstandings or lack of awareness but colleagues and managers have a duty to be ready to listen and understand, in order to lessen these incidents. Unintentional harm from comments or actions linked to a person's ethnicity can still be damaging and lead to colleagues feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in their place of work.

Confidentiality

Staff will need to feel confident that any abuse that they are subjected to will be addressed. All partners are committed to address staff concerns in a confidential manner. Staff who want to raise an issue should be advised to go to their manager or a named contact person dealing with racial abuse. Following discussion, all involved parties should agree what action will be taken. Staff should be advised that the employer has a duty of care for their health and wellbeing, and that key information needs to be collated that will help the organisation address racist behaviours and institutional racism.

Clear guidance on reporting whether the concern raised falls into one of the following categories;

- Racial Incident
- Safeguarding
- Criminal offence

(Protocols should be followed where existing Council and/or agency policy and procedures exist.)

Anonymised data should be collated as part of the organisation's Equality Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

Safe Spaces

It is recommended that all partners provide a 'safe space' for colleagues sharing circumstances or characteristics to connect with others, share experiences and challenge organisational practices to create a more inclusive working environment. Managers should encourage Black Asian & Minority Ethnic staff to have Safe Spaces within supervision, team meetings and where group sessions are facilitated. When setting up safe spaces, clarification on purpose and desired outcomes will be essential so that all parties involved do not feel that they are being 'set up'. Staff Network groups such as the DEBs Group also provide colleagues with peer support in terms of next steps or simply a trusted person to talk to.

Management Support

It is a manager's responsibility to ensure that all racist incidents are reported and actioned appropriately. If a member of staff has been subject to racist abuse, they can access support from their manager, the EDI Officer or the Staff Network group.

- Sefton employee support network - DEBs (Diverse and Ethnic Background Staff) Group
- Anthony Walker Foundation for Mental Health Support
- Trade union support at [Trade union information \(smbc.loc\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/trade-union-information)

Safeguarding:

When reporting abuse crosses over with Safeguarding procedures. The Council is not required by law to carry out enquiries for those individuals who do not fit the 3 stage condition threshold for adult safeguarding, however they may do so at their own discretion. These enquiries would relate to an adult who is believed to be experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect but does not have care and support needs. These enquiries might be about a carer for example, or someone with support needs but no obvious care needs. In this instance MASH can progress to S 42 (2) and undertake non-statutory safeguarding enquiries.

Threshold for reporting incidents to the Police

For more serious incidents, it may be necessary to report the abusive behaviour to the Police by calling 101 or via the Hate Crime Reporting website. Advice from the Police is that the worker who has been abused would have to be prepared to press charges for the Police to investigate the incident. When an incident is reported to the Police:

- If the person committing the offence is 'vulnerable', safeguarding measures would be sent to the local authority
- Even if a prosecution is not pursued it is good to have the incident logged as this may be used to evidence a pattern of behaviour if the abuse continues
- Community Resolution is an option available to the police in such cases
- Victim Support will also be triggered for the employee involved

All organisations agree that the affected workers are to be offered all appropriate support such that:

- they feel confident to report incidents to the Police and to press charges
- are supported to participate in the Police investigation
- are supported to attend court if required
- they are paid to complete the report, to meet with the Police and attend court if required.

Joint Process for Reporting and Investigating incidents of Racism

If a person feels that they have been subjected to or witnessed racist discrimination while at work, they should be confident in raising the matter with their manager and be assured it will be taken seriously. If a staff member is not comfortable reporting to their manager then an alternative option will need to be in place.

There should be an understanding as to why staff might be reluctant to report:

- Although in some cases staff will formally report an abusive incident or harassment to staff, research indicates that staff do not always feel comfortable raising issues around third-party abuse with managers. They can be fearful of it being dismissed or being perceived as a sign they cannot handle their role.
- Staff can also become 'desensitised' to abuse or harassment to the extent that it can be seen as a 'normal' part of their role. It is therefore important that managers encourage an open dialogue about third party abuse and be mindful that it may not always be reported through the expected route, i.e., immediately from workers to their manager. It may be that discussion about abuse can occur in passing in conversation, in a one-to-one or a supervision session.
- In addition, third party abuse or harassment can sometimes be overlooked in cases involving employee disputes, capability, or disciplinary proceeding. Managers, HR and Health and Safety should all be alert to situations where third-party abuse may be detected which has not been raised through the expected route.

Key actions following an incident:

All incidents of racist abuse should be reported to the line manager immediately and the manager should meet with the staff/care worker for a debriefing including obtaining an account of the incident. A summary of this meeting and its discussion points should be recorded and emailed to all attendees within 2 working days.

When the incident of racist abuse is by a Sefton citizen who is receiving care and support then:

- the employing manager should work with the affected employee to decide on whether the incident should be reported to the Police and any further immediate action to be taken in accordance with the agreed protocol below.
- an incident report should be completed and sent to their HR by the employing organisation or as per their internal procedures
- steps should be taken to ensure the member of staff/care worker is well supported and identify resources and support networks as appropriate

all organisations agree to work to the principles that:

- requests to replace the worker from the Black, or Asian, or other minority ethnicity with a white worker should not be entertained as this would be seen as condoning and colluding with the racist behaviour (exceptions to this must be agreed at Head of Service and/or Area Manager level)
- the shared response from all organisations should seek to:
 - ◇ give a clear message that racist abuse will not be tolerated o reduce the number of incidents of racist abuse experienced by staff in the short term
 - ◇ eliminate such incidences of racist abuse in the long term

Abusive or discriminatory behaviour by a colleague

When the incident of racist abuse or discrimination is by a colleague from the same organisation then this should be reported to Human Resources or equivalent as an incident of racism and the appropriate internal policies and procedures of the employing organisation should be followed. The staff member might want to speak to a trusted colleague for an informal but supportive conversation which might consider possible next steps. The victim's views and feelings should be central before any action is taken.

If the incident is regarding racist abuse by a colleague from a second organisation then this should be reported to HR/equivalent as an incident of racism and the appropriate internal policies and procedures of the first organisation should be followed. Also, reported to the appropriate manager in the organisation that employs the alleged abuser. This second organisation will be required to work with the first organisation to complete a joint investigation and agree a shared outcome.

Managers support

It is firstly a manager's responsibility to support staff who have been subjected to racist abuse.

They should make the team aware of their open-door policy in meetings and on a regular basis.

They should have training on how they should initially respond effectively, emotionally, and practically.

Managers should be aware of the processes and procedures – for both internal and external incidents of racist abuse. The zero-tolerance policy should link to a tool kit for managers.

They should understand all of the options and discuss with the member of staff how to come to an agreement on the next steps.

If it is deemed necessary - clear guidance is needed so managers can construct a letter to member of public – this to be linking from Zero Tolerance.

Managers should also offer other forms of support internally and from outside agencies – Zero tolerance can contain a list of services.

Managers can use the Additional Guidance for Managers documents that explains their role in more detail.

Top Tips for setting up a 'Safe Space' for staff

Stay Connected. What does it mean to create a safe space for employees? It's hard to tell if you don't know your workers, so take some time to learn more about them.

Don't be intrusive, but get to know your team on a personal level so you can better provide for their needs. Safe spaces mean different things to different people, so don't just rely upon your preconceived notions of what your employees might want. Remember to learn not just about their personalities, but also how they handle conflict.

Have an Open Door Policy. Can your employees talk to you about the things that bother them? Does your team feel comfortable taking time out of their day to let you know what's going on? You can't provide a safe space if your team is afraid of you, so implement a true open-door policy that will help to foster a sense of communication. In addition to keeping your door open, you'll also need to guarantee a certain degree of privacy - no one will talk to you if their issues become the latest bit of workplace gossip. Your team should feel comfortable in the knowledge that what they tell you will stay between the two of you.

Listen: Then Take Action. One of the best ways to create a safe space for your employees is to stop and listen before you take any action. When your employees come to you, they're not always looking for you to take an immediate stand. Take some time to gather up all the information, investigate what you are realistically able to do, and then take the appropriate action. This creates not only a safe space for your workers, but one that can realistically provide for their needs. Immediate action might feel good, but properly researched action is better able to solve problems over the long term.

Find Leaders. Identify leaders within your workplace as a method of creating a safe space for your employees. While this is a very good idea for those who are concerned with physical safety, it's also very important for those who are looking to create an emotionally and psychologically safe space for employees. Good leaders will be your eyes and ears in the workplace, identifying problems that you are too removed to spot. It might be a good idea to start your search by looking at those employees who have received service awards in the past.

Creating a safe space is not always easy, but it is rewarding. If your employees feel comfortable, they can be more productive and will become more loyal. A safe space will help you to create the kind of workplace that your employees truly deserve. These Safe Spaces could be staff led or facilitated. Staff may need support to speak out about issues as confidence increases. The DEBs Group acts as an organised presence for Sefton's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers. This is an inclusive group, embracing all ethnic strands of the workforce. You do not have to be a member of a union to be a member. Individuals can connect with each other and feel a sense of belonging. Through sharing of experiences, supporting cultural and organisational behaviour change and making contributions to policy and practice.

TIPS!

Positive action can include:

1. Awareness that we all have unconscious biases. Be curious about your own and how these may impact on your interactions with others.
2. Acknowledging and calling out the pain caused by racist beliefs and actions – doing nothing can be interpreted as agreeing.
3. Centring Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic voices without placing the burden on individuals to lead conversations about race.
4. Listening to hear, rather than listening to respond and actively listen to the voices of those most impacted.
5. Being aware of potential personal discomfort when engaging in dialogue if you are not a member of the Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic community. Check in and make sure that your intention matches your impact.
6. Being curious about openness to listening and deepening your understanding about others' experiences and the effects, with no expectation that they take you up on it.
7. Being open to taking responsibility for your own education and examine your understanding of the intersections of race and ethnicity with other protected characteristics.
8. Being genuine and honest in terms of what you can offer as support.

Take care to avoid:

1. Remaining silent in the face of injustice and discrimination.
2. Perceiving a person's experience of discrimination as a personal criticism of your values.
3. Expect Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic individuals to educate you. This is potentially re-traumatizing, don't assume your colleague is comfortable with explaining something about racism or their lived experience with you.
4. Sharing viral recordings of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic individuals being harmed.
5. Assuming that every Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic person is impacted in the same way or needs the same kind of support.

Agenda Item 7

Report Title: Domestic Abuse Update

Date of meeting:	Tuesday 21 January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Assistant Director Communities		
Portfolio:	Communities & Partnerships		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to update Overview & Scrutiny Members on Sefton’s strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Members note the content of the report

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Elected members will benefit from understanding the work of the Domestic Abuse Board and how the council collaborates with partners to respond to the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act locally. This will provide assurance as well as information and insight to support overview and scrutiny of this issue.

2. Financial Implications

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The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed duties on local authorities across England to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it. The council received £631,105 in new burdens funding for 2024/25 for delivery of this duty. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has confirmed that the domestic abuse safe accommodation grant will continue in 2025-26.

3. Legal Implications

The work of the board and commissioning of domestic abuse services is a statutory responsibility of the council

4. Corporate Risk Implications

If the work of the board and commissioning of domestic abuse services using allocated funds is not carried out, there is a risk that statutory requirements are not fulfilled.

5 Staffing HR Implications

None

6 Conclusion

The work of the board and commissioning of domestic abuse services is a statutory responsibility of the council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There are no alternative options as Sefton's domestic abuse response and the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board are a statutory requirement.

Equality Implications:
The equality implications have been identified and mitigated
Impact on Children and Young People:
Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are defined as direct victims within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Therefore, it is imperative that addressing the needs of children and young people is integral within the preventative and response work associated with domestic abuse.
Climate Emergency Implications:
The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD7889/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5989/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision:

With immediate effect.

Contact Officer:	Mel Ormesher
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	mel.ormesher@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Mid-year Report September 2024

Background Papers: None

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In September 2023 elected members were provided with an update on the work of Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the refresh of Sefton's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and accompanying action plan.

2. Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

- 2.1 Over the past year, Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board has continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis and has focused on taking forward some of the key priorities identified in Sefton's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028.
- 2.2 On 15 May 2024 the board met for a half day workshop session to review the work achieved so far against the strategy objectives and action plan and what activity needs to be prioritised going forward. This has been compiled into a mid-year report to share across partners and partnership (see attached appendix to this report). Key highlights from this report around what has been achieved over the past year include:

Objective 1

To prioritise a strategic partnership approach to the reduction of domestic and sexual abuse in our communities.

- Partnership approach with Safer Sefton Together for the 2023 White Ribbon and 16 days of action campaign, repeated in 2024.
- Additional funding from the Standing Together national whole health project to trial the IRIS programme, which focuses on improving the response to domestic abuse in health settings. The programme started in January 2024 and by September there were 22 GP practices signed up for the IRIS domestic abuse training, with 6 practices having been trained in full. In addition to this, there have been 32 referrals from GPs for domestic abuse support since the programme started.

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- Partnership mapping around current domestic abuse provision to build on the outcomes of the domestic abuse strategic assessment which has informed the development of the Healthy Relationships programme and multi-agency training on domestic abuse.
- Partnership away day held in May 2024 which aimed to take stock of progress so far and consider the experience of children's services in defining outcomes and measuring impact against activity.

Objective 2

To improve the prevention, early identification and response to domestic and sexual abuse.

- Introduction of the new Healthy Relationships offer for children and young people. The Women's Aid's 'Expect Respect' programme is delivered in Sefton schools by Sefton Women and Children's Aid (SWACA) as part of Sefton Domestic Abuse Service. 4,128 children and young people have attended sessions between January and June 2024.
- An increase in opportunities for professionals working in Sefton to access free multi agency training on domestic abuse, including sessions on domestic abuse awareness, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), coercive control and domestic abuse and children. Sessions continue to be delivered, and further training options are being developed, including a new e-learning domestic abuse awareness package which is hosted by Sefton Council's corporate learning site and launched in November 2024.

Objective 3

To increase the reporting of domestic and sexual abuse through awareness raising and access to support services.

- Launch of a new borough wide Domestic Abuse Helpline 0151 394 1400 as part of the integrated Sefton Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) open 8am-6pm Monday – Friday. Between November 2023 – June 2024 the helpline has received 3,173 calls.
- Introduction of new community based drop-in sessions as part of the integrated Sefton Domestic Abuse Service offer.
- Creation of a new Health IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) post in January 2023 seconded to Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust following a successful bid for funding from the Ministry of Justice via the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner Merseyside. In 2023/24 144 victims/survivors were supported by the health IDVA.
- Development and launch of a new domestic abuse microsite which includes a range of information and guidance as well as links to support services:
www.sefton.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Objective 4

To work with commissioners to ensure a wide range of services are in place to support and protect victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including children.

- New domestic abuse housing advisor post created within Sefton Council's housing options team who can offer specialist advice and guidance and is linked closely to local specialist domestic abuse support services.

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- Opening of Sefton's new 24-hour refuge provision Eva House managed by SWACA for female victims of domestic abuse and their children. This consists of a total of 19 bedspaces – for up to 5 adults and 14 children. Between December 2023 and June 2024, 8 women and 14 children have been supported.
- Ongoing co-production of the new Sefton Domestic Abuse Service between the community safety and engagement team, children's services and the Integrated Care Board Sefton Place commissioning team, utilising learning from the proof of concept model currently in place.
- Development and procurement of a new Complex Lives Accommodation service – Athena House - for female victims of domestic abuse by Sefton Council. This service launched in August 2024 and is being delivered as a partnership approach between Excel Housing and Venus. It offers 12 beds with a mix of crisis, short, and long-term accommodation and will include 24/7 support with a therapeutic and trauma informed approach.

Objective 5

To hold perpetrators to account through appropriate criminal justice sanctions and effective interventions that promote long term behaviour change.

- Development and introduction of a new pilot multi-agency approach to tackling serial/high risk of harm perpetrators of domestic abuse in Sefton which started in February 2024.
- Introduction of the Caring Dads programme within the safer families practice team in children's social care, in May 2023. This is a group behaviour change programme for fathers who have been abusive, neglectful or violent in their families and is run by trained facilitators.

Objective 6

To safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the impacts of living within a household experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.

- Creation of the Sefton safer families practice team in children's social care, with a focus on improving practice in social care, the implementation and delivery of a new Caring Dad's programme to offer behaviour change opportunities to perpetrators of domestic abuse and supporting the multi-agency training offer.
- Additional domestic abuse staffing resource provided by SWACA to Sefton Children's Social Care at the Integrated Front Door (now FAST and CHAT) and in the Sefton Safer Families Practice Team.

2.3 The board is also working on a creating a performance dashboard which will include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data and will be used as a tool to help measure the impact of the strategy.

3. Domestic abuse improvements - Ofsted monitoring visit June 2024

3.1 Positive work around domestic abuse was highlighted in the feedback provided by Ofsted following their latest monitoring visit to Sefton children's services on 25 and 26 June 2024. This included specific reference to improvements in the response to domestic abuse

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(please see below) which reflects the partnership work between children's social care and community safety & engagement and preventing homelessness teams, and the prioritisation of this work.

"The approach to dealing with domestic abuse concerns is improving. There are now clear discussions with victims in considering children's safety before contacting perpetrators. Additional resources of a dedicated Sefton's women and children's aid worker are enabling swift access to support victims. Victims are quickly contacted, risk assessments are completed, and safety plans implemented. This is providing a more holistic approach to supporting victims to keep children safer."

4. Other initiatives

4.1 Several other initiatives are also in development or being rolled out, including:

4.1.1 Brighter Kinder Future project

In September 2024 Sefton was successful in securing funding from Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to implement Brighter Kinder Futures to offer a whole family response to domestic abuse. Delivered by children's social care, this includes 3 elements:

- Father's using harmful behaviours – Caring Dad's is a 17-week programme using a CBT model of intervention to create behaviour change.
- Adult victim/survivors – Healing Together is a 6-week trauma informed programme to support increased emotional recovery following abuse.
- Child victim/survivors – Healing Together is a 6-week trauma informed programme with 3 options – experience of domestic abuse, angry feelings, stress and anxiety.

Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

Mid-Year Report September 2024



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Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Mid-Year Report September 2024

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Our partners



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About the Board

The Domestic Abuse Act was signed into law on 29 April 2021. The Act is designed to raise awareness of domestic abuse and provide a range of further protections for victims of domestic abuse as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.

Part 4 of the Act places a statutory duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.

The Government has provided a statutory framework which outlines how local authorities are expected to meet the needs of this duty, which includes:

- The appointment a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
- Assessment of the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support
- Development and publication of a strategy

The Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was established in September 2021, taking over the responsibilities of the previous Sefton Domestic Abuse steering group.

To ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling domestic abuse in Sefton, the Board is responsible for overseeing all areas of domestic abuse and not just safe accommodation.

There is a legal requirement to have the following representatives on the Board:

- Local authority
- Representative of victims of domestic abuse
- Representative of children of victims of domestic abuse
- Other VCF organisations working with domestic abuse victims
- Health representative
- Criminal justice representative.

Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board also includes a number of other agency representatives so there is a wide range of involvement and partnership working. Details of the Board's membership can be found in Appendix B ([hyperlink](#)).

The Board's Vision is set out in the Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-28

- That domestic and sexual abuse is viewed and challenged as an unacceptable form of behaviour by all our communities.

- That victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and their families in Sefton feel safer in their communities, are protected from harm, and are able to move forward positively with their lives as a result of receiving the support and interventions they need.
- That the behaviour of perpetrators is effectively challenged, and perpetrators are fully held to account.

Board Governance

Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is responsible for overseeing the delivery of Sefton’s Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and meets on a bi-monthly basis.

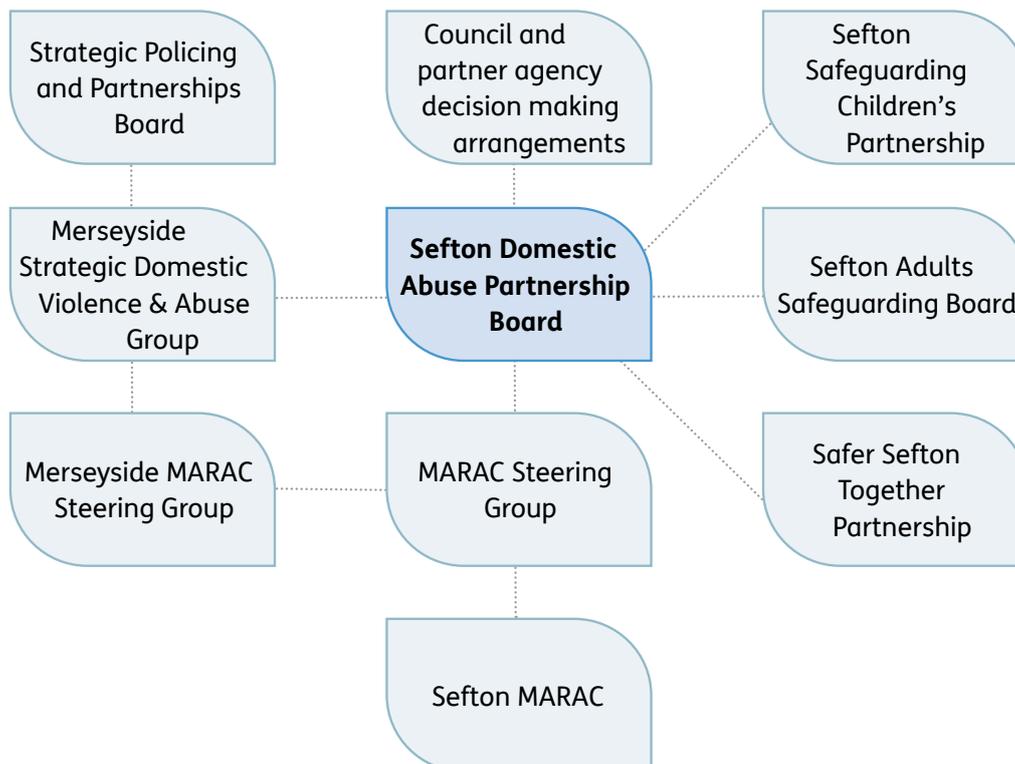
There are 3 sub-groups of the Board which are responsible for taking forward the Strategy Action Plan. They are based on the Strategic Themes outlined in the Strategy and meet on a monthly basis.

Sub-Group 1 Leadership & Governance and Prevent

Sub-Group 2 Protect and Repair

Sub-Group 3 Children and Young People

The Board is also closely linked with a number of other multi-agency partnerships in recognition of how domestic abuse cuts across a range of work areas.



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Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were introduced in April 2011 under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. The purpose of these reviews is to understand what lessons can be learned and to implement changes to help stop them happening again and to help prevent future deaths.

A DHR is a locally conducted multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:

- a person to whom he or she was related, or with whom he or she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship or
- member of the same household.

This includes considering deaths by suicide whereby a history of domestic abuse with coercive and controlling behaviour was present or suspected.

DHRs are a statutory responsibility for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). In Sefton, they are managed via the Safer Sefton Together (SST) partnership. To date, 16 DHRs have been completed in Sefton on behalf of Safer Sefton Together.

The learning and recommendations from these reviews is linked closely to the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to ensure they are being enacted on and are directly built into the Strategy Action Plan. In February 2023 an Analysis Report on DHR1-14 was produced on behalf of the Board to identify key themes to help support the prioritisation of key activities within the Strategy.

Understanding and awareness of domestic abuse

- Lack of consistency amongst professionals of what domestic abuse can consist of.
- Lack of knowledge of family violence and abuse.
- Lack of understanding of the barriers victims can face in making a disclosure, particularly for older people.
- Lack of understanding of the law in relation to domestic abuse in the context of GDPR and consent, and when to override this.

Providing an appropriate response

- Lack of risk recognition /use of risk assessment to identify risk.
- Lack of understanding of what support services are available and the referral processes.

- A need for more accessible advice and resources for family and friends.
- Practitioners not following organisational policies and procedures.
- Lack of management oversight/quality assurance on cases involving domestic abuse.

Complex needs

- Victims of domestic abuse with substance misuse and/or mental health issues face additional vulnerabilities and barriers to accessing support meaning standard referral/support routes and services may not be sufficient.
- The risk of suicide for victims of domestic abuse is increased but often not properly considered or understood.
- Consider how domestic abuse victims with complex needs can be best supported by services and multi-agency safeguarding partnerships.

Professional curiosity

- Lack of further querying by practitioners of issues presented – both in terms of issues faced by victims and what is presented by perpetrators.
- A need for more routine enquiry of domestic abuse indicators.

Impact of trauma

- Lack of consistent understanding of the additional trauma impact on victims of domestic abuse who have children removed from their care.
- Victims with complex needs often have a significant history of trauma.
- A need for a greater understanding of the impact experiencing domestic abuse as a child can have on an individual.

Additional learning from further current DHRs will be incorporated into the work of the Board as it becomes available.

This work also continues to feed into the Merseyside strategic domestic abuse partnership arrangements to support pan Merseyside priorities.

The Board also continues to develop involvement and sharing of information with other local partnerships with responsibility for learning reviews – such as Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews – to support collaborative working on similar themes.

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Experts by experience - survivor voice

The Partnership recognises that while this is still an underdeveloped area which must be prioritised in the next year. Currently survivor voice is represented at the Board via specialised domestic abuse support services and early mechanisms are now established to gather feedback and survivor voice from clients who have utilised local domestic and sexual abuse support services, such as those below:

“Talking has allowed me to put the past behind me and cope better with what happened to me.”

“The services have helped me be more mindful to put myself first.”

“I was lucky enough to find the Freedom Programme after 20 years of domestic abuse. Following the Freedom Programme I was invited to complete the Freedom Forever programme. At first I wasn't sure I was ready to think about relationships and moving forward, but I am so glad I did. The 9 weeks are intensive, but it has allowed us as a group to grow and share experiences on ensuring we move forward with housing, finances, parenting and new relationships in a safe and healthy way. I have come away with some great tools to be able to move on from domestic violence. Thank you for having me and supporting me grow. I will forever be thankful to Jemma and her team as without them I know I wouldn't be here today.”

“I think the best thing to say is how important exercise is, it can boost your confidence and make you feel powerful again after feeling so powerless due to DV.”

“I valued the care, compassion and understanding.”



“The place was very comfortable and welcoming. Everything was well explained in sessions, I learn a lot. I felt at ease and validated which was really helpful.”

“AW was amazing, she didn't judge me and I felt that she really understood what I had gone through. She helped me to see that I am strong, despite what he (ex-partner) did and said about me. I have a long way to go, but in the future, I feel that I could maybe help other women who have experienced what I have gone through. I just want to say thank you to AW.”

“You have all been amazing. I don’t know how I would have survived these last 7 weeks without you. You’ve been a family when I have been isolated and away from mine and part of my team. My boys cried when I told them we had to leave, and I will cry too. The work you do here is amazing and you all do a fantastic job.”

“Thank you again Victoria for your ongoing support especially during this difficult time in my life. The situation would have been very different if it hadn’t of been for your help and support.”



“I find it so easy to talk to you - it’s difficult with family because they are emotionally invested and affected.”

“You were the only one there throughout such a negative experience with every other agency that got it and I felt I trusted. I can honestly say you were the only one who seemed to fully understand every emotion I felt, even when my friends and family have been so supportive. Thank you so much for being there.”

“I didn’t know what support was available in this country for abuse and feel reassured to know that there are services who will help you and not judge. I feel a lot better now.”

“I just wish everything was under one person, it was a bit confusing having so many people involved at once at the beginning of things.”

The Partnership will develop a range of mechanisms to enable victims and survivors to have their voices heard across all elements of Sefton’s Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy. This includes gathering qualitative and quantitative data on the impact of support services.



Strategy progress and achievements so far

Sefton's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy contains a range of priorities under 3 Strategic Themes to be delivered over the next 5 years.

- 1. Prevent** - Early intervention provision, including improving public knowledge on domestic and sexual abuse to drive a cultural shift, intervening earlier to prevent and reduce the impact of longer term poor outcomes, and breaking the cycle of abuse across generations.
- 2. Protect** - Keeping victims/survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and their children safe in a consistent and coordinated way, providing safe and quality assured support services, and challenging the behaviour of perpetrators whilst also offering opportunities to change
- 3. Repair** - Supporting the development of resilience for families and individuals to move on and deal with future life challenges, providing ongoing support beyond crisis intervention.

In addition to this, 2 additional cross cutting priorities have been created as part of the Sub-Group remits:

Leadership & Governance – to ensure the board has an effective structure and ensure delivery of the strategy.

Children and Young People – to ensure there is sufficient focus on supporting our children and young people.

On 15 May 2024 the Board held a half day workshop session to review the Strategy Themes and Objectives, and to reflect on what has been achieved so far in the past 12 months and understand what needs to be refreshed and prioritised going forward. Highlights on new areas of work that have been progressed towards the achievement of the Strategy Objectives are outlined below:

Objective 1 - To prioritise a strategic partnership approach to the reduction of domestic and sexual abuse in our communities.

- Joint partnership approach with Safer Sefton Together for the 2023 White Ribbon and 16 days of Action campaign, which included the following:
 - Promotion of 16 days of action themes and new SDAS Helpline across partner social media channels
 - White Ribbon Schools resources 'Building Gender Equality' shared and promoted across all Sefton schools as part of healthy relationships mapping work

- Opportunities to support the campaign and make the White Ribbon promise
 - ◇ Sefton Health & Social Care Forum hosted by Sefton CVS as part of National Safeguarding Week
 - ◇ Sefton CVS Annual Conference
 - ◇ Sefton Council Full Council meeting
 - ◇ Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and Safer Sefton Together meetings
- Display stands and information across public Council buildings (libraries, leisure centres, Family Wellbeing Centres and Town Halls) and Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust sites in Southport and Ormskirk.
- A range of community based activities hosted by RASA Merseyside
- Sefton has been successful in securing 12 months funding from the Standing Together national Whole Health project to trial the IRIS programme. Sefton Council and Merseyside ICB (Sefton Place) Safeguarding Team helped prioritise this as an area for focus by providing information on the need for this type of programme in Sefton as part of the Whole Health mapping phase. SWACA was successful in becoming the local provider to deliver IRIS and have employed the Advocate Educator. The programme started in January 2024 and at September 2024 22 GP practices in Sefton are signed up for the IRIS domestic abuse training, with 6 practices having been trained in full. In addition to this, there have been 32 referrals from GPs for domestic abuse support since the programme started.
- Partnership mapping around current domestic abuse provision to build on the outcomes of the Domestic Abuse Assessment which has informed the development of the Healthy Relationships programme and multi-agency training on domestic abuse.

Objective 2 - To improve the prevention, early identification and response to domestic and sexual abuse.

- Introduction of the new Healthy Relationships offer for children and young people. The Women's Aid's 'Expect Respect' programme is delivered in Sefton schools by SWACA as part of Sefton Domestic Abuse Service. 4,128 children and young people have attended sessions between January and June 2024.
- An increase in opportunities for professionals working in Sefton to access free multi-agency training on domestic abuse. This has included the following in 2023/24 which provides a snap shot of what has been promoted and shared across Sefton partnerships.

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Name of training	Provider	Format	Date
Domestic Abuse Awareness	Sefton CSC- Safer Families Practice Team, Sefton Council	In person	March 2023
Domestic Abuse Awareness	SWACA via Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership	In person	June 2023, April 2024
Sefton MARAC Briefing	Community Safety & Engagement, Sefton Council	Virtual	5 sessions June 2024
Coercive Control	Sefton CSC - Safer Families Practice Team, Sefton Council	Briefing	Sept 2023
Supporting Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices from Marginalized Communities	Wirral Change	Virtual	February and March 2024
Minority Ethnic Women's Advocate training	Wirral Change	2 & Half days	March 2024
Children & Domestic Abuse	Sefton Domestic Abuse Service	Virtual	March, April, May & June 2024
An Introduction to Domestic Abuse	Sefton Domestic Abuse Service	Virtual and in person	March, April, May & June 2024
Coercive and controlling behaviour	Sefton Domestic Abuse Service	Virtual	May and June 2024
Trauma Informed Practice	Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership	4x in person sessions	Various dates in 2023/24
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Mersey Care	Virtual	May 2024
Honour Based Abuse	Karma Nirvana via Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership	Virtual	July 2024

Objective 3 - To increase the reporting of domestic and sexual abuse through awareness raising and access to support services.

- Launch of a new borough wide Domestic Abuse Helpline 0151 394 1400 as part of the integrated Sefton Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) open 8am-6pm Monday – Friday3
Between November 2023 – June 2024 the Helpline has received 3,173 calls.



- Introduction of new community based drop-in sessions as part of the integrated Sefton Domestic Abuse Service offer. Locations for sessions are currently being reviewed to consider additional community venues.
- Creation of a new Health IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) post in January 2023 seconded to Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust Mersey following a successful bid for funding from the Ministry of Justice via the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner Merseyside. In 2023/24 144 victims/survivors were supported by the Health IDVA.

- Development and launch of a new domestic abuse microsite which includes a range of information and guidance as well as links to support services. www.sefton.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Objective 4 - To work with commissioners to ensure a wide range of services are in place to support and protect victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including children.

- New Domestic Abuse Housing Advisor post created within Sefton Council's Housing Options Team who is able to offer specialist advice and guidance and is linked closely to local specialist domestic abuse support services.
- Opening of Sefton's new 24 hour refuge provision for female victims of domestic abuse and their children. This consists of a total of 19 bed spaces – for up to 5 adults and 14 children. Between December 2023 and June 2024, 8 women and 14 children have been supported.
- Ongoing co-production of the new Sefton Domestic Abuse Service between Sefton Council Community Safety and Engagement team, Children's Services and Integrated Care Board Sefton Place commissioning team, utilising learning from the Proof of Concept model currently being delivered.
- Development and procurement of a new Complex Lives Accommodation service for female victims of domestic abuse by Sefton Council. This service will be delivered as a partnership approach between Excel Housing and Venus and will be operational by September 2024. It will offer 12 beds with a mix of crisis, short, and long-term accommodation and will include 24/7 support with a therapeutic and trauma informed approach.

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Objective 5 - To hold perpetrators to account through appropriate criminal justice sanctions and effective interventions that promote long term behaviour change.

- Development and introduction of a new pilot multi-agency approach to tackling serial/ high risk of harm perpetrators of domestic abuse in Sefton which started in February 2024.
- Introduction of the Caring Dads programme within the Safer Families Practice Team in Children's Social Care, Sefton Council in May 2023. This is a group behaviour change programme for fathers who have been abusive, neglectful or violent in their families and is run by trained facilitators.

Objective 6 - To safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the impacts of living within a household experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.

- Creation of the Sefton Safer Families Practice team in Sefton Children's Social Care, with a focus on improving practice in social care, the implementation and delivery of a new Caring Dad's programme to offer behaviour change opportunities to perpetrators of domestic abuse, and supporting the multi-agency training offer.
- Additional domestic abuse staffing resource provided by SWACA to Sefton Children's Social Care- at the Integrated Front Door and in the Sefton Safer Families Practice Team.



Looking ahead – 2024/25 Priorities and Actions

The Board feels progress has been made but is fully aware there is still lots to do. The Strategy is a 5-year plan with a broad range of ambitions. As part of the workshop session on 15 May 2024, partners discussed and identified what needed to remain a priority and areas that needed to be progressed further.

The following provides an overview of the outcomes of this workshop, including the key themes identified by partners and suggested actions:

Objective 2 - To improve the prevention, early identification and response to domestic and sexual abuse.

Key themes identified:

1. **Early Intervention:** All partners emphasised the importance of addressing domestic abuse at an early stage. This includes preventing escalation and providing support before risks increase.
2. **Training and Consistency:** The need for quality training for front-line staff, considering the importance of consistent language and approaches across agencies.
3. **Resource Management:** Resource allocation, understanding funds brought into the system, and working smarter with available resources.
4. **Data-Driven Approach:** Thorough analysis of data, understanding case numbers and their needs, and tailoring interventions based on characteristics.
5. **Awareness and Education:** Age-appropriate campaigns and training to raise awareness among less represented demographic areas, young people and older individuals.

Overall, these themes underscore the collaborative efforts required to effectively address domestic and sexual abuse, emphasising early action, consistency, and resource optimisation.

Action plan based on key themes –

1. **Early Intervention and Consistency:**
 - Develop a clear pathway for lower-risk referrals/cases.
 - Provide a toolkit for practitioners with key messages and guidance.
 - Ensure consistent language and approach across agencies.
 - Train staff to deliver this approach effectively.

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2. Resource Management:

- Identify funds brought into the system.
- Optimise resource deployment.
- Address recruitment challenges in the workforce.

3. Data-Driven Approach:

- Analyse case numbers and characteristics.
- Understand risk around resource deployment.

4. Awareness and Education:

- Tailor campaigns for different age groups.
- Include consent discussions and sexual violence awareness.
- Address barriers for specific groups (e.g., males, older people).

Objective 3 - To increase the reporting of domestic and sexual abuse through awareness raising and access to support services.

Key themes identified:

1. **Emphasis on Reporting and Confidence:** All partners highlighted the importance of increasing reporting.
2. **Collaboration and Consistency:** ensuring consistent messaging and training across agencies. All partners support peer reviews to gather evidence of practice and improvements as well as standardised approaches where possible.
3. **Creative Solutions:** A multi-faceted approach to address fear of reporting. Utilisation of community safe spaces (e.g., libraries, family wellbeing hubs) for disclosure.

Overall, the themes emphasise collaboration, standardised approaches and creative solutions to enhance disclosures and support services.

Action plan based on key themes –

1. Enhance Reporting and Confidence:

- Develop targeted awareness campaigns to encourage reporting.
- Ensure consistent messaging across agencies.
- Promote protective orders and Claire's Law.
- Establish clear pathways for friends and family to report concerns.

2. Resource Allocation and Training:

- Provide trauma-informed training for professionals.

- Address fear of reporting through multi-faceted approaches.
- Collaborate with private sector/businesses for wider engagement.

3. Data Collection and Safe Spaces:

- Collect data beyond police records (e.g., support service uptake).
- Create safe spaces (e.g., libraries, family hubs) for disclosure.
- Implement routine questioning and peer review within agencies.

Objective 4 - To work with commissioners to ensure a wide range of services are in place to support and protect victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including children.

Key themes identified:

1. Collaboration and Cohesive Approach:

- All partners emphasised collaboration between services and agencies.
- They highlight the importance of a cohesive offer and strong collaboration.

2. Resource Optimisation and Funding:

- The majority discussed sustainable funding, co-commissioning, and shared resources.
- The importance of robust contract monitoring and value for money.

3. Data-Driven Decision-Making:

- Focus on data collection, overlaying information, and understanding resources.
- Importance of capturing victims' experiences and measuring engagement.

4. Creative Strategies:

- Suggestions for lobbying for longer-term funding and using procurement rule changes.
- Community events and independent evaluators.

Overall, these themes underscore the need for collaboration, resource optimisation, evidence-based approaches, and creative solutions in supporting abuse victims and survivors.

Action plan based on key themes –

1. Collaboration and Cohesive Approach:

- **Objective:** Strengthen collaboration between services.
- **Actions:**

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- ◇ Facilitate joint meetings to align understanding of needs.
- ◇ Review commissioned services based on current needs.
- ◇ Encourage services to evolve as requirements change.
- ◇ Implement robust contract monitoring.

2. Resource Optimization and Funding:

- **Objective:** Ensure sustainable funding and resource utilization.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Co-commission services across partnerships.
 - ◇ Explore shared resources and funding transfers.
 - ◇ Advocate for long-term funding at the national level.
 - ◇ Leverage procurement rule changes.

3. Data-Driven Decision-Making:

- **Objective:** Use evidence to inform decisions.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Overlay information across partnerships to identify gaps.
 - ◇ Collect data on engagement and quality of work.
 - ◇ Regularly report to the Board on progress.

4. Creative Strategies:

- **Objective:** Innovate and engage.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Piggyback on community events for awareness campaigns.
 - ◇ Involve non-threatening teams (e.g., money management, fire service).
 - ◇ Collaborate with independent evaluators for effectiveness assessment.

Objective 5 - To hold perpetrators to account through appropriate criminal justice sanctions and effective interventions that promote long term behaviour change.

Key themes identified:

1. Accountability and Outcomes:

- All partners emphasised the importance of holding perpetrators accountable, including outcomes such as reduced crimes, prevention of reoffending, and increased prosecutions.

2. Measures and Evidence:

- Discussions around increased prosecution rates and engagement in multi-agency plans.
- Highlighted the need for better data collection and understanding of risk.

3. Creative Approaches:

- Mentions of the “Caring Dads” programme and volunteer services.
- Suggestion of a perpetrator framework and early intervention.
- Ensure that there is an offer for all perpetrators.

Overall, these themes underscore collaboration, evidence-based approaches, and innovative strategies in addressing domestic abuse perpetrators.

Action plan based on key themes –

1. Collaboration and Accountability:

- **Objective:** Strengthen collaboration among agencies.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Establish regular joint meetings focused on perpetrators.
 - ◇ Identify the most dangerous offenders based on intel from a variety of sources.
 - ◇ Develop a hub for men to access support.
 - ◇ Address barriers for men reporting abuse.

2. Evidence-Based Measures:

- **Objective:** Use data to inform decisions.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Monitor prosecution rates and breach incidents.
 - ◇ Collect service user feedback.
 - ◇ Assess programme effectiveness.
 - ◇ Record victim/survivor journeys.

3. Creative Approaches:

- **Objective:** Innovate and prevent reoffending.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Implement behaviour change programmes for all types of perpetrator.
 - ◇ Involve grassroots organisations.
 - ◇ Address child-on-parent violence through early intervention.

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Objective 6 - To safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the impacts of living within a household experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.

Key themes identified:

1. Outcome Focus:

- All partners emphasise specific outcomes, such as reducing risk, increasing knowledge, and raising public confidence.
- They recognize the importance of early identification and prevention.

2. Measures and Evidence:

- Review of strategies, monitoring interventions, and tracking cases.
- Suggestions on capturing data on prevalence reduction and understanding risk.

3. Collaboration and Education:

- All recognised that collaboration among agencies is crucial.
- Educating children on healthy relationships is highlighted as a preventive measure.

4. Holistic Approach:

- Emphasis on considering the whole family, including both victims and perpetrators.
- Mentions of focusing on adults and older people.

Overall, these themes underscore the need for collaboration, evidence-based approaches, and a comprehensive strategy to protect vulnerable individuals from abuse .

Action plan based on key themes –

1. Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:

- **Objective:** Enhance collaboration among agencies.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Establish regular joint meetings to improve understanding of each agency's role.
 - ◇ Develop a trauma-informed approach to engage families.
 - ◇ Use established family links for creative interventions.
 - ◇ Review strategies and assess knowledge levels of front-line services.

2. Data Integration and Monitoring:

- **Objective:** Use evidence-based measures.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Create an outcomes framework to track progress.

- ◇ Integrate data systems (e.g., Oasis, Liquid Logic, Power BI).
- ◇ Collect service user feedback and track cases.

3. Prevention and Education:

- **Objective:** Educate children and prevent future abuse.
- **Actions:**
 - ◇ Provide healthy relationship training beyond schools.
 - ◇ Focus on adults, including older individuals.
 - ◇ Analyse data to identify trends and risks.

These themes and actions have been incorporated within the review of the current Strategy Action Plan which is in the process of being refreshed and updated.

Existing Priorities - Further continuing activity

In addition to the actions identified by partners at the Board workshop, there are a number of continuing activities that are either already underway or have been identified as priority pieces of work that need to be progressed.

- Development of an Experts by Experience framework which includes survivor forum(s) options for representation on the Board, involvement in the development of campaigns and resources, and involvement in future service commissioning.
- Development and implementation of a data dashboard which enables the Partnership to better understand the local picture of domestic and sexual abuse in Sefton and what impact the Strategy is having in making a positive difference. This will include qualitative information from victims and survivors gathered through the Experts by Experience framework.
- Continued development and roll out of domestic abuse multi-agency training:
 - new DA Awareness E learning programme in development with the aim to be launched by October 2024.
- Continued development of the Domestic Abuse microsite, to include a refreshed Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Protocol/Handbook and thematic resources for professionals.
- Development of a domestic abuse perpetrator framework for Sefton which provides a comprehensive and coordinated approach to tackling the behaviour of perpetrators.
- Developing and implementing a campaign around tackling sexual violence in the night time economy.

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How to get help

Information, guidance and support is available at Sefton's Domestic Abuse Helpline on **0151 394 1400**. This is available to anyone in Sefton:

- if you are experiencing domestic abuse yourself
- you are a family member, friend or colleague
- you are a professional working with a victim/survivor

Further information, including advice and guidance and the latest news on domestic abuse can also be found at www.sefton.gov.uk/domesticabuse



Emergency situations and Safeguarding

If you or someone you are concerned about is in immediate danger call 999

If you are worried about the safety of a child, contact the Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) or Sefton Family Advice and Support Team (FAST). Visit **here** for more information Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) (sefton.gov.uk) Family Advice and Support Team (sefton.gov.uk)

If you are worried an adult is at risk of, or is experiencing, abuse or neglect, consider making an Adult Safeguarding referral. Visit **here** for more information Worried about an adult (sefton.gov.uk)



Appendix A

Definition of domestic abuse and sexual abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a definition of domestic abuse which can be found **here** www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet

In summary, it includes the following key points:

The behaviour of a person towards another person is defined as “domestic abuse” if:

- both people are aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other
and
- the behaviour is abusive

Behaviour is defined as “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies:

- they are, or have been, married to each other
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other

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- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- they are relatives

It should be noted behaviour considered as abusive towards a victim can also include conduct directed at another person eg the victim's child/children

Children are also explicitly included within the Act as direct victims of domestic abuse. This includes circumstances where a child:

- sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse,

and

- is related to either the victim or perpetrator of the abuse

There is no one set definition of sexual violence or abuse; however, it is widely accepted as being any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence and abuse, including rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by a stranger or by someone known.

Appendix B

Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Membership

- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council - Elected Member, Communities, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Public Health and Housing and Investment Services.
- Sefton Women's and Children's Aid (SWACA)
- Rape and Sexual Assault Merseyside (RASA)
- Merseyside Police
- Probation Service
- Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board - Sefton Place
- Mersey Care Foundation Trust
- One Vision Housing
- Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Venus
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue
- Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner Merseyside
- Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board

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

Date of meeting:	21 January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer		
Portfolio:	Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Regeneration, Economy and Skills		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2024/25, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings of the Committee; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; to seek approval for the deferral of a number of reports; and to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the reports/presentations on the Green Sefton Annual Review 2024, the Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy, Southport Recovery, Sandway Homes Limited - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies and Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies 2023/24 be deferred to the meeting to be held on 11 March 2025;
- (3) the report about Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth be deferred from the 11 March

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2025 meeting to the June 2025 meeting;

- (4) consideration be given to the selection of a topic(s) for review by either a Working Group or at informal meetings of the Committee as detailed in section 2 of the report;
- (5) consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above; and
- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

1.1 Work Programme 2024/25

- 1.1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2024/25, as approved by Committee in June 2024, is set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme had been produced in liaison with the appropriate Executive Directors/Assistant Directors, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.1.2 The Work Programme was produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.1.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2024/25 to provide Members with the opportunity to add items to the Programme.
- 1.1.4 The Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services has requested that her report/presentation about **Green Sefton Annual Review 2024** be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 March 2025. This is due to a lengthy period of sickness absence by a senior member of the Green Sefton team which resulted in it not being possible to collate all the necessary information for the Annual Review for this meeting.
- 1.1.5 The Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets has requested that his report about the **Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy** be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 March 2025. The reason for the deferral is that the overarching strategy is still being developed. The Executive Director has also requested that the **Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies 2023/24** report be deferred to the meeting on 11 March 2025 so that it can be considered at the same meeting as the Sandway Homes report.
- 1.1.6 The Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Housing has requested that his report about **Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth** be deferred from the 11 March 2025 meeting to the June 2025 meeting to help align with new internal reporting deadlines for updating the Economic Dashboard. This will also allow officers to provide a more detailed update for the 6-month period in line with the report that was presented to Committee on 25 November 2024.
- 1.1.7 The Assistant Director – Communities has requested that her report about the **Southport Recovery** be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 March 2025. The reason for the deferral is that some of the detail required for inclusion in the report will not be finalised until January 2025.

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- 1.1.8 The Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets has requested that his report about **Sandway Homes Limited - 2023/243 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies** be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 March 2025. The reason for the deferral is that work is continuing on the production of the outturn report.

1.2 Scrutiny Review Topics 2024/25

- 1.2.1 It has been usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 1.2.2 However, over the last number of years the Committee agreed to hold informal meetings to consider topics for review rather than establishing Working Groups.
- 1.2.3 The Committee's views are therefore sought on topics for review by informal meetings of the Committee.

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

- 1.3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan, which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.
- 1.3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.
- 1.3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.
- 1.3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at **Appendix 3** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 1.3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

1.4 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1.4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 22 October 2019 (Minute No. 20).
- 1.4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (L**Page 93**;) be included in the Work

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Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

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

1.4.4 **Role**

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

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Financial Performance April - July 2024;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

1.4.5 **Membership**

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

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

1.4.6 **Chair**

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

1.4.7 **Quoracy Issues**

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

1.4.8 **Meetings**

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

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

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

27 November 2024

- Mayors Update - Devolution and Local Growth Plans
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2022-26 Update

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- Financial Performance Report and Mid-Year Treasury Management Strategy Update
- Performance Reporting on the Combined Authority Corporate Plan
- Work Programme 2024-25

1.4.9 The next meeting of the LCRCOA&S will be held on 22 January 2025. At the time of writing this report the agenda for the meeting has not been published. An update will be provided to the next meeting of this Committee.

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

2. Financial Implications

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

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

3. Legal Implications

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

4. Risk Implications

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

5. Staffing HR Implications

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

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Committee is requested to determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2024/25 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

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

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify sciPage 95v topics.

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Equality Implications:

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

Impact on Children and Young People:

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

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

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

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

(B) External Consultations

None.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

With immediate effect.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

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

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (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, 25 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 - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephen Watson
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
12.	Domestic Abuse Report	Mel Ormesher/Janette Maxwell
13.	Southport Market Update	Stephen Watson/Stuart Barnes/Mark Catherall

Tuesday, 21 January 2025, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	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
2.	Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts
3.	Update on Operational Activities delivered via In-House Operational Services	Michelle Williams
4.	Green Sefton Annual Review 2024 - recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Michelle Williams/Mark Shaw
5.	Serious Violence Duty Review - provide an opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny members to take an active part in the review	Mel Ormesher
6.	Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy - recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Stephen Watson/Dom Ellis
7.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
8.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser
9.	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies – Deferred from meeting on 25 November 2024 and recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Stephen Watson
10.	Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies – Deferred from meeting on 25 November 2024 and recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Stephen Watson
11.	Domestic Abuse Report – Deferred from meeting on 25 November 2024	Mel Ormesher/Janette Maxwell
12.	Southport Recovery - recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Mel Ormesher/Steven Martlew
13.	Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy - recommendation to defer to 11 March meeting	Stephen Watson/Dom Ellis/Suzanne Rimmer
14.	Zero Tolerance Policy	Stephen Watson/Emma Stewart

Tuesday, 11 March 2025, 6.30 p.m., - Town Hall, Bootle		
No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth - recommendation to defer to the June 2025 meeting	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.	Care Experienced Housing Charter – report on the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
5.	Green Sefton Annual Review 2024 – deferred from 21 January meeting	Michelle Williams/Mark Shaw
6.	Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset - Management Strategy - deferred from 21 January meeting	Stephen Watson/Dom Ellis/Suzanne Rimmer
7.	Southport Recovery - deferred from 21 January meeting	Mel Ormesher/Steven Martlew
8.	Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies - deferred from 21 January meeting	Stephen Watson
9.	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2023/24 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies - deferred from 21 January meeting	
10.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
11.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

APPENDIX 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

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

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

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

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SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

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

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

APPENDIX 2

KEY QUESTIONS

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

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

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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

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APPENDIX 3

**SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN****FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2025 - 31 MAY 2025**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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

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FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Sandway Phase 1 Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842, Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk
Strand Business Plan	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk
Southport Pier	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk
Biodiversity Net Gain, Responsible Body Application	Rachael Rhodes rachael.rhodes@eas.sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4963
Furniture Provision in Council Housing	Alistair Malpas alistair.malpas@sefton.gov.uk
Fleet Renewal Programme	Marie Gosling marie.gosling@sefton.gov.uk
Zero Tolerance Policy	Emma Stewart emma.stewart@sefton.gov.uk
Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk
Acceptance of Warm Homes : Local Grant Funds	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (2027-32) - Update	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Procurement Strategy for the Transport Technical Services Supply Framework	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Schemes - Compulsory Purchase Order	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Approval of LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Andrea O'Connor andrea.oconnor@sefton.gov.uk

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Sandway Phase 1 Business Plan Approval of the Phase 1A Business Plan outlining future housing development by Sandway Homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 09/01/2025 to 06/02/2025. Reason: work is ongoing on the business plan			
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 – Regeneration, Economy and Assets			
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, Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Strand Business Plan Strategy and updated Business Plan for the Strand shopping centre, including in the context of the ongoing repurposing programme			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 09/01/2025 to 06/02/2025. Reason: work is ongoing on the business plan			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Derby; Linacre			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Breadth of external engagement, and internal engagement, ongoing			
Method(s) of Consultation	Consultation ongoing relating to the Strand, Salt and Tar, Area Action Plan			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Strand Business Plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	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	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	6 Feb 2025 24 Apr 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 09/01/2025 to 06/02/2025. Reason: work is ongoing on the business plan / case			
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	Biodiversity Net Gain, Responsible Body Application To seek approval for MEAS to apply to Defra to become a Responsible Body, which will allow the Liverpool City Region local authorities to establish Biodiversity Net Gain habitat banks.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 24 Apr 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 09/01/2025 to 06/02/2025. Reason: Work is ongoing on the application			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Merseyside Local Authorities; Liverpool City Region			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and briefings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Biodiversity Net Gain, Responsible body application			
Contact Officer(s) details	Rachael Rhodes rachael.rhodes@eas.sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4963			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Furniture Provision in Council Housing Seek approval for the proposal to introduce a furnished tenancy scheme (including floor and window coverings) .			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 27 Feb 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Not a Key Decision – Submitted to Cabinet as a matter of local choice	Community Impact	Not a Key Decision – Submitted to Cabinet as a matter of local choice
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member Housing and Highways and Council Housing Steering Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and briefings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Furniture Provision in Council Housing			
Contact Officer(s) details	Alistair Malpas alistair.malpas@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Fleet Renewal Programme Approve fleet renewal via capital borrowing.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 24 Apr 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Operational In-House Services Assistant Director - Operational In-House Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Service Leads and Assistant Directors.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Fleet Renewal Programme			
Contact Officer(s) details	Marie Gosling marie.gosling@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Zero Tolerance Policy Summary of policy			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Staff Network Groups and Corporate Equalities Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefings, meetings and emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Zero Tolerance Policy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Emma Stewart emma.stewart@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton To seek approval to the provisionally agreed Heads of Terms for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in part of the former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Feb 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 09/01/2025 to 06/02/2025. Reason: ongoing negotiations are taking place			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Part exempt – Paragraph 3			
Wards Affected	St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member and Senior Officers			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Asset Disposal - Former Bootle High School site, Brown's Lane, Netherton			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Rimmer suzanne.rimmer@sefton.gov.uk			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Acceptance of Warm Homes : Local Grant Funds Central Government award for the retrofit of privately owned domestic properties (improving poorly insulated homes for those on the lowest incomes)			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Mar 2025			
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 – Regeneration, Economy and Assets			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	LCR Combined Authority, procurement team, legal team, finance team.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Officers are liaising closely with the LCR Combined authority who will be the accountable body for the funding award. Officers have also consulted internal teams via email and teams.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Acceptance of Warm Homes : Local Grant funds			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephanie Jukes stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4552			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (2027-32) - Update This report aims to confirm to update Cabinet on the transport schemes to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for potential funding support from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (2027-32) and the assessment process.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Mar 2025 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/12/2024 to 06/03/2025. Reason: the likely Sefton allocation from the Combined Authority has yet to be determined			
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 - Highways and Public Protection			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Members Housing and Highways and Regeneration, Economy and Skills.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefings and emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (2027-32) - Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Procurement Strategy for the Transport Technical Services Supply Framework This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Procurement Strategy for the appointment of a new provider (and reserve) of Transport Technical Services from January 2026 onwards.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Mar 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways Procurement and Legal teams			
Method(s) of Consultation	Consultation through briefings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Procurement Strategy for the Transport Technical Services Supply Framework			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Schemes - Compulsory Purchase Order This report seeks Members approval of the Statement of Reasons, Schedules and Plans that form the proposed Compulsory Purchase Orders for both schemes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Mar 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Dukes; Kew; Molyneux; Netherton and Orrell; Norwood; St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Consultation has been held with Brabner's, the appointed Legal consultant, a barrister, the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer. External consultation has been held with all landowners and interests for the land proposed for inclusion in the CPO.			
Method(s) of Consultation	The schemes have been subject to public consultation and engagement.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Schemes - Compulsory Purchase Order			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Approval of LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the final Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Nature Recovery Strategy for submission to the LCR Combined Authority.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	22 May 2025			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	The community and a range of local stakeholders			
Method(s) of Consultation	Consultation process to be undertaken by LCRCA			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrea O'Connor andrea.oconnor@sefton.gov.uk			

Cabinet Member Reports – September 2024 to November 2024

Date of meeting:	21 January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer		
Portfolio:	Cleansing and Street Scene Communities and Partnership Engagement Housing and Highways Public Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Regeneration, Economy and Skills		
Wards affected:	All		
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 November 2024 to January 2025.

Recommendation(s):

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.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 The most recent Cabinet Member reports for Cleansing and Street Scene; Communities and Partnership Engagement; Housing and Highways; Public Health and

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Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); and Regeneration, Economy and Skills Cabinet Member are attached.

2. Financial Implications

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

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

3. Legal Implications

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

4. Risk Implications

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

5. Staffing HR Implications

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

6. Conclusion

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

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

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

Equality Implications:

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

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

Impact on Children and Young People:

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

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

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

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**(A) Internal Consultations**

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

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

With immediate effect.

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

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

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

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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Cabinet Member Update Report		
Overview & Scrutiny		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
Peter Harvey	Cleansing & Street Scene	January 2025

Catering & Building Cleaning Services

Building Cleaning

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Cleaning Contract

The above MAT put its Cleaning Services out to competitive tender in 2024. The tender was for two schools. The service currently holds the contract for one of the schools, The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco, Bootle.

Since the initial tender was released, a further four schools have joined the trust in September 2024. The Trust plans to have up to 28 schools in the MAT in the coming years.

Officers from the Building Cleaning service delivered a presentation to the trust. The result of the tender exercise was initially due in July 2024, but the process has taken longer than expected and the contract has yet to be awarded.

Peterhouse School

Peterhouse School is a non-maintained Specialist School for children and young people aged 5 to 19 who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. The school is in Southport and is administered by the Autism Initiatives charity.

The service has provided a cleaning provision to the school for several years. The School to put the contract out to competitive tender, with the new contract due to start in January 2025. Officers from Building Cleaning gave a presentation to the school in late November and were informed shortly afterwards, that they had retained the contract which is excellent news.

Catering

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust Cleaning Contract

As with Building Cleaning, the MAT has put its Catering contract out to tender. At this stage it only involves one school, Sacred Heart Catholic Academy, Crosby. The service currently operates this contract. More schools are expected to join the MAT.

Officers from the service delivered a presentation to the trust. As with the Building Cleaning contract, the tendering process has taken significantly longer than the trust anticipated, and the contract is yet to be awarded. No date for a decision has been given.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)

Following enquiries from various elected members, a report is due to be taken to the above committee in January 2025. It will cover:

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- School Meals finances
- Nutrition
- Where the school meals section sits within the council structure and why
- Auto enrolment for free school meals

Rimrose Hope Primary School, Seaforth

The school currently operates its school meals service in-house, with the school employing the catering staff directly. The school is exploring the possibility of returning to the council's service, and positive discussions have taken place to this end.

The Council's Obesity Strategy.

The catering service continues to support the Council's Obesity Strategy. The Service Manager chairs the Live Well sub-group, which is charged with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

Burial and Cremation Service

The Burial and Cremation Service continues to provide a sustainable and professional service to the bereaved. Burial and cremation numbers are expected to increase during winter months.

Investment planning continues to progress well, with consultants and architects on board, preparing a full business case for the service, including evidence of much-needed investment to ensure service continuity for the future. Investment is essential due to upcoming changes in legislation.

Grounds maintenance works continue, with some areas more challenging than others. The service is keen to work with Merseyside UPW Team (community payback) to assist with maintenance works in cemeteries. Arrangements are in place to recruit additional grounds seasonal workers for 25/26.

Repairs and maintenance continue to be prioritised, including the completion of the much-needed improvements to the canopy at Thornton Crematorium recently. Memorial testing on headstone stability continues, to ensure the safety of the public visiting cemeteries is a priority. Cemetery maintenance staff will be undertaking grave digging training in January 2025 to ensure further resilience across staff resources.

The contract with the current music/media provider for Thornton Crematorium and Southport Crematorium ceases at the end of this month. Following a procurement exercise, Obitus, a new provider, was awarded the contract.

During the last couple of months the service, along with Obitus have been working very closely with staff, funeral directors and celebrants. New equipment was scheduled to be installed and operating in Southport and Thornton pre Christmas. This offers an improvement to sound and visuals (including a large screen in overflow areas, two large screens in chapels, etc).

Burial and Cremation services continued throughout the council's shutdown period. There were no services on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day. However, all grounds are open for the public to visit every day of the year.

Street Cleansing

The Street Cleansing Service has been working hard over several weeks to get through the rear entry alleyways priority list. The service is now coming towards the end of the priority list and will be working on the new rota for rear entries throughout the borough as they continue to improve the service delivery.

'Before and after' photos of the work undertaken illustrate the improvements, and through our communications team we are promoting the message to Sefton residents that fly tipping is not acceptable. Culprits who blight our neighbourhoods are being challenged and where appropriate action is being taken, including fixed penalty notices.

The Street Cleansing Service worked on clearing leaf fall throughout the borough in autumn.

Waste Management

Waste collections over the Christmas period took into account the council's shutdown days. Some staff volunteered to come into work on those days, and a collection service was revised to align with what was possible within the available resources.

As part of the Corporate Transformation Programme, the route optimisation project began on 1st November 2024. There will be a significant amount of work required to deliver the change and innovation that is much needed.

December also saw the appointment of the new Service Manager for the Waste Management & Street Cleansing Service. This is a welcome appointment and will bring management stability to a large, high profile, front facing core service.

Sefton ARC & Sefton Careline

Sefton ARC & Careline, Electrical & Alarms services continue to develop, and grow its current offer in accordance with the council's vision and core purpose and in alignment with other strategies and policies.

The service is working closely to help support colleagues through all service areas of the council through the services provided. Sefton ARC Alarms Section has recently been assessed by NSI for installation of alarms systems, feedback from NSI was that the assessment went well and Sefton ARC passed the necessary criteria to retain the award. This is testament to the ongoing good work consistently delivered by the team.

Sefton ARC is currently in discussion with BT, the provider of public realm CCTV infrastructure and how best to move forwards from analogue to digital switchover, this has resulted in very positive meetings to look at what the service could look like with future investment in the infrastructure.

With regard to the provision of public conveniences, the service will commence a mini tendering exercise in early January 2025 for the provision of services and maintenance of public conveniences throughout the borough. This will allow competition within the market ensuring the council is receiving value for money and a standard of service delivery through the correct procurement route.

The Careline Service continue to focus and support the transition of analogue to digital equipment as part of the national digital switchover. This work is being undertaken daily and numbers continue to fall of replacing the old analogue kit as part of the digital switchover for our clients. Careline is currently working with Procurement on the tender process for the new call monitoring platform to allow competition on the market ensuring the council is receiving value for money and a standard of service through the correct procurement route.

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Careline continue to support other service areas throughout the council with lone worker devices. By working with telecare suppliers this has allowed the service to introduce equipment to service users. It provides a piece of technology that is designed to be monitored through the Sefton Careline Team and an alert system to ensure lone worker safety. The most basic function of a lone worker device is to raise an SOS alarm when the user needs help, for example if they're in danger, suffer an injury or feel threatened. Upon an activation of the alarm, The Careline team will follow the process agreed with management at the setup of the lone worker agreement.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

The Transport and Fleet Service continues to provide a full maintenance and fleet compliance service to all departments within the authority. The rating from the Traffic Commissioners Office remains green, this is the highest standard on the rating system.

The service continues to provide a full MOT service to both internal and external customers and remains 100% compliant with inspections and services. As part of the services contributing to net zero by reducing carbon emissions within the fleet work continues, the proposal is still to have one petrol tank at the main Hawthorne Road Depot.

The Food Waste Collection Vehicle and Food Caddy pre-procurement report has been agreed by Cabinet Member regarding the council's intent to purchase the new vehicles for the impending Food Waste Collection service that will become statutory in 2026. Sefton are working closely with all LCR Authorities to establish best practice regarding waste containment and collections.

The T&VM Service remained operational throughout the Christmas shutdown period as garage staff were required on call and in work to ensure the council fleet remained compliant.

Services such as MOTs and tachograph calibrations re-opened on 2nd January 2025.

School Crossing Patrol Service

The service currently has 6 vacancies. Recruitment does tend to be more challenging during the winter months due to the demographics of the staff cohort. The service continues to provide 100% cover at all established sites across the borough.

Specialist Transport Unit

The Specialist Transport Unit provide home-to-school and day centre travel for the most vulnerable in our society. The service currently operates 17 x School Routes and 9 x Adult Social Care routes.

The service is working closely with colleagues in ASC regarding the provision of transport for customers to and from day centres in the south of the borough. The STU currently provides transport for 131 SEND customers each day and 52 x ASC customers to and from their destination. The service users are among some of the most vulnerable in our society who need the support and extra care that the STU In-House service provides.

Many aspects of the service remained operational throughout the Christmas and shutdown period to ensure ASC service users were accommodated and transported throughout.

The service continues to evaluate all current practices to enhance service provision.

Taxi Licensing:

Bootle One Stop Shop Update:

- During November and December the processing of vehicle plates and the renewal of driver's badges continued with a high level of efficiency. Vehicle plates are currently being processed within 1-2 days.
- There are three sets of Knowledge tests currently being offered at Bootle One Stop Shop every week. In November, 137 tests were offered, 22 failed to attend and 56 failed the test. However, a total of 59 passed the test and have been issued with a Sefton licence. To improve the pass rate for the Knowledge test, discussions have been held with the trade representatives and several changes have been put in place.
- The £50 non-refundable application fee for all new drivers was introduced on 25th November 2024. The fee will not only generate valuable licensing revenue, but it will also recognise the resource time and effort carried out to process the applications.
- Weekly internal meetings between Customer Services and Taxi Licensing continue and the trade are given regular e-mail updates on progress. Quarterly trade meetings are also due to recommence in 2025.
- The Taxi Licensing website continues to be regularly updated with progress on new driver applications and it also explains how drivers may find quicker and easier access to the answers from the questions asked in the Knowledge test and can be found at [Taxi Licensing](#)

Enforcement:

- Training of the 2 new Taxi Enforcement Officers has continued with both officers progressing well and successfully commencing operational duties.
- 3 Further successful Joint Enforcement Operations have been undertaken in November and December 2024.

22nd November 2024 - Manchester Airport

11 Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) inspected
5 Stop Notice issued – (2 no door signs, 2 defective tyres, 1 smashed wing mirror)
6 clear

29th November 2024 - Liverpool Airport

14 PHVs inspected
2 Defect Notices issued (wing mirror defect & plate on with cable ties)
8 Stop Notice issued – (no door signs)
3 vehicles clear
1 unlicensed vehicle – investigations on going

14th December 2024 - Manchester Airport

12 PHVs inspected
1 Defect Notice issued – (rear plate on with tape)
9 Stop Notices issued – (8 no door signs 1 no driver badge)
2 clear

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- Regular routine Vehicle Inspections have recommenced and are taking place on Tuesdays (Southport) and Wednesdays (Bootle). Planned night time shift work will continue in the New Year with a focus on South Road Waterloo, Crosby & Birkdale, Formby & Lord Street areas.
- Officers continue to work strategically with LCR Authorities to progress standardisation across the region. Work on the following topics has progressed well - Vehicle Conditions / Drugs Policy / Fit and Proper Persons / Convictions policy. A more detailed update on this work will be provided in early 2025.

Local Licensing

- The Local licensing team continue to process high volumes of licence applications within the strict legal timescales. The new Licensing officers training is progressing well and she is now commencing operational duties.
- Officers from the Local Licensing team along with Pollution Control Officers continue to attend Merseyside Police licensing partners meeting which is held every fortnight. The meetings are extremely productive and an effective way for officers to share intelligence about licensed premises, provide case updates and co-ordinate enforcement activities.
- Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (GA05) requires that all licensing authorities prepare and publish a statement of the principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under the GA05 during the three-year period to which the Statement of Licensing Policy (the Policy) applies.

Sefton's existing Policy is now due for review. The Council must consult as part of this review process and a report on the proposed consultation is being taken to the next Consultation and Engagement Panel in January 2025. Further updates on this process will be provided in due course.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Liz Dowd	Communities and Partnership Engagement	January 2025

Community Engagement

Christmas events took place at the following locations.

- Bootle – Saturday 23rd November 5pm
- Hightown Village Green – Tuesday 26th November 6.50pm
- Marian Square – Wednesday 27th November 6.30pm
- South Road – Thursday 28th November 5pm
- Crosby Village – Friday 29th November 5pm
- Bispham Road – Friday 29th November 6.30pm
- Thornton – Friday 6th November 6.30pm

Bootle Tool Shed were commissioned to build a new Christmas crib that is located on Hawthorne Road at the junction with Church Road.

The team are working with Hugh Baird College students to design a flyer and poster to encourage residents not to fly tip, particularly within rear entries. ETS and our new waste minimisation officer within cleansing will provide some information and support to students to enable them to carry out this task.

Southport Recovery

The first phase of work to the memorial gardens took place between the 28-30th October. Dowhigh dug out the old bedding around the gardens and there was a partnership day, involving members of staff from Dowhigh, Sefton Council and around 20 volunteers from the Lord Street in Bloom Volunteers who planted 3000 bulbs.

Immediate Justice programme – Causeway

In 2023 Merseyside was identified to participate in the Immediate Justice Programme which was initiated by the Home Office. Under the programme, those found committing anti-social behaviour were made to carry out reparations in the community, with aim of works starting as soon as 48 hours after the offence. The programme will cease in March 2025 and as such Causeway will be unable to proceed with the proposed grass/weeding maintenance project around the Sefton Estate. Community engagement on the proposal has not taken place however officers aim to develop a work plan with Community Payback that will include this project.

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Community Safety

The community garden on Park Lane estate was launched on 21st November. Colleagues from One Vision Housing (OVH), Netherton Park, Neighbourhoods Team, Community Payback and Merseyside Police attended to help clear weeds, litter, and fly tipping.

The OVH land is being leased to Netherton Park Community Centre as part of the Evolve, Clean Hold Build initiative.

Holiday Activity Fund

There have been 31 applications to the programme for the Christmas delivery period. Offer letters have been sent out to the applicants. There is a wide range of activities being offered across the borough for Children of all ages.

The Department for Education has made us aware that currently, there has been no decision about the future of HAF.

Equality Diversity & Inclusion

School support and engagement across Sefton has continued to be developed, aimed at improving outcomes with black, Asian, & minority ethnic children and young people and support of their families. This has included staff training and curriculum area reviews with key education leaders.

Youth Engagement

The youth engagement team delivered activities with partners across the area during the Halloween and Bonfire period.

- 55 young people participated in the Behaviourself programme.
- 33 young people attended a session at Linacre Mission delivered with the Fire Service looking at the dangers of fireworks and fires.
- 50+ young people attended a Halloween Disco in partnership with community-by-nature
- 40+ young people took part in activities on Bonfire night in partnership with community-by-nature

20 young people visited a fun session at Linacre mission on Bonfire Night.

Hate Crime

The draft hate crime strategy and action plan was considered by the Safer Sefton Together Partnership in November. The Strategy sets out Sefton's response to hate crime - a collective vision for the borough based on consultation with service users, partner organisations and informed by research. The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for agencies and partners to work together challenging hate crime, identifying gaps in services and other areas for development.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Sefton Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU) currently has 80 open cases. The team attended training with colleagues from environmental protection to upskill them on dealing with ASB and noise complaints. The training focussed on Community Protection Warning Letters and Community Protection Notices.

LIBRARIES

Microgrant Funding success

A new external funding stream has become available to public libraries called the Libraries Connected Microgrant. Library services can submit a bid for up to £5000 and the funding is designed to support small library projects with the aim of providing experience and training for library staff. Bootle Library staff member Ben Kelly had already submitted a project concept which fitted the funding well. Ben's concept is to develop an exhibition on the history of gaming which will provide an intergenerational experience for families. The exhibition will then tour the library services across the Northwest. The funding bid has been successful and once received, the work on the project can begin.

Grief Project launches

Crosby Library hosted the launch of a new grief project with artist Jenny Gaskell leading a lively discussion on public attitudes to grief. The launch was well attended and is the start of wider activities aimed at encouraging residents to talk about their experiences. The project is the first event in Sefton where the concept of a 'death positive library service' is explored, where libraries support residents living with grief, with the hope of improving their mental well-being.

Library App goes live

The library service has been developing a new library app with suppliers PTFS Europe. The app was first developed in America to work with the Aspen System which is the new public facing system of Koha (our library management system). Sefton library service was only the second library service in the country to go live with Aspen and since then have been the trail blazer in the development of it. The new library app called LiDA is designed to be an extension of Aspen, allowing customers to renew their books, check their account and take out books using a virtual library card feature. Sefton is the first library service in Europe to go live with LiDA which is now available to download via the Google Play and Apple store. As the first to adopt LiDA, Sefton received the app for free and staff have now been asked to attend conferences to demonstrate how we have developed it.

International Café, Bootle

Venus have recently relocated the International Café from Bootle Library to operate from their premises in Orrell. The International Café supports migrants who need help integrating with the community, finding housing, filling out paperwork to support their immigration applications and general day to day living. Work has now begun in setting up a similar project in Crosby and Southport Libraries with the support of the Resettlement Team.

Southport Library becomes latest National Databank site

After a successful application to the Good Things Foundation, Southport Library has now joined Bootle, Crosby and Netherton Libraries in becoming a National Databank site. These sites distribute free SIMs and data to residents that are digitally excluded due to the cost of the data for their devices. Unlike other applications, Southport's isn't targeting a specific demographic group in the area but provides more general SIM availability. The onboarding process for library staff at Southport has taken place and it is hoped that SIMs will arrive and be ready for distribution before Christmas.

Squish project

A new project aimed at parents with young toddlers is being run from Bootle Library with funding from Arts Council England. Called Squish, the project aims to provide creative activities for toddlers that engage all the senses. The weekly activities have proved successful with clay smushing, creating jelly sculptures and sniff sessions all going down well. The sessions are artist led with each artist bringing a new and exciting activity to stimulate specific senses.

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Participants of the Colour of Pomegranates project and the library's mums and toddler group held a joint visit via Mersey Ferries to the Eureka! Museum at Secombe ferry terminal. The Colour of Pomegranates members are all sanctuary seeking and have young children. Arts Council England fund the project, and the idea of the visit is to help the two groups get to know each other and help the migrant ladies integrate into the local community. Activities such as this should help the Pomegranate ladies make friends and establish connections outside of their peer group.

Devicebank and Digital Inclusion Initiative completion

The library service's first foray into the National Devicebank and LCR's Digital Inclusion Initiative has now been completed. Both projects allowed the library service to gift equipment to residents who were digitally excluded which was 30 reconditioned laptops and 50 new tablets, all provide with data. Working with the Resettlement Team, officers took the opportunity of the gifting process to provide additional support to target groups, particularly migrants being resettled in Sefton. Two migrant ladies from the Colour of Pomegranates received training so they could support the gifting process. Funding for both projects is currently closed but plans are being developed to reapply to both initiatives if/once they reopen.

New local history publication

The information team have been working on new local history publication called Unseen Formby. This is a booklet of historic photographs of old Formby that have never been published before. The photos come from a variety of sources but are primarily from old lantern slides in the council archive. The booklet is a collaboration with Formby Civic Society who provided some of the images and information for the captions. Working between other jobs, the booklet has taken two years to complete, as sourcing old photos of Formby that haven't been previously published has proved challenging. The booklet is an income generator, and we expect to cover our costs and be in profit by January/February.

Microgrant Funding success

A new external funding stream has become available to public libraries called the Libraries Connected Microgrant. Library services can submit a bid for up to £5000 and the funding is designed to support small library projects with the aim of providing experience and training for library staff. Bootle Library staff member Ben Kelly had already submitted a project concept which fitted the funding well. Ben's concept is to develop an exhibition on the history of gaming which will provide an intergenerational experience for families. The exhibition will then tour the library services across the Northwest. The funding bid has been successful and once received, the work on the project can begin.

Grief Project launches

Crosby Library hosted the launch of a new grief project with artist Jenny Gaskell leading a lively discussion on public attitudes to grief. The launch was well attended and is the start of wider activities aimed at encouraging residents to talk about their experiences. The project is the first event in Sefton where the concept of a 'death positive library service' is explored, where libraries support residents living with grief, with the hope of improving their mental well-being.

Library App goes live

The library service has been developing a new library app with suppliers PTFS Europe. The app was first developed in America to work with the Aspen System which is the new public facing system of Koha (our library management system). Sefton library service was only the second library service in the country to go live with Aspen and since then have been the trail blazer in the development of it. The new library app called LiDA is designed to be an extension of Aspen, allowing customers to renew their books, check their account and take out books using a virtual library card feature. Sefton is the first library service in Europe to go live with LiDA which is now available to download via the Google Play and Apple store. As the first to

adopt LiDA, Sefton received the app for free and staff have now been asked to attend conferences to demonstrate how we have developed it.

International Café, Bootle

Venus have recently relocated the International Café from Bootle Library to operate from their premises in Orrell. The International Café supports migrants who need help integrating with the community, finding housing, filling out paperwork to support their immigration applications and general day to day living. Work has now begun in setting up a similar project in Crosby and Southport Libraries with the support of the Resettlement Team.

Southport Library becomes latest National Databank site

After a successful application to the Good Things Foundation, Southport Library has now joined Bootle, Crosby and Netherton Libraries in becoming a National Databank site. These sites distribute free SIMs and data to residents that are digitally excluded due to the cost of the data for their devices. Unlike other applications, Southport's isn't targeting a specific demographic group in the area but provides more general SIM availability. The onboarding process for library staff at Southport has taken place and it is hoped that SIMs will arrive and be ready for distribution before Christmas.

Squish project

A new project aimed at parents with young toddlers is being run from Bootle Library with funding from Arts Council England. Called Squish, the project aims to provide creative activities for toddlers that engage all the senses. The weekly activities have proved successful with clay smushing, creating jelly sculptures and sniff sessions all going down well. The sessions are artist led with each artist bringing a new and exciting activity to stimulate specific senses.

Colour of Pomegranates away day

Participants of the Colour of Pomegranates project and the library's mums and toddler group held a joint visit via Mersey Ferries to the Eureka! Museum at Secombe ferry terminal. The Colour of Pomegranates members are all sanctuary seeking and have young children. Arts Council England fund the project, and the idea of the visit is to help the two groups get to know each other and help the migrant ladies integrate into the local community. Activities such as this should help the Pomegranate ladies make friends and establish connections outside of their peer group.

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“Shine a Light” for Libraries

On 11 December, libraries across the country were lit up overnight in a gesture of “solidarity, hope and joy” to mark the opening of Spellow Library and Community Hub, which suffered criminal damage during the public disturbances of the summer.

In the image below, Councillors Atkinson, Lappin and Dowd can be seen standing with Children’s Laurette Frank Cotterall-Boyce as they answered the call for solidarity at Crosby Library ahead of the reopening of Spellow Lane Library the following day. Every library in Sefton displayed a light in support of our neighbours in Liverpool.



THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

The Theatre programme enjoyed a successful autumn season with wonderful audience attendance including many sold-out shows. Events featured perennial favourites such as comedian Count Arthur Strong and Ruby Wax’s stage show *I’m not as well as I thought I was*. Music performances have included piano quartets by Mozart, a Bruce Springsteen tribute, blues/rock from King King and an evening with ABC frontman Martin Fry.

A particular highlight was the welcome return of Crown Ballet with *The Nutcracker*. After a successful tour last year, the ensemble returned to enchant a sold-out audience with their delightful production. This eternal favourite is an ideal introduction to classical ballet and a welcome addition to the performing arts programme at the Atkinson. It also marked the lead-in to the Christmas season followed by Chapterhouse Theatre Company with their interpretation of *A Christmas Carol*, and the KD pantomime production of *Sleeping Beauty* which attracted thousands of visitors to Southport across its 41-performance run.

Exhibitions Programme

Ruth Moilliet: *Fear of Finding Out* 26 October 2024 – 8 March 2025

Having celebrated the botanical world in her work for many years, artist Ruth Moilliet’s bold and engaging sculptures now look at the decline of plant species, their pollinators and the natural world. Her initial studies highlighted the fossil fuel industry has on our planet where

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she began to use found, recycled plastic materials to produce her work. The new additions shown in this exhibition encourage discussion around the responsibilities we have as individuals to prevent further decline through our daily activities and the items in our lives. <https://www.theatkinson.co.uk/exhibition/ruth-moilliet>

Volunteer audio description project

The Atkinson has been working with a team of twelve Inclusion Volunteers to develop audio descriptions of the art in our collection. The priority is to improve access for visitors who are blind, have low vision or are partially sighted. An audio description provides a spoken description of the art, including dimensions, medium used, content, colour and style. This offers an understanding of what's being represented visually; creating valuable insight for people who are blind or have low vision. They are available to all visitors, offering a slow and close-looking experience for anyone interested in art.

The volunteers received in-house training to enable them to create drafts of art installed in current exhibitions, which are then peer reviewed, before being checked and approved by the Curatorial team. The audio recordings and their transcripts are then installed onto Bloomberg Connects - a free arts and culture app. Anyone with a mobile phone can download this app for use within the venue or elsewhere.

Print acquisitions

The Atkinson has received two substantial gifts of prints recently. A group of thirty-four prints, the Balakjian collection, has been given through the government's Acceptance in Lieu scheme, whereby important works of art are given to public art collections in lieu of tax. The collection includes work by leading British artists including seven prints by Lucian Freud, as well as several prints by Michael Auerbach, Leon Kossoff and Celia Paul. There are also prints by Marc Balakjian (1938-2017) and his wife and collaborator Dorothea Wight (1944-2013), who ran Studio Prints in London, where all the prints in the Balakjian gift were made.

In addition, four more prints by Lucian Freud have been received from the Lucian Freud estate. The donations are the most important additions to The Atkinson's fine art collections for several decades and will be displayed in a special exhibition at The Atkinson from 18th October 2025 to 28th February 2026.

Museum Programme

Lessons from Windrush: the Atkinson supported the council's celebrations for Black History Month with an open discussion on 22 October. Organised by Sefton's Equality and Diversity Officer, in association with the Southport African Caribbean Heritage Association (SACHA), this consultation event referenced the current Windrush exhibition to encourage debate and reflection. Participants featured in the exhibition acted as panel members and shared accounts of their experiences of racism. It made for a moving occasion, celebrating the fortitude and resilience of the Windrush generation and their descendants.

Southport Library

National Databank Inclusion Hub: Along with Bootle and Crosby Libraries Southport Library has been successful in their application to become a Digital Inclusion Hub. The National Databank is like a food bank, but for internet connectivity data. Southport Library will provide free data to people in our community who otherwise cannot afford it. Working with the Good Things Foundation and their partners Vodaphone, O2 and 3 Mobile, the library will issue data sims to residents ensuring more people can access the connectivity they need in today's digital world.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Highways and Housing)		
Councillor Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	January 2025

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT

The current Strategic Transport initiatives aren't specifically set out in this update but clearly there is a link to the development of Transport and Highway schemes. Current initiatives and areas of work include;

- Agreement of a Pipeline of projects for CRSTS2 with the LCRCA following their assessment.
- Work with the CA on the development of the Local Transport Plan 4– now out to consultation.
- Low Carbon Transport Position Statement
- Carbon Assessment work on training of staff.
- Consultation on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Development of an EV Charging policy and roll out of EV infrastructure.
- Use of the agreed process for Engagement and Consultation on Transport Schemes.
- Supporting Public Transport development and access.

Highway Schemes

The development and delivery of highway schemes is undertaken by the Council' Design team supported by the Council's Transport Technical Support Services providers, WSP and Atkins. Efforts are underway to recruit to increase in house resource.

Business Case Schemes

- **Maritime Corridor Scheme**

This scheme involves the delivery of some highway improvements between and including A5036 Dunnings Bridge Road, A59 Ormskirk Road. It was identified by Members as a priority in 2016, the CA approved a Strategic Outline Case in 2018 and an Outline Business Case in 2020. The scheme also includes active travel and safety improvements and has been considered and reviewed by Active Travel England. It is one of the larger schemes in the current CRSTS programme and has attracted funding from the Levelling Up Fund. The funds allocated to the scheme are £21.2m and these need to be expended by March 2027, with the £9.5m LUF by March 2025 (although it is accepted that this won't be expended in its entirety).. The LUF Business Case has been approved, the CA have completed a Gateway Review and approved the CRSTS allocation to deliver the first Phase of work and a Grant

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Funding Agreement signed. The Business Case has been approved and a GFA is being compiled for Phase 2 funding. Phase 1 of construction is now on site.

Main actions since last time:

- Section 6 agreement signed with National Highways.
- Contract signed for Phase 1 and works commenced.
- Lease details agreed with Netherton Park
- Comms strategy enacted, letters sent out and social media information produced.
- Social Value Action Plan put into place.
- Business Case approved and discussions held with CA over GFA for Phase 2
- Cabinet report setting out Acquisition strategy agreed.

Main Actions before next update:

- Works progress on site within agreed Traffic management regime for Phase 1.
- GFA for Phase 2 works received and signed.
- Programme to be developed for Phase 2.
- Remaining design of Phase 2 to commence.
- Statement for Reasons for CPO to be developed and approved
- Letters to be sent to all Internal land transfers re the CPO position confirming the intention to acquire land by negotiation.

- **Southport Eastern Access Scheme:**

This scheme involves the delivery of some highway improvements to reduce congestion on the eastern approaches to Southport. Like the Maritime Corridor, it was identified by Members as a priority in 2016, the CA approved a Strategic Outline Case in 2018 and an Outline Business Case in 2020. The scheme also includes active travel and safety improvements as well as traffic mitigation measures to help address potential changes in traffic patterns resulting from the reopening of Foul Lane. The scheme is wholly CRSTS funded with £19.97m allocated. This needs to be expended by March 2027. The Business Case has been approved by the LCRCA. Phase 1 of construction is programmed for starting on site in January 2025.

Main Actions since last time:

- GFA signed and agreed.
- Contract signed.
- L&R Committee has considered and approved changes to the highway.
- Social Value Action Plan agreed in principle.
- Sustrans have presented the work that they have completed with the schools in Norwood.
- Comms strategy enacted, letters sent out and social media information produced.
- Information collated for Planning Approval,
- Cabinet report setting out Acquisition strategy agreed.

Main Actions before next update:

- Works commence on site.

- Social Value Action Plan signed off.
- Programme to be developed for Phase 2.
- Design work to be progressed for the Norwood mitigation measures.
- Statement for Reasons for CPO to be developed and approved
- Letters to be sent to all Internal land transfers re the CPO position confirming the intention to acquire land by negotiation

Corridor or Area Wide Improvements

- **A59/Kenyon's Lane Junctions and Corridor:**

This is part of a wider scheme is aimed at creating cycle facilities along the A59 corridor linking facilities in West Lancs with Switch Island and beyond whilst improving pedestrian and cycle accessibility across the A59 at key junctions. The CA received a Strategic Outline Case for the whole corridor but agreed that the improvements should be delivered in Phases. This phased focusses on the section from Dodds Island to Robins Island and creates a new CYCLOPs junction at Kenyon's Lane.

Main Actions since last time:

- Dowhigh Ltd have started work focussing on some additional survey work.
- A meeting has been held with Lydiate Parish Council with the aim of agreeing the details of the change of lease and the mitigation and boundary treatment measures.
- Temporary road closures of Kenyon's Lane have been approved.

Main Actions before next update:

- Continued work on site.
- Deed of variation for the lease to be agreed with Lydiate Pariah Council.
- Continued engagement of scheme progression to stakeholders and ward members.

- **A59/Dodds Lane Junction**

A further part of the wider scheme includes reviewing this junction from a safety and accessibility perspective with a view to improvements to the junction forming part of the next phase of work.

Main Actions since last time:

- Options for improvement received.

Main Actions before next update:

- Preferred option to be reviewed and discussed with Cabinet Member.
- Prelim design work and survey work commissioned

- **A565/ Woodvale junction**

This scheme aims to introduce active travel improvements through the junction to enable the previous improvement work to link with the Coastal Road and TransPennine Trail. Consultation has been completed Further preliminary and outline

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design work is continuing on the section from Southport Road and through Ince Woods.

Main Actions since last time:

- WSP completing a design review using Active Travel England's Toolkit

Main Actions before next update:

- Design review to be completed.
- Prelim design fee to be agreed,
- Scheme details, to be finalised with report submitted in March to L&R.
- Further CM Update before L&R

- **A565 Wider Corridor improvements**

Works is progressing looking at the continuation of an active travel link southwards from Southport Road to Thornton including access improvement work at the various junctions. An offline route has been identified through Ince Woods and negotiations are ongoing with landowners.

Main Actions since last time:

- Assessment work reviewed and scope of further work discussed and agreed.
- Scope of work required at Southport Roundabout and link to Altcar Lane discussed.
- Initial plans for new commercial development proposed for North of Formby reviewed and proposal identified for possible link to the Formby Industrial estate.
- Outline plans agreed for North End Lane junction to address the safety issue.
- Junction with Scaffold Lane reviewed.

Main Actions before next update:

- Further discussions with landowners over Ince Woods route
- Design brief for A
- Initial land search for Formby Industrial estate.
- Design brief to be completed for the Scaffold Land junction to potentially be delivered using local safety scheme funding
- Further discussion around LCWIP to feed into development of schemes

- **Green Bus Corridor:**

The LCRCA commissioned consultants to develop and appraise options for potential bus priority measures commence works on a number of routes in the City Region , including the No 53 bus corridor which travels between Crosby and Liverpool, including Stanley Road. Officers have reviewed the works undertaken and provided comments.

Main Actions since last time:

- No further formal update – currently awaiting LCRCA's confirmation that they are seeking consultancy support to model and develop the design

Main Actions before next update:

- To be held with LCRCA to further understand their intentions for the corridor.
- **Great Georges Road:**

Much of the work (Phase 1) was delivered some time ago. The final design for the remaining work has been completed.

Main Actions since last time:

- Additional re-paving works outside the Hotel have been completed

Main Actions before next update:

- Completion of the works including reinstatement of compound area

Town Centre Schemes

- **Les Transformation Phase 1**

The Business Case Submission for the Southport Town Deal identified a series of public realm and accessibility projects in Southport Town Centre under the term 'Les Transformation de Southport'. Phase 1 is focussed around Southport Market with works proposed for Market Street, King Street and Eastbank Street. The scheme includes £2.5m from the Southport Town Fund with the remainder 5m from CRSTS. A contractor has been appointed and works are programmed for starting on site in January 25.

Main Actions since last time:

- The tender cost has been agreed.
- A CM report which adds funds to the budget has been approved.
- The works contract has been signed.
- Testing has been completed on the existing foundations.
- Businesses and other stakeholders to receive an update.
- A drop in session has been held with businesses.
- Social Value Plan agreed in principle.

Main Actions before next update:

- Th trial panel will be completed.
- Works commence on site.
- The Social Value Plan will be enacted.

- **Les Transformation Phase 2**

Further to the above, the need for public realm improvements improvement on the Promenade around the MLEC building to complement this scheme and improve accessibility to the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians has been identified.

Main Actions since last time:

- Agreement reached with the MLEC team over the details proposed outside the building to feed into the
- Informal discussions held with the LCRCA over possible funding over and above the current CRSTS 1 allocation.

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- Consultation proposals discussed in principle

Main Actions before next update:

- Consultation plans developed and taken Cabinet Member and Ward Members.
- Surveys, traffic counts to be completed.
- Prelim design brief to be compiled.
- Likely phasing of works to be firmed up.

- **Chapel Street and North- South Cycle route**

The Southport BID and others are keen that Chapel Street be reviewed and some improvement works initiated. There is also a commitment, identified in the report recommending the retain of the current north-south cycle scheme in Southport that consideration be given to a more permanent improvements scheme which does incorporate walking and cycling improvements.

Main Actions since last time:

- Works orders for some minor decluttering near the station entrance.
- Further review of the possible short term measures undertaken following the review by WSP.

Main Actions before next update:

- Decluttering works commenced.
- Agreement to be reached on scope of work on Chapel Street over and above the decluttering.
- Review to be undertaken of the timing of consultation on the N-S cycle route.

- **Scarisbrick Avenue:**

This public realm improvement scheme, linked with the Southport Townscape Heritage initiative, was largely completed in 2023. There are some remedial and enhancement works to be completed following a review. These are programmed

Main Actions since last time:

- Discussions have been held with the contractor regarding a return to site however due to capacity issues within the design team and other delivery priorities the timescales for delivery have slipped.

Main Actions before next update:

- Revised timescales for delivery to be agreed
- Ward Member updates to be set out.

- **Birkdale Village Improvements**

This is a pedestrian access and safety improvement scheme in Birkdale Village funded from the CRSTS1 programme. Some additional assessment work has been completed in Birkdale and an assessment process undertaken.

Main Actions since last time:

- Tender documents completed

Main Actions before next update:

- Tender documents sent out
- Construction programme agreed and Ward Members updated

- **Crosby Town Centre Improvement Works**

Highway works aimed at improving accessibility were completed in late 2023 funded by CRSTS1. Public realm works to introduce higher quality paving are currently being implemented. Further design work has been programmed to redesign the car parks.

Main Actions since last time:

- Final Account agreed.

Main Actions before next update:

- Agreement to be reached on whether the car park modification design (and implementation) works to be delivered.

- **Thornton Improvement Works**

A number of issues have been raised by residents, schools and the Parish Council re traffic and safety concerns in Thornton. These have been reviewed and an Action Plan developed.

Main Actions since last time:

- A Programme of implementation work has been determined.
- Initial design work commenced on Drummond Road element of the scheme.

Main Actions before next update:

- The Drummond Road design work will be completed and signal changes at a couple of junctions determined.

- **Bootle Town Centre – Works supporting the Strand development**

Work had been designed and procured to ensure the Strand Service Road can operate from Vermont Way thus enabling a section to be closed and demolition to take place. The design team are reviewing a longer-term plan to create an improved access arrangement which will be completed once demolition has been undertaken. This will involve modifications to one of the car parks and some work on the service road from Washington Parade

Main Actions since last time:

- Detailed discussions held with the Strand Team over demolition programme and interface with highway works with a demolition start date of March 2025 through to Autumn 2025.
- Initial progress on the WSP commission to undertake the Preliminary Design for the revised car park exit onto Vermont Way and the subsequent changes

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to the proposed signal junction and the Service Road works off Washington Parade.

- Informal discussions on highway issues including those impacting on Planning Applications.
- Action Plan developed for Bramley Moor Dock and enhancing links with Everton.
- Costs established for developing a possible residents parking scheme in Sefton on matchday.
- Discussion held with LCRC re potential transport funding for Bootle in CRSTS2.

Main Actions before next update:

- Design work to be progressed on all aspects of the enabling works.
- Delivery Programme for the enabling works to be agreed following discussions with the demolition contractor as to what works can be carried out during the demolition.
- Initial costs to be developed to check against transport allocation.
- Action Plan for Everton links to be further developed and actions re bus operation and matchday parking to be progressed.
- Masterplan exercise to be developed over possible links between bus station, train station and Strand.

- **Walkable Stanley Road**

Freshfield Foundation agreed to fund a pilot study to identify a series of measures aimed at encouraging and enabling walking in Bootle to tie in with other initiatives. The Consultants, Urban Movement initially identified 48 possible interventions for further consideration and development.

Main Actions since last time:

- Final report to be drafted by Urban Movement, with a particular focus on linking the defined actions to a 'school neighbourhoods' approach (i.e., road safety / safer routes to school focus) and reverting back to a 'Bootle-wide' scale.
- Priority list to be developed for potential early interventions.

Main Actions before next update:

- Final report to be reviewed.

- **School Neighbourhoods Work:**

Two schemes have been delivered on the three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. The further scheme, at Stanley High School is subject to further consultation before implementation later in 2024. Engagement work has been undertaken with 5 other schools in the south of the borough and one school street scheme implemented. Work also progressed with schools in Norwood ward impacted on by the Southport eastern access scheme.

Main Actions since last time:

- Continued work progressing with 5 schools in South of the borough (at varying stages of development).

- Work completed in Norwood Ward and reviewed.
- Work commenced on the development of the School Neighbourhood area (involving up to five schools and the local community) in Bootle, using ATE Capability Fund and secured from the Freshfield Foundation..

Main Actions before next update:

- Further school engagement and programme of interventions to be developed.
- Stanley High zebra crossings and new cycle parking on the school grounds to be completed.
- Reconsider previous school prioritisation process to determine additional schools to engage, in line with appropriate funding availability/opportunities.

Local Safety Schemes

The Local Safety Schemes in the Transport Capital Programme include interventions at Northern Road (Gt Crosby), Hawthorne Road and Prescot Road. These schemes have all been subject to consultation and approved by L&R Committee and are at different stages of development. The programme for 24-25 is being developed.

Main Actions since last time:

- Prescot Road works complete, however additional road marking works are required for the roundabout.
- Northern Road puffin crossing completed.
- Hawthorn Road works completed,
- Designs completed and consultation completed for 3 the proposed zebra crossing locations.

Main Actions before next update:

- L&R to consider approval of 2 new zebra crossings.
- Further consideration to be given to Brownmoor Lane.

Highways Development Control

The Highways DC team is currently under pressure from a significant number of applications and legal agreements requiring input. To assist the team, recruitment is ongoing to boost resources. The Council's Transport Technical Support Services providers provide specialist advice, WSP and Atkins. The team is also dealing with high workloads for highway searches, street naming and numbering, Public Rights of Way and highway adoption queries.

Planning Applications

- A total of 131 applications have been responded to in the 3 month period between October and December. This number is based on per planning application and does not include the numerous responses that are provided for a particular planning application (there can be typically up to 5 responses for a major planning application and ones with significant highway issues, sometimes more). A lot of staff time has also been spent on Council regeneration proposals that have been submitted to Planning.

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Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. This is exacerbated by developments being split into different phases/agreements which takes a lot longer to process than if everything was considered in a single agreement for a development. Staff leave in the design team is also impacting on delivery due to limited resources.
- The report is as follows:
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 46
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 where the developer appears to have ceased trading.
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 0
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval – 33
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up – 0

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 74 live full s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council plus 27 minor s278 agreements. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments. Staff leave in the design team is also impacting on delivery due to limited resources.

Winter Maintenance

- To date (6th January) we have gritted the carriageways on 19 occasions and the footways 4 times.
- Regular financial reports are now being produced to monitor expenditure against budget and information will be shared with Cabinet Member in the monthly briefings.
- The new LCR Contract for Forecasting and Bureau Services is due to go out to tender in the next few weeks with a new contractor being appointed before the current contract expires in July. Having an LCR contract provides savings to each individual Authority.

Quarterly Update Highways Maintenance December 2024

- Since 1st April 2024 which coincides with the start of the new financial year, planned & routine maintenance operations are progressing well and in accordance with allocated programming timeframes.
- To date key maintenance improvements have been completed which include the following:
- Completion of carriageway Surface Dressing programme which is a recognised preventative type of treatment covering approximately **7,000m²** of carriageway, inclusive of road markings totalling **£518,000.00**.

- Resurfacing which involves the removal of one or more surfacing layers in the carriageway has been completed, totalling approximately **90,000 M2** with a spend value of **£3,267,000.00**.
- Routine safety inspections continue to operate daily which identifies isolated defects and repairs in accordance with the council's safety inspection policies and other industry guidelines, The volume and value of work does fluctuate monthly, current invoiced values associated with these reactive working operations is totalling **£1,400,000.00**.
- In support of the council's routine safety inspection responsibilities and reactive repairs, approximately **900M2** of footway has been improved through extended patching operations with a spend value of **£60,000.00**.
- Other maintenance operations including grass cutting, gully cleansing and road marking upgrades continue which has a current spend value nearing **£1,200,000.00**.

PLANNING SERVICES

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 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#). This sets out our values, our service standards, our priorities and how we are accountable.

1. Development Management

- Numbers of planning applications have reduced to below pre-Covid levels
- 100% of Major and Minor applications were determined 'in time' between October - December 2024 (targets 60 & 65% respectively), and 98% of 'Other' applications (mainly householder; target 60%)
- This high level of performance is dependent on staff agreeing 'Extensions of Time'. We are actively seeking ways to improve performance without the need to seek EoTs although this is more difficult for 'Majors' which are often complex and require more time to address key planning issues.

Key Challenges

- In December 2024, the Government confirmed a significantly higher housing target for Sefton. This could lead to applications for planning permission for housing on land within the current Green Belt. The anticipated rise in applications will put pressure on staff resources.
- We regularly receive proposals for children's homes which are often difficult to resist purely on 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 timely responses from statutory consultees, in particular some of our internal consultees.

2. Building Control

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- 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.
- Towards the end of 2024, Building Control held interviews for two vacant permanent Building Control Officer positions - one officer started with the Team in early October and the other in November. One member of staff remains on long-term sickness absence.

Key Challenges

- The Team is struggling to meet its locally set plan-checking targets, due to long-term staff absence. As a temporary measure, a consultant has been engaged to assist with plan checking. As the Team comes back to full establishment, that temporary arrangement will come to an end and it is expected that plan checking performance levels are likely to improve.
- One of the biggest challenges 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. Approximately half of the Team has now been successfully assessed and it is hoped the rest will be successfully assessed over the first half of 2025.
- The Building Control Team is due to be assessed by the newly established Building Safety Regulator sometime in 2025 - in order to confirm they can continue to operate as a Building Control Body. Work is currently being undertaken by the Team to ensure the assessment is successful – such as ensuring the annual ISO 9001 Quality Assurance internal audits are all completed.

3. Local Planning

- The government have recently updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the way they calculate local authority's housing requirements. This has given Sefton a housing requirement of 1,368 per year.
- This means that Sefton has a much reduced supply of developable land and now leaves us exposed to housing proposals on sites they we may have been able to previously resist.
- The government has ordered every Council to set out a timetable for a new Local Plan. The timetable should be submitted by 6 March 2025.
- A report on the updated NPPF, housing numbers and possible Local Plan timetable is going to members in the next few weeks.
- A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have recently been adopted (in December). These are:
 - Boundary Treatments
 - Short Term Holiday Lets
- Additional SPDs are being progressed to secure developer contributions towards visitor infrastructure in Southport; to manage proposals for conversions to Children's Care Homes; an update of the current Nature and Affordable Housing SPDs; and a city region approach to mitigation at the coast from new housing developments.

- Bootle Area Action Plan - The publication draft of the AAP was approved in July and was published for public comment from 13th September to 11th November 2024. This was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 16th December 2024. If hearings are needed, it is expected that these will be in late Winter/Spring 2025.
- The Local Plan team are also helping to support the CA in developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is due to be published in January 2025.

Key challenges

- Responding to questions and preparing evidence for the Bootle AAP examination
- Dealing with the implications and making plans for a new Local Plan under the emerging planning system and higher housing requirement.
- Finalising and engaging on a range of Supplementary Planning Documents.

4. Heritage and Conservation

- Southport Townscape Heritage Project – Grants given and building works now on site for 6 retail units and upper floors repaired and reinstated. A further 9 units and upper floors in progress on site and extension given from Lottery Fund to end of December 2025.
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans – Damfield Lane, Maghull Conservation Area and Lydiate Hall and Chapel Conservation Area under initial draft
- Development Management – For last three months 61 DM consultations undertaken. Continuing to work with enforcement to resolve outstanding heritage cases.

Key Challenges

- To unlock difficult Heritage at Risk development sites and facilitate their sustainable future.
- Progress delivery of remaining large scale Townscape Heritage Projects.
- Loss of staff, adding pressure to workload and ensuring adequate levels of staffing and recruitment.

5. Technical Support

- Performance in completing searches has been consistently above target throughout the last quarter.
- Performance in validating minor applications has slightly improved in the last quarter from 74% up to 79% within 5 working days but is still slightly below the target of 80%. This shortfall is due to staff vacancies and ongoing training of new team members.
- A key success has been consistently in the HMLR gold standard of best performing Local Authorities for maintaining the Local Land Charges register.

Key Challenges

- Ensuring adequate staff levels and training over next 12 months
- Recruitment to vacant posts.

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- Implementing a biodiversity net gain monitoring system and the validation of biodiversity net gain metrics.
- Setting up of reporting mechanisms for the Building Safety Regulator.

PUBLIC PROTECTION – FOOD AND SAFETY AND POLLUTION CONTROL

- The 2024/2025 Food Hygiene and Standards inspection programme is progressing well and as we approach the end of quarter 3 the Food and Safety team are currently on target to meet the Food Standards Agency (FSA) inspection requirements. Lower risk inspections which were previously removed from the programme during the Covid recovery period i.e. 'E' rated businesses are being filtered back into the inspection programme.
- During the later part of 2024 the Food and Safety Team have observed a significant increase in the number of food borne infectious diseases (eg Salmonella, Campylobacter etc) which are notifiable to the EH service. This has resulted in an increased demand for infectious disease investigation. Working in collaboration with our infection control team and other partners we have ensured all ID's have been investigated as required.
- Preparation for the implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM) which is due to be implemented imminently is progressing well. Staff training and updates of the Information management system are underway. A number of officers within the Food and Safety team will, however, require an additional qualification in Food Standards inspection. The lead food officer is currently exploring what options are available in respect of this training provision.
- The Food and Safety Team are preparing a campaign to educate residents in Sefton about the possible dangers and risk associated with consuming some American Confectionary. The law in England is very different to that in the USA and products that are made for the USA market may not be compliant with food law in England. Where there are compositional issues, such as banned additives being used, these products are technically unsafe and must not be sold. Businesses will be educated about these dangers and advised of likely enforcement action if they are found selling such products. In conjunction with educational settings and Public Health, children and carers will be provided with information and advised of the risk of consuming such products.
- To help Support Southport businesses following the tragic events in summer the Food and Safety team will be offering new or existing businesses in the Southport area free support to comply with food hygiene legislation and help them achieve the highest food hygiene score. Advice prior to the unannounced statutory food hygiene inspection will be provided to assist businesses to get it right first time, saving money and enhance chances of receiving the highest food hygiene rating to attract more customers. Additionally, we are also offering free advice and support in relation to food labelling / composition and health and safety at work.
- The Pollution Control Team continue to respond to significant numbers of complex planning consultations within the specified deadlines, this however, can impact on the reactive (complaint type) work of the team.

- Work to progress and develop a number of the proposed air quality improvement actions proposed in the Council's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is now underway. These include progressing the traffic light optimisation project at key junctions in South Sefton to improve traffic flow and engaging with Fleet operators to better understand barriers to vehicle upgrades and replacement.
- Officers from the Pollution Control Team along with the Local Licensing team routinely attend Merseyside Police licensing partners meeting which is held every fortnight. The meetings are an effective way for officers to share intelligence about problem licensed premises, provide case updates and co-ordinate enforcement activities.

HOUSING UPDATE

Affordable Housing

Affordable Homes Programme

Officers have been meeting with developing Registered Providers over the last few months in anticipation of a new Affordable Homes Programme, being announced in the 2025 Comprehensive Spending Review.

In addition, as part of the Social Housing Transformation Project a paper on options to maximise Affordable Housing delivery in the borough is being developed.

Council Housing Programme

Phase 1

I'm pleased to report that the Council and Sandway Homes have now exchanged contracts for the purchase of 18 apartments at Buckley Hill Lane. The build of the apartments continues to progress with both apartment blocks now constructed to roof height and remain forecast for completion in March 2025.

Work continues to progress in the background to ensure that the Council is operationally ready to take handover of the apartments, moving into the letting and management of tenancies.

A key step to being operationally ready is ensuring that the Council has a suite of policies in place necessary to be able to manage its homes and future tenancies. Members will recall that earlier this year, Cabinet gave delegated authority to consider and adopt a suite of policies in readiness to become a landlord. I can now report that the following suite of policies has been approved for adoption:

- i. Access to Housing Policy
- ii. Aids and Adaptations Policy
- iii. Alterations and Improvements Policy
- iv. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- v. Damp and Mould Policy
- vi. Decant Policy
- vii. Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy
- viii. Housing Landlord Complaints Policy
- ix. Housing Rechargeable Works Policy
- x. Neighbourhood Policy
- xi. Property Safety and Compliance Policy

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- xii. Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- xiii. Rent Arrears and Credit Management Policy
- xiv. Rent Setting Policy
- xv. Resident Involvement Policy
- xvi. Right to Buy Policy
- xvii. Service Charge Policy
- xviii. Tenancy Policy
- xix. Void Policy

All policies will be kept under review allowing for changes to be made in response to new/amended legislation, regulation, best practice, learning and service changes.

Members may be aware that the Autumn Budget proposed some changes to Right to Buy as well as setting out plans for long term stability with social housing rents, both impact the Council Housing Programme. The Government has now published consultations in both areas and responses have been prepared, agreed and submitted.

Housing Standards Team

As of 10 December 2024, we have received 3414 licence applications, which is 98.5% of the expected number of applications. 1818 licences have been issued and 624 compliance inspections have been carried out.

The team has taken a very strict approach with landlords that provide properties or services that fall below the expected standards, and we have had 3 successful prosecutions against one Managing Agent for failure to licence 2 properties and failure to provide requested information. The Landlord was found guilty in their absence and sentenced to a £20,000 fine. A further prosecution of another Managing Agent for failure to licence 5 properties has been found guilty with a fine of £25,000 and a Landlord has also been found guilty of not licensing a property. He is yet to be sentenced. One landlord has been entered onto the Government's Rogue Landlord Database. There are a further 6 prosecutions pending for offences including failure to licence properties and failure to respond to Statutory Notices. We also have 4 appeals that remain pending at the First Tier Property Tribunal, where Landlords have appealed against enforcement action, including a Prohibition Order and Civil Penalty Fines for breaches of licence conditions.

There have been 79 requests for service relating to poor housing standards received between 18 Oct 2024 and 10 Dec 2024. Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action. Since 18 Oct 2024 this has included the service of 1 Prohibition Order, 4 Improvement Notices, 4 Intention to serve Civil Penalty Notices and 1 Final Civil Penalty Notice for failure to licence properties. There have also been 5 further enforcement actions for landlords failing to maintain smoke alarms or provide the necessary Electrical Safety Certificates or other documentation for privately rented properties.

32 Landlords have attended specific training sessions in relation to dealing with Damp & Mould in their properties. Further training sessions for Landlords will continue to take place using the Government's Healthy Homes Grant. All staff within the Housing Standards Team have received specialist training in relation to damp and mould enforcement.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 7 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes.

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Mhairi Doyle	Public Health and Well Being	December 2024

Green Sefton update

Some service areas have found it challenging to meet expectations within resources available and efforts are being made to address this. This has resulted in ongoing levels of complaints, FOI's and EIR requests, and at times negative press coverage for several areas of the service during the peak season of 2024/25.

Developments and issues of note over the last quarter:

- The two new posts in the Tree and Woodland team were filled but unfortunately one of the team has since left and the post is back out to recruitment, this has of course caused a delay in the 'discovery' exercise in relation to trees on Council land that sit outside of the Green Sefton or Highway portfolios.
- New Machinery has continued to arrive from Gibson Groundscare (over 220 machinery assets). The Land Management team are now fully equipped with improved machinery that supports operations across all areas which is a positive step forward.
- Training – Three members of the Land Management Team 3 have undertaken a 'Train the Trainer' qualification. This will facilitate more efficient and cost-effective in-house training for new starters on handheld and pedestrian machinery.
- Green Sefton Health and Safety sub-committee, issues raised include: water safety review, event review, asbestos review, building management, tree management and more. Other H+S issues include:
 - Risk Assessments – Work is ongoing to review and update all RA's to the new Corporate template. 35+ Risk Assessments have been completed since May 2024 which has also included in-house training in; the safe use of the Defibrillators and Depot Inspections.
- Countryside stewardship – CSHT supports the conservation grazing programme at Ainsdale and Birkdale LNR's where there is a flock of 25 Herwick sheep (supplied via Natural England), and a herd of 27 English Longhorn cattle (supplied through Lancs Wildlife Trust). These animals will be on site through the winter until sometime in March 2025.

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- Winter works programme – Additional Land Management Team funding has been utilised to recruit additional seasonal staff throughout Winter 2024/25. Teams have been working through the maintenance tasks, including: Vegetation management along boundaries and access routes, the removal of invasive species, lifting and lowering shrubbery to improve sight lines and site safety. Working on 20+ sites out of 150 identified locations that required vegetation management.
- Hesketh Park Legacy Project - The waterfall has been serviced and the pump mechanism is working, the floral clock mechanism has been inspected and repair work identified. A conservation architect has been engaged to support the plans for the conservatory refurbishment.
- Severe flooding in Bootle on the 30th September caused internal flooding to 37 properties and had much wider impacts to the surrounding community. The flood risk management team have been supporting the wider Council's recovery work. Section 19 reporting is underway.



- The Making Space for Water Crossens business case has been submitted for approval by the Environment Agency for £1.7m funding. The business case has been received positively, however, there has been a national hold on grant-in-aid funding whilst the government reviews the funding model.
- The Land Management Team have continued to support two Sefton at Work placements in the team, developing horticultural grounds maintenance skills and experience. The team are very proud to have been nominated for an 'Employer Award' for Stephen Howe – Principal Grounds Maintenance officer for his commitment.
- Regenerus – Taking Root Project. The Land Management team have purchased 2 new machinery assets to support the ongoing creation and ongoing maintenance of wildflower meadow sites in the South of the Borough.



- Bonfire night - The Land Management Team have completed the clear up bonfire sites across the Borough working in close partnership with the Street Cleansing Service and Merseyside Fire & Rescue. In some locations this took a significant amount of time and additional resources which had an impact on core works.

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- Coastal training beachmaster – shoreline pollution incidents preparedness - emergency planning – Merseyside group – 7 Sefton staff trained;
 - Supporting Southport recovery through composting material, friends group
 - Restarting of fountains on lord street
 - United Utilities work complete – restoration overview by Sefton
- Several audits are underway as identified by Green Sefton /Risk and Resilience /Audit inc:
 - Golf Shops finance systems
 - Bootle and Southport golf courses
 - Allotments
 - Botanic Gardens Depot (Natural Alternatives)
 - Hesketh Park Depot
 - Cambridge Road Depot
 - Water safety follow up meetings
 - Event and Activities follow up meetings

Action plans and costings have / are in the process of being agreed / implemented.

- Asset List for ‘corporate landlord’ work completed, and building inspections via Property Management have begun which is very welcome.
- Traveller Encampments at 10 locations so far this year have cost Green Sefton upwards of 15k in staff time and repairs following damage caused to barriers.
- Volunteer Hours (Friends of, community groups, individual volunteers) supported and facilitated by the Community Engagement team, are at 15000 so far this year (last year’s total was 38000).
- In Bloom – six days of judging, taking in Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland, Crosby and Waterloo, Ainsdale, Southport (and Maghull). Groups from Sefton attended recent award ceremonies, scooping 42 in total plus 2 discretionary awards.

- Green Flag / Green Flag Community Awards were all retained

Planned activity over the next quarter:

- Winter works until April
- Seek planning permission for the:
 - Crosby interim coastal defence works to protect the most vulnerable section of eroding coastline.
 - 'Making Space for Water' scheme in Crossens
- Publishing of the Section 19 flood investigation report for Bootle 30th September
- Seasonal recruitment for summer season 25/26
- Completion of play and drainage works under UKSPF funding
- Mersey Forest Plan refresh /consultation (led by TMF)
- Implementing the recommendations of recent audits
- Refresh of the 'Volunteer Handbook'
- Public Satisfaction Survey via 'Your Sefton Your Say'
- Planning for 2025 In Bloom / Green Flag Awards begins, intention to expand into Netherton and Litherland and to enter the National competition for Southport.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor Paulette Lappin	Cabinet Member Regeneration, Economy and Skills	21 January 2025

INVESTSEFTON

O& S Update -January 2025-InvestSefton

- The team sadly announced the sudden passing of Julie Swarbrick (Business Growth Adviser) who was a much respected and beloved member of the team Tributes being paid to InvestSefton's Julie Swarbrick - Invest Sefton Invest Sefton
- Approaching businesses 150 attended InvestSefton's Winter Economic Forum event; the event was filmed for free by Mandy Lalley of film and tv production company Space Hound who Julie had assisted and includes a piece from Julie which will provide a lasting legacy to her work in Sefton- https://youtu.be/wJ36uNK_D4A
- InvestSefton continues to support businesses impacted by the incident in Southport on 29th July. Some £158k has been awarded. The team has also organised a recovery event for hospitality businesses on 13th January. Discussions being held with LCR Growth Platform and Southport BID about further events.
- UKSPF extended for 12 months by Government; This includes a 40% reduction and InvestSefton is preparing costings for the final year to continue its business support delivery.
- Current UKSPF contract ends 31 March 2025. Some 14 start ups created by MEH & Safe Regeneration as part of commissioned work from the team. Anonymised Case study below:

Community interest company (CIC) is dedicated to enhancing holistic educational outcomes for young people, helping to address critical issues such as teacher shortages, mental health, and wider skill development. xxxxxx attended a business-start- up event organised by the InvestSefton team in Maghull, and after a conversation with business advisor Brian Dawe, it became clear that a CIC was the best company structure to take her idea forward. After returning from working abroad, Kathryn became aware of the spiralling teacher recruitment and retention crisis which had become a long-standing concern in the UK contributing significantly to many subjects being

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covered by unqualified teachers, supply staff and non-specialist teachers. She decided to do something about it. "I am really excited about making a difference in young people's education, and I'm very grateful for the support that I've had from InvestSefton and Safe Regeneration, giving me confidence in my vision and the determination that I will make my business a success."

- Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **8,630** enquiries from a wide range of businesses up to 29th November 2024

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Employment & Learning includes the three service areas of Sefton@work, Sefton Adult Community Learning Service and the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service (NREIS) together with other associated projects including Building Better Customer Experience and Multiply adult numeracy projects.

All activities within Employment & Learning are externally funded, apart from NREIS.

Summary Position

All programmes are currently operating to programme, within forecast and budget including UKSPF, Restart, Multiply, AEB, Town Deal, NREIS, LCR Mayoral Young Peoples Guarantee and LCR Test & Learn. Any risks to project delivery are understood and mitigated through robust contract management. At present there is low risk of non-compliance or financial clawback from unfavourable audit or inspection. Quality assurance systems are in place including Matrix assessments, Customer Service Excellence standards, individual awarding body standards and the most recent Ofsted inspection rating for SACL was "GOOD" in 2024.

The end of substantive funding for UKSPF which supports numerous staff in Sefton@work has been mitigated with a government announcement of a further year of UKSPF funding for 2025/6. However, there will likely be a reduction in the level of funding and this month the service has been working with the LCr-CA to better understand the implications of this reduction, promoting the continuity of service delivery and retention of trained staff as our priority.

The government's white paper "Get Britain Working" has provided a framework for significant change over the coming years across employment and skills. This includes the announcement of a new devolved scheme for economically inactive people called Connect to Work and a Youth Guarantee trailblazer scheme for 18-21year olds.

Recent Headlines

- Sefton@work continue to work with employers and contractors to identify opportunity for recruitment and training for local residents arising from regeneration projects & inward investment. Projects worked on in this period include The Strand transformation and various planning consents. This work includes promotion of the Caring Business Charter.
- Sefton@work has returned templates to the CA outlining the impact of reduced funding under UKSPF for 25/26. Greater involvement and

engagement in the funding allocation process, to recognise the strategic role of LAs has been requested by the LA Growth Directors group.

- UKSPF solely targets economically inactive people, but in Sefton we have chosen to continue with our “Open Door policy” for any workless Sefton resident seeking support regardless of benefit status.
- LA officers are still expecting to participate in negotiations with LCR-CA about the future shape and requirements of employment support which will impact on future funding available to Sefton@work. However, these arrangements have not yet been outlined.
- Sefton@work is in talks with LCR-CA about Connect2work about how this might operate across Sefton. It's focus is on improving access to work for people who are inactive and in poor health, using experience from previous programmes commissioned by health services such as Individual Placement Support. The guidance from government has made specific reference to the integral role they expect to be played by LAs, with CAs acting as Accountable bodies.
- The new Sefton@work unit in Cambridge Walk, adjacent to the Southport Town Hall has now opened to receive its first clients. A formal opening is being prepared for February 2025.
- Sefton@Work are pleased that we have again passed our annual Matrix assessment including the new assessment criteria that features health & wellbeing being a core focus.
- The Freeport Extension Fund allocation for Phase 2 of the refurbishment works for Cambridge Road Community learning hub has been secured and work is underway to commence this project. Workstreams for this project include the specification of work, procurement of a suitable contractor, oversight of works, Cambridge Kitchen concept, ICT upgrade and identification of appropriate new tenants.
- Adult Community Learning is supporting a range of community events and engagement sessions across the Borough to promote starts on the new courses commencing in January 2025.
- Sefton@work held a training showcase in the Strand unit to encourage any Sefton residents of any age to be more aware of the range of local offers across the range of providers. This was well attended by both providers and residents, many of whom had previously not used Sefton@work.
- Recent effort to secure waged placements for care experienced young people engaging with Sefton@work has been successful. This has made a positive impact on the NEET rate of this group but is funded by UKSPF and will therefore conclude in March 25. A financial and benefit analysis will be conducted in the New year and shared with colleagues in Children's services for their consideration.

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- Work on the September Guarantee has now completed and Career Connect staff are in the process of analysing the cohort to identify those children most in need of targeted, additional support.
- A member of staff from Career Connect, Katie Enstone, has won a prestigious national award for Frontline Adviser of the Year for the exceptional work she has done for the SEND group in Sefton.
- The proportion of our young people with complex needs and deemed At Risk of Becoming NEET has increased significantly, putting extreme pressure on the capacity of this service to meet demands for intensive support needed to re-engage in learning and work. For example, the Elective Home Educated group is now more than twice the baseline figure when we first commenced the contract with Career Connect. We will present an analysis of this to Cabinet Member when all the data is available in the new year of 2025.
- The latest reported data available on 16/17 NEET rates from October 24 indicates that Sefton has the lowest rate of NEET across the LCR, is performing considerably better than regional and national averages and was ranked as 4th best compared to all other LAs in the country. In October 2024 we were also ranked lowest NEET amongst our 10 statistical neighbours.

REGENERATION SERVICE

The Regeneration Service continue to lead and support the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme for Sefton Council by helping to deliver several key Council priority projects across Sefton and also assisting where relevant on external partner led projects. In addition, the team manage the monitoring and reporting for a range of externally funded capital and revenue grant funding programmes.

Southport Town Deal

A range of projects are being supported through Southport Town Deal and form part of the Southport Town Deal programme for generating economic growth.

Marine Lake Events Centre

The Marine Lake Events Centre demolition work is progressing. Significant Utility diversions have been completed ahead of schedule - this has included Dowhigh, the Council's term contractor completing major water/sewerage diversions to allow future sheet piling works. DSM have been appointed to carry out the demolition and enabling works.

The demolition of the Southport Theatre Convention Centre is now over 80% complete with the theatre element demolished, and just the offices and meeting rooms near to the hotel party wall remaining. Works to salvage the historic items has also been completed. Trial pits 13m deep have commenced, and the removal of recyclable materials is underway.

The demolition and enabling works will continue until early 2025. The main contractor procurement has been completed, this will be announced shortly with the contractor entering into a PCSA with the main contract then starting on site in 2025 once demolition and enabling works have been completed by DSM.

Enterprise Arcade

The Enterprise Arcade made considerable progress this year following the start in site in January 2024 by the appointed contractor Skyline. Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project and will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport.

External works are now complete, and scaffolding has been removed. Works are progressing well with the main contract and are expected to complete early in the new year. The fitting of the lift has commenced, with major structural alterations to the ground floor retail and food and beverage design well underway. Work is progressing on developing the operational management for the facility once works are complete. Discussions are progressing with potential tenants for the facility.

Les Transformation de Southport

The first phase of transportation improvements, focusing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, Eastbank Street. Market Street and Eastbank Street is progressing. This exciting project should help transform this area of the town centre by updating and improving the quality of the public realm and improving directional signage. Balfour Beatty have been appointed as the contractor for this project and construction works programme is due to start in 2025 and are expected to last through to the Autumn of 2025. Letters explaining the works have been sent to all local businesses and Ward Members.

Stakeholder engagement and liaison is ongoing to ensure disruption is minimised and phasing does not affect business operation. The Contractor has held a meet the contractor event for businesses. Stakeholder engagement and liaison is ongoing to ensure disruption is minimised and phasing does not affect business operation. The Contractor has held a meet the contractor event for businesses. A programme of consultation has been determined for a second scheme centred around the Promenade and MLEC site.

Building a Better Customer Experience

This key training programme has been operation for a year now and is progressing well.

The pilot of the Building Better Customer Experience Training with Southport College has now been completed, in total 212 learners have now participated in the programme including 22 different businesses participating with Southport College. The feedback has been very positive with Southport College. Training for volunteers and workless people through Sefton's Adult & Community Learning service is also proposed as part of this pilot programme. The course information has been featured in the Community Learning Service Summer prospectus, reaching approximately 70,000 households, expanding the courses visibility.

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Southport Cove – The Esplanade

An Exclusivity Agreement is in place with GSL the team behind the Cove Resort proposals for the Esplanade site in Southport. The agreement gives GSL 18 months to work on the details of the scheme and prior to agreement from the Council on any future lease arrangement for development of the site. GSL are progressing planning discussions and all matters relating to delivery of the project on this site.

BOOTLE

Bootle Strand Repurposing

Progressing design development and programme for implementation of Phase 1 of Bootle Strand transformation project following approval of £20M by MHCLG.

The first phase of delivery work, which is building on the Salt and Tar events space will involve selective demolition of part of the centre, provide a new town square and landscaping down to the canal side and involve the repurposing of the former M&S unit for retail, community, health and leisure uses.

Following appointment of Vinci Build UK as demolition contractor, enabling works and utility diversions are progressing now on site to enable demolition early in 2025.

The main works planning application for Phase 1 was submitted in October following detailed consultation with over 570 people about the Strand Transformation Project. Demolition works are expected in March/April 2025. The planning application includes details on the creation of a new town square and landscaping work to better connect the shopping centre with the existing Salt and Tar site, as well as the canalside. This has been shaped by the Council's consultation and engagement exercise from people who reside, work or visit the area. Changes will include more green spaces and community areas, and changes to the former M&S building, with plans to repurpose the shop into six individual units and a community space. Sefton Council has released a CGI video showcasing its ambitious redevelopment plans for Bootle Strand, which can be accessed using the following link: [New CGI video is chance to fly through visionary Bootle Strand plans](#)

Further information on MySefton news link: [Next step for Bootle's transformation unveiled as planning application is submitted](#)

The full planning application for the next steps for the Strand is [available to view online](#).

Bootle Regeneration

Work is ongoing on the Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP) which is expect this to be submitted for examination in 2025. The AAP sets the land-use planning context to inform, direct and permit investment and development the wider Bootle area. People can find out more about the Bootle Strand scheme on the Council's website [Bootle Strand](#) .

AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works

Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council undertook to update the vision for this key coastal gateway in response to the feedback received. The Council appointed specialist planning and development consultancy Turley's, to undertake a feasibility study for the coastal gateway. Officers are working on a review of the key assets in the area including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operational bases, and options for their development/delivery.

Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way – In February 2023 Cabinet considered the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Further completions of additional properties have taken place recently. This leaves a few remaining properties to be acquired. Efforts are ongoing to bring the remaining ownerships into Council control. Parallel to this process, agents have been appointed continue to market the site to support the Council's ambitions for change and redevelopment of this site. Expressions of interest are continuing to come forward and lines of enquiry explored further with the market, and members are being updated on progress.

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site. Sefton is considering and assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest, as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site continues (Marketing Website link: [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#))

MAGHULL

Maghull Health Park

MerseyCare are continuing to work with Sefton Council to develop plans for a Mental Health Digital Research and Innovation Centre at Maghull Health Park. Building on the significant investment in the site to date by MerseyCare to this site - Europe's largest concentration of complex secure mental health services and sector leading clinical excellence for serious mental illness. Phase 1 of this health park development will look to bring forward a world class Mental Health Digital Research Centre, a landmark centre of excellence for digital mental health research in Sefton.

The proposals under development include plans for a business park of 320,000sqft for medical research, technology and data occupier space which will anchor the development of a new regionally significant 10 ha Health Park.

The site forms part of the successful LCRCA bid for Life Sciences Investment Zone funding approved in March 2024 to develop and life sciences cluster in the region and will safeguard 1800 jobs currently on site and develop 1270 new jobs, training, research and product development opportunities as well as attracting private sector investment. It will also help to address health deprivation and economic inactivity in Sefton and wider region.

The Investment Zone status offers a number of tax reliefs to business looking to locate within the Health Park, making it a more attractive investment location. Tax incentives to locating within investment zone including Business Rates, Stamp Duty

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Land Tax (SDLT), Employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs), Enhanced Structures and Building Allowance, and Enhanced Capital Allowances. There will be a 5-10 year programme of support. (Until 30th September 2034).

Discussions are underway with LCRCA regarding predevelopment funding for this project.

TOURISM

Destination Marketing

Destination Campaign – Due to the current impacts in Southport it was decided to run an extended Christmas Campaign, match funding was secured from UKSPF. Working with Marketing Southport and Southport BID the campaign focused on the key Christmas activity taking place in Southport along with a focus on the BID events and Christmas illuminations.

An evaluation of the campaign will take place looking at footfall and spend data to see if Christmas created a pick up in business for Southport.

PR – our agency continues to produce releases and listicles to support other elements of the marketing campaign. Pick-up on the latest (Christmas) release has been very good with it featuring on Yahoo and MSN as well as with regional media.

E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 58,000 with the addition of 2024 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience (the latest being as part of the autumn campaign).

Golf – We continue to work with EGC and receive reports from them for Marketing Southport board meetings. We are currently finalising the 'England's Golf Coast' trademark agreement.

Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 106

Events

Southport Food & Drink Festival – 30th & 31st May, 1st June

- Application forms for street food, bars, producers and exhibitors have been sent, the closing date is February 2025.
- The event will be in the same format as previous years
- New elements of the festival are being researched to look at growing the event for 2025.

Southport Air Show – 30th & 31st August

- The Flying Display Management Company have submitted the forms for Military aircraft requests which will be announced early this year.

- Other civilian aircraft are being approached for availability and quotes
- Due to high tides only a June or the August date was available.

British Musical Fireworks Championship – 27th & 28th September

- The event will take place on Saturday & Sunday this year and not Friday & Saturday as in the previous years. This is due to historic figures showing that the Sunday has predominantly been busier than the Friday.
- 2025 is the Champion of Champions year where the last 6 winners are invited back to compete against each other.

MLEC

- The demolition contractor DSM have been on site since July 2024. They commenced with soft strip out and asbestos removal and are now nearly complete with the demolition of the STCC.
- DSM are also responsible for the works on the party wall to disconnect from the hotel. Works are underway and due to be completed in 2025.
- Over the last few months, the procurement process to appoint a main contractor has been progressing and the preferred contractor, legals are now completed and the contractor will be announced shortly.
- As part of the MLEC Project and leading on Social Value alongside Project Management Consultants Gardiner & Theobald we continue to engage with several sectors of the community with various initiatives and events.

Salt & Tar

- Work continued to refine and shape the 2025 event programme for Salt and Tar, being mindful of the demolition work on The Strand.
- Already announced The K's, the first headline act for the next music festival in 2025 to take place over 8th – 10th August 2025, only a few hundred tickets remain.
- Billy Ocean has also been secured as the second headline act, tickets sold out within two days. A third headliner will be announced this month.
- Other events will include a new Fringe Festival that will incorporate the Bootle Comedy Festival, tickets are on sale and selling well.

PROPERTY SERVICES

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

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Asset Management

- Ongoing work to deliver the approved Asset Disposal phases.
- Developing an overarching disposal/utilisation proposal.
- Assisting with the SEND programme.
- Ongoing work supporting Growth Board projects.
- Ongoing work in connection to lease agreements.
- Delivered work in connection with the Southport Recovery (this spans across all areas of property).

Maintenance Management, Building Services & FM

- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Corporate Buildings.
- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Education Capital & SEND programme.
- Delivery of reactive maintenance and statutory compliance services to Corporate and Educational buildings.
- Professional advice and support on a broad range of regeneration programmes.
- Phase 1 essential maintenance delivery plan for corporate buildings progressing with works nearing completion.
- Phase 2 essential maintenance – Funding secured with programme underway.
- Asset survey delivery plan in train.
- Delivering services in support of major adaptation to vulnerable and disabled residents.
- Phase 2 Corporate Landlord approval received with programme now in development.

Project Management

- Provide professional support to Growth Board on several projects.
- Project delivery for various Education capital & SEND schemes.
- Provide support to other teams on Asset Disposal, Building Maintenance, Asset Management, Energy and Statutory Compliance colleagues.

Energy Management

- Management of the Council's gas, electricity and water portfolio, procurement, contract management and billing management
- Energy and water efficiency works across the portfolio – council buildings, schools and care homes.
- Retrofit of Council buildings – insulation and low carbon heating (via external funding)
- Sefton Council Retrofit programme – Delivering large scale government funded programmes ; Providing insulation to privately owned properties for the worst insulated homes/ low income residents.
- Delivering services in support of affordable warmth to residents. Team now called Healthy Greener Homes
- Managing the Council's Climate Emergency programme to drive action across all departments.

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- Southport Eco Centre educating children and delivering 'eco focused' programmes of work.
- Making funding applications to support Retrofit of domestic homes, Retrofit of Council buildings, affordable warmth, Eco Centre delivery.

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