

COUNCIL

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor June Burns) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Carragher) Vice Chair

Councillors Atkinson, Brodie - Browne, Brough,
Danny Burns, Byrom, Carlin, Cavanagh, Corcoran,
Jim Conalty, Desmond, Dodd, Doolin, Dowd, Doyle,
Duerden, Evans, Grace, Hansen, Hardman,
Harrison, Hart, Harvey, Hinde, Howard, Keith,
John Kelly, Sonya Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lloyd-
Johnson, Lunn-Bates, McGinnity, McNabb, Moncur,
Morris, Myers, Neary, O'Brien, Catie Page,
Christopher Page, Parker, Porter, Prendergast,
Pugh, Richards, Robinson, Roche, Roscoe,
Sammon, Shaw, Spring, Thompson,
Sir Ron Watson, Webster and Williams

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bradshaw, Halsall, Johnson, Maher, McKee, Murphy, Thomas, Tweed and Veidman.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

34. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

35. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Salt and Tar Events

On Friday, 16 and Saturday, 17 August the Mayor had attended concerts for Status Quo and Tom Jones and had enjoyed the concerts for both events. The Mayor considered that it was a credit to the Borough to have such a fantastic live events venue at Salt and Tar, to attract such great artists to perform.

Southport Flower Show

Southport Flower Show celebrated its 100th anniversary this year and the Mayor reported that it was an honour to attend the opening day on Thursday, 15 August. Despite the weather, it was very well attended, and the Mayor was delighted to receive the Council's rent payment once again, a bouquet of flowers.

Fundraising Events

The Mayor reported that it was an honour for her to attend two fundraising events in Southport following the tragic events of 29 July 2024. The first event was on Saturday, 31 August 2024 at Southport Football Club when the Club invited first responders and other key people to have lunch and watch the match as a special thank-you for what they did. The second event was on Sunday, 1 September 2024 which was the Southport Together Fundraiser for Alder Hey and North-West Ambulance Service. Both events were very well attended and brought a much-needed boost to the Southport community.

Mons

The Mayor reported that she had attended a working visit to Mons with a delegation during August 2024 which had been a great success, with visits to the Town Hall, Memorials and museums, and setting up projects for 2026 and 2027. A return visit by Mons representatives was planned for October 2024.

Charity Event

The Mayor reported that she would be hosting a Charity Cabaret Evening on Saturday, 19 October at St. William of York Church Social Club. Tickets were available at a cost of £10 each.

Inter-Faith Community Event

On Monday, 2 September 2024, the Mayor attended an Inter-faith Community Event at Southport Hebrew Congregation. This event was particularly important to the Mayor, particularly to let the multi faith organisations know that the Council was here to support them during this time. The visit finished with a visit to Southport Mosque, at the request of the Imam.

Rita Rimmer

The Mayor reported with great sadness on the loss of former Councillor Rita Rimmer who passed away on 16 July 2024. Rita Rimmer was Mayoress of Sefton in 1985/86. She was elected as a Councillor for Kew Ward in May 1986 and served on the Council for 4 years. During her time on the Council she served on various Committees and was the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on the Libraires and Arts Committee.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor acknowledged Rita Rimmer's dedicated service to Sefton and extended her sincere condolences to her family at this difficult time.

Councillors Sir Ron Watson, Brodie-Browne and Pugh paid tribute to Rita Rimmer.

The Council observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect in reflecting on the sad passing of Rita Rimmer.

36. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

The Council considered a schedule setting out the written questions submitted by:

1.	Mr. Jeffrey Holloway to the Cabinet Member – Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Doyle)
2.	Ms. Eileen O'Connor to the Cabinet Member – Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Doyle)
3.	Mr. Stephen Kelly to the Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways (Councillor Veidman)
4.	Ms. Maria Walsh to the Cabinet Member – Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Doyle)

together with responses given.

Members of the public who had submitted the questions were in attendance at the Council meeting. Supplementary questions to questions 2 and 4 were responded to by the Cabinet Member – Public Health and Wellbeing, who indicated that in respect of question 2, a written response would be provided to the member of the public concerned.

37. QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council considered a schedule setting out the written questions submitted by:

1.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
2.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economy and Skills and Deputy Leader (Councillor Lappin)
3.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Street Scene (Councillor Harvey)

4.	Councillor Sammon to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
5.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
6.	Councillor Shaw to the Spokesperson for Merseytravel (Councillor Carragher)
7.	Councillor Doolin to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Doyle)
8.	Councillor Doolin to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnership Engagement (Councillor Dowd)
9.	Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Street Scene (Councillor Harvey)
10.	Councillor Brodie-Browne to the Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways (Councillor Veidman)
11.	Councillor Brodie-Browne to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economy and Skills and Deputy Leader (Councillor Lappin)
12.	Councillor Lloyd-Johnson to the Cabinet Member – Housing and Highways (Councillor Veidman)
13.	Councillor Sammon to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economy and Skills and Deputy Leader (Councillor Lappin)
14.	Councillor Sammon to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Doyle)

together with responses given. Supplementary questions to questions 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, were responded to by the Leader of the Council; the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economy and Skills and Deputy Leader; the Spokesperson for Merseytravel; the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partner Engagement; and the Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Street Scene.

38. SOUTHPORT BUSINESS RECOVERY FUND

Further to Minute No. 40 of the meeting of the Cabinet of 5 September 2024, the Council considered the report of the Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing advising, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, of the decision of the Leader of the Council to exercise their powers to make urgent decisions because of the necessity to deliver emergency funding to businesses as part of the Council's response to the incident in Southport on 29 July 2024. The Council would aim to provide long-term support to all affected families, communities and stakeholders,

in every respect, following the events of 29 July 2024. The Council's priority was immediate and long-term support for those families, in any and every manner required. However, wider support included financial assistance for businesses affected by the events, via the introduction of a Southport Business Recovery Fund. While business and economic considerations might be wider and longer-term as well, the immediate focus was proposed to be on businesses and organisations located in the Hart Street and St Lukes Road areas of Southport.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Atkinson and

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and the necessity for the Leader of the Council to exercise her powers under the Council's Constitution to make urgent decisions to deliver emergency funding to businesses as part of the council's response to the incident in Southport on 29 July 2024, be approved, including the introduction of a Southport Business Recovery Fund to provide financial assistance, in the first instance, to businesses and organisations located in the Hart Street and St Lukes Road areas of Southport which have incurred losses following the incident in Southport on 29th July 2024;
- (2) the allocation of £0.5m funded via existing Council resources be approved;
- (3) the establishment of the fund, and disbursement of monies be progressed immediately given the urgency with which support is needed by affected businesses, with Cabinet and Council approvals to be secured retrospectively;
- (4) the finalisation of eligibility criteria and associated processes be delegated to the Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Regeneration, Economy and Skills;

Rule 27

- (5) it be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) had been consulted under Rule 27 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because it was necessary to provide emergency funding to businesses in Hart Street, Southport following the incident on 29 July 2024 which forced them to close, causing loss of income for the period of closure of up to four weeks.

39. ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY REVIEW

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets indicating that in view of the recent Property and Building Services move from Corporate Resources to Regeneration Economy and Assets, changes were required to the Council's Asset Disposal Policy. The Asset Disposal Policy was attached to the report.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Atkinson and

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to the Asset Disposal Policy, as detailed with the report, be approved.

40. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Further to Minute No. 22 of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 4 September 2024, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial which formally presented the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2023 -2024.

This was the third year an annual report had been presented which contained updates on the following:

- Audit and Governance Committee Work Programme 2023-2024
- Assurance Activity
- Risk Management
- Treasury Management
- Statement of Accounts and External Auditors
- Information Governance/Constitution Updates
- Audit and Governance Self-Assessment Exercise
- Appointment of an Independent Member
- Audit and Governance Committee Member Training and Development
- Outcomes/Achievements

It was moved by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor Roche and

RESOLVED:

That the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved.

41. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Further to Minute No. 2 of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 4 September 2024, the Council considered the report

of the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial which provided a number of recommendations and options for the Council's Constitution to be amended to reflect good practice and changes of arrangements within the Council. The Council also considered the additional information provided by the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial within the supplementary agenda.

It was moved by Councillor Howard, seconded by Councillor Atkinson:

That the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved, as follows:

That

- (1) the recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.4 (dates of Full Council meetings), 4.3 (motions), 5.5 (questions at Full Council) 6.2 (cabinet portfolios), 7.1 (petition scheme) and 8.3 (Planning Committee) of the report be approved; and
- (2) the only business to be transacted at a budget meeting will be:
 - (a) The setting of the Council Tax for the following year
 - (b) The setting of the Council's budget and related decisions determined by the Council's S.151 Officer
 - (c) If it is the final meeting before the end of the financial year, any decisions that are required by law to be made by the Full Council, and
 - (d) Any business agreed by the Mayor following advice from the Monitoring Officer.

An **Amendment** was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the Motion be revised as follows, in respect of recommendation (1):

That

- (1) the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved, with the exception of the recommendations set out in paragraphs 4.3(Motions) and 5.5(Questions at Full Council) which be referred back to Audit and Governance Committee for further consideration.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that **the Amendment was lost** by 15 votes to 40, with 0 abstentions.

On being put, **the Original Motion was carried unanimously** and it was:

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved, as follows:

- (1) the recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.4 (dates of Full Council meetings), 4.3 (motions), 5.5 (questions at Full Council) 6.2 (cabinet portfolios), 7.1 (petition scheme) and 8.3 (Planning Committee) of the report be approved; and
- (2) the only business to be transacted at a budget meeting will be:
 - (a) The setting of the Council Tax for the following year
 - (b) The setting of the Council's budget and related decisions determined by the Council's S.151 Officer
 - (c) If it is the final meeting before the end of the financial year, any decisions that are required by law to be made by the Full Council, and
 - (d) Any business agreed by the Mayor following advice from the Monitoring Officer.

42. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2024/25 TO 2027/28 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2024/25 - ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial that set out supplementary estimates for approval in the Capital Programme following recommendation by the Cabinet.

It was moved by Councillor Howard, seconded by Councillor Lappin and

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.022m for the Enterprise Arcade project funded by capital receipts, as set out at paragraph 1 of the report, be approved;
- (2) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.498m for the ICT Cyber Security project funded by external borrowing, as set out at paragraph 2 of the report, be approved;
- (3) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.148m for the Committee Meeting Microphone and Live Streaming System funded by external borrowing, as set out at paragraph 3 of the report, be approved; and

- (4) a supplementary capital estimate of £0.040m for the Red Rose Park works funded by capital receipts, as set out at paragraph 4 of the report, be approved.

43. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2023/24

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial that provided a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken during 2023/24 and an update to 31 July 2024. The Council received this outturn report to allow monitoring against the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and Prudential Indicators approved by the Cabinet and Council in March 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Howard, seconded by Councillor Lappin and

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management position during 2023/24 and the update to 31 July 2024, to review the effects of decisions taken in pursuit of the Treasury Management Strategy and to consider the implications of changes resulting from regulatory, economic and market factors affecting the Council's treasury management activities, be noted.

44. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2023/24

The Mayor reported that the Labour Group wished to make changes to the membership of the following Committees:

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

Councillor Duerden to replace Councillor Johnson as the substitute member for Councillor Richards.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor McNabb to replace Councillor Williams as the substitute member for Councillor Cavanagh.

Planning Committee

Councillor Conalty to replace Councillor McNabb as the substitute member for Councillor Desmond.

RESOLVED:

That the changes as detailed above be approved.

45. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ATKINSON - SEFTON UNITY MOTION

It was moved by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Prendergast and unanimously:

RESOLVED:

Unity Motion

Sefton Council is united in condemning any criminal, racist, Islamophobic, antisemitic acts and any violent disorder.

We stand in solidarity with all of our communities, against those who seek to divide us.

Sefton is a proud borough with a rich history of diversity and inclusivity and we are proud to represent a borough of many faiths. We commit to support and defend those who are targeted because of their faith or race.

We denounce all forms of racial hatred, and endeavour to promote social justice and equality for all.

The goodwill we have seen from people in and beyond Southport, including recovery from the attack on the Mosque on Sussex Road and surrounding shops and homes, shows the true spirit of Southport.

Sefton Council will

- Take a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime and encourage anyone who experiences assaults, threats or harassment, whether they be a one-off incident or a series of incidents, to report it immediately.
- Increase our engagement with faith communities, and those who have English as a second language, to build trusting relationships.
- Urge everyone to think before sharing information online, that it comes from a trusted source and they are not spreading misinformation.

**46. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PRENDERGAST -
CHANGES TO THE WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE AND
PROTECTING PENSIONERS FROM FUEL POVERTY**

It was moved by Councillor Prendergast, seconded by Councillor Brough:

Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty

Council Notes:

- The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.

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- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents across Sefton and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship. Around 40% of those eligible for Pension Credit do not claim it.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Sefton sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents. Only those receiving a pension of £218.25 per week, or £332.95 per week for couples, are eligible for Pension Credit, this massively restricts the pool of potential claimants.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.

- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Sefton are supported in claiming their entitlement.

Following debate and in accordance with rule 95 of Chapter 4 in the Constitution, the voting on the Motion was recorded and the Members present at the time, voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION:

Councillors Brodie-Browne, Brough, Carlin, Dodd, Doolin, Evans, Keith, Lloyd-Johnson, Morris, Prendergast, Pugh, Sammon, Shaw, Thompson and Sir Ron Watson.

AGAINST THE MOTION:

Councillors Atkinson, Danny Burns, Byrom, Carragher, Conalty, Corcoran, Desmond, Dowd, Doyle, Duerden, Grace, Hansen, Hardman, Harrison Kelly, Hart, Harvey, Hinde, Howard, John Kelly, Sonya Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lunn-Bates, McGinnity, McNabb, Moncur, Myers, Neary, O'Brien, Catie Page, Chris Page, Parker, Porter, Richards, Robinson, Roche, Roscoe, Spring, Webster and Williams.

The Mayor declared that **the Motion was lost** by 40 votes to 15.

47. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SHAW - PENSIONER WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

It was moved by Councillor Shaw, seconded by Councillor Brodie-Browne:

Pensioner Winter Fuel Payments

Council notes:

1. The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and to restrict eligibility only to those in receipt of Pension Credits and other similar benefits.
2. That the Government's own figures indicate that, across England and Wales, the number of pensioners eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by around 10 million (down from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).
3. That locally, the same Government figures indicate that in Sefton Borough around 51,600 pensioners will lose out, equating to 86% of the 60,000 Sefton pensioners who previously received the winter fuel payment.

Council expresses its concern:

1. That many thousands of local pensioners, particularly on lower and middle incomes, will suffer genuine hardship as a result of the loss of the £200 or £300 annual winter fuel payment; in general only those below the pension credit limits of £218.15 a week (£11,300 pa) for a single pensioner, or £332.95 a week (£17,300 pa) for pensioner couples, will remain eligible. These income levels are significantly lower than the living wage rate.
2. That the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of winter fuel payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council accordingly resolves to:

1. Authorise the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on winter fuel payments to be rescinded.
2. Also authorise the Chief Executive to write to the three MPs representing the Sefton Council area asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the winter fuel payment eligibility.

Following debate and in accordance with rule 95 of Chapter 4 in the Constitution, the voting on the Motion was recorded and the Members present at the time, voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION:

Councillors Brodie-Browne, Brough, Carlin, Dodd, Doolin, Evans, Keith, Lloyd-Johnson, Morris, Prendergast, Pugh, Sammon, Shaw, Thompson and Sir Ron Watson.

AGAINST THE MOTION:

Councillors Atkinson, Danny Burns, Byrom, Carragher, Conalty, Corcoran, Desmond, Dowd, Doyle, Duerden, Grace, Hansen, Hardman, Harrison Kelly, Hart, Harvey, Hinde, Howard, John Kelly, Sonya Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lunn-Bates, McGinnity, McNabb, Moncur, Myers, Neary, O'Brien, Catie Page, Chris Page, Parker, Porter, Richards, Robinson, Roche, Roscoe, Spring, Webster and Williams.

The Mayor declared that **the Motion was lost** by 40 votes to 15.

48. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DOOLIN - CANCEL THE PROPOSED A5036 PORT OF LIVERPOOL ACCESS ROAD THROUGH RIMROSE VALLEY COUNTRY PARK

It was moved by Councillor Doolin, seconded by Councillor Lloyd-Johnson:

Cancel the proposed A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road through Rimrose Valley Country Park.

This council notes:

The A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme was paused in March 2023, and pushed back to a group of road projects known collectively as "RIS3" which are due to commence in April 2025. As such, the plan to build a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley remains in place.

The election of a new Labour Government provides an opportunity to end the uncertainty and cancel the proposed scheme once and for all.

The untiring work of local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley campaign for its continued campaign to prevent the destruction of Rimrose Valley, has been a credit to our community and their devotion to protecting green spaces.

This council believes:

There are better ways to improve transport links to and from the Port of Liverpool which would avoid the long-term consequences and harm to the local environment and to the health and well-being of the surrounding communities caused by the building of a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley.

The proposed road would worsen air quality in South Sefton, which already has some of the worst levels of pollution in the country and therefore represents a grave threat to public health. The CO2 emissions generated through its construction and subsequent use would contribute to the global climate emergency, at a time when the transport sector urgently needs to *reduce* its CO2 emissions; it being the only sector to see emissions grow in recent years.

Rimrose Valley serves as a vital green space for the surrounding communities and offers a sanctuary for residents to connect with nature, engage in recreational activities, and find solace amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life. As such, it needs to be recognised and protected as resource for both physical and mental well-being.

Green spaces such as Rimrose Valley are home to a rich and diverse range of plant and animal species, making them essential habitats for our biodiversity to thrive. This biodiversity is under threat. We therefore have a responsibility to protect and preserve such places, as they contribute to the overall health and resilience of our planet's ecosystems.

Building a road through this park would further perpetuate the mindset of prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability and public health and wellbeing.

This council resolves to:

Continue to oppose the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road.

Write to Louise Haigh MP, new Labour Party Secretary of State for Transport to call for the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road to be cancelled and alternative methods of addressing the transport needs of the Port of Liverpool are explored.

Thank the local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley Campaign for its continued work.

Continue to protect green spaces within urban environments and support communities to access such amenities to promote mental and physical health wellbeing.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Brodie-Browne that the Motion be revised as follows:

This council notes:

The A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme was paused in March 2023, and pushed back to a group of road projects known collectively as "RIS3" which are due to commence in April 2025. As such, the plan to build a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley remains in place.

The election of a new Labour Government provides an opportunity to end the uncertainty and cancel the proposed scheme once and for all.

The untiring work of local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley campaign for its continued campaign to prevent the destruction of Rimrose Valley, has been a credit to our community and their devotion to protecting green spaces.

This council believes:

There are better ways to improve transport links to and from the Port of Liverpool which would avoid the long-term consequences and harm to the local environment and to the health and well-being of the surrounding communities caused by the building of a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley.

The proposed road would worsen air quality in South Sefton, which already has some of the worst levels of pollution in the country and therefore represents a grave threat to public health. The CO2 emissions generated through its construction and subsequent use would contribute to the global climate emergency, at a time when the transport sector urgently needs to reduce its CO2 emissions; it being the only sector to see emissions grow in recent years.

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Green spaces such as Rimrose Valley are home to a rich and diverse range of plant and animal species, making them essential habitats for our biodiversity to thrive. This biodiversity is under threat. We therefore have a responsibility to protect and preserve such places, as they contribute to the overall health and resilience of our planet's ecosystems.

Building a road through this park would further perpetuate the mindset of prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability and public health and wellbeing.

This council resolves to:

Continue to oppose the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road.

Write to Louise Haigh MP, new Labour Party Secretary of State for Transport:

(1) to call for the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road to be cancelled and alternative methods of addressing the transport needs of the Port of Liverpool are explored.

(2) to establish whether her department supports a tunnel link in contradistinction from the view expressed by Highways England

(3) to establish whether there are any proposals under active review in the department which would alleviate pressure on Church Road.

Thank the local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley Campaign for its continued work.

Continue to protect green spaces within urban environments and support communities to access such amenities to promote mental and physical health wellbeing.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Amendment was lost** by 15 votes to 40.

A **further amendment** was moved by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Moncur that the Motion be revised as follows:

Cancel the proposed A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road through Rimrose Valley Country Park.

This council notes:

The A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme was paused in March 2023, and pushed back to a group of road projects known collectively as "RIS3".

Despite our constant requests to the previous Conservative Government to confirm abolition of the scheme, which were ignored, we will continue our efforts to work with the newly elected Government through our MPs to seek a positive outcome.

The untiring work of Bootle MP Peter Dowd, who has campaigned against the road for decades, alongside Sefton Central MP Bill Esterson, local residents and volunteers of Save Rimrose Valley has helped to prevent the destruction of Rimrose Valley, and their devotion to protecting green spaces has been a credit to our community.

This council believes:

There are better ways to improve transport links to and from the Port of Liverpool which would avoid the long-term consequences and harm to the local environment and to the health and well-being of the surrounding communities caused by the building of a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley.

The proposed road would worsen air quality in South Sefton, which already has some of the worst levels of pollution in the country and therefore represents a grave threat to public health. The CO2 emissions generated through its construction and subsequent use would contribute to the global climate emergency, at a time when the transport sector urgently needs to *reduce* its CO2 emissions; it being the only sector to see emissions grow in recent years.

Rimrose Valley serves as a vital green space for the surrounding communities and offers a sanctuary for residents to connect with nature, engage in recreational activities, and find solace amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life. As such, it needs to be recognised and protected as resource for both physical and mental well-being.

Green spaces such as Rimrose Valley are home to a rich and diverse range of plant and animal species, making them essential habitats for our biodiversity to thrive. This biodiversity is under threat. We therefore have a responsibility to protect and preserve such places, as they contribute to the overall health and resilience of our planet's ecosystems.

Building a road through this park would further perpetuate the mindset of prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability and public health and wellbeing.

This council resolves to:

Continue to oppose the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road.

Ask the Leader of the Council to write to our Sefton MPs, to thank them for their hard work to date and continue to work with them to look at alternative methods of addressing the needs of the Port.

Thank the local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley Campaign for its continued work and, in particular, pay tribute to former Councillor Paul Cummins who was instrumental in the setting up of the Friends of Rimrose Valley Group.

Continue to protect green spaces within urban environments and support communities to access such amenities to promote mental and physical health wellbeing.

Following a debate on the **further Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **further Amendment was carried** by 40 votes to 15.

Thereafter, the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote on the **Substantive Motion** and the Mayor declared that the **Substantive Motion was carried** by 40 votes to 13 with 2 abstentions and it was

RESOLVED:

Cancel the proposed A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road through Rimrose Valley Country Park.

This council notes:

The A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme was paused in March 2023, and pushed back to a group of road projects known collectively as "RIS3".

Despite our constant requests to the previous Conservative Government to confirm abolition of the scheme, which were ignored, we will continue our efforts to work with the newly elected Government through our MPs to seek a positive outcome.

The untiring work of Bootle MP Peter Dowd, who has campaigned against the road for decades, alongside Sefton Central MP Bill Esterson, local residents and volunteers of Save Rimrose Valley has helped to prevent the destruction of Rimrose Valley, and their devotion to protecting green spaces has been a credit to our community.

This council believes:

There are better ways to improve transport links to and from the Port of Liverpool which would avoid the long-term consequences and harm to the local environment and to the health and well-being of the surrounding communities caused by the building of a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley.

The proposed road would worsen air quality in South Sefton, which already has some of the worst levels of pollution in the country and therefore represents a grave threat to public health. The CO2 emissions generated through its construction and subsequent use would contribute to the global climate emergency, at a time when the transport sector urgently needs to *reduce* its CO2 emissions; it being the only sector to see emissions grow in recent years.

Rimrose Valley serves as a vital green space for the surrounding communities and offers a sanctuary for residents to connect with nature, engage in recreational activities, and find solace amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life. As such, it needs to be recognised and protected as a resource for both physical and mental well-being.

Green spaces such as Rimrose Valley are home to a rich and diverse range of plant and animal species, making them essential habitats for our biodiversity to thrive. This biodiversity is under threat. We therefore have a responsibility to protect and preserve such places, as they contribute to the overall health and resilience of our planet's ecosystems.

Building a road through this park would further perpetuate the mindset of prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability and public health and wellbeing.

This council resolves to:

Continue to oppose the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road.

Ask the Leader of the Council to write to our Sefton MPs, to thank them for their hard work to date and continue to work with them to look at alternative methods of addressing the needs of the Port.

Thank the local residents and volunteers of the Save Rimrose Valley Campaign for its continued work and, in particular, pay tribute to former Councillor Paul Cummins who was instrumental in the setting up of the Friends of Rimrose Valley Group.

Continue to protect green spaces within urban environments and support communities to access such amenities to promote mental and physical health wellbeing.

**49. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PRENDERGAST -
COUNCIL TAX**

It was moved by Councillor Prendergast, seconded by Councillor Sir Ron Watson:

Council Tax

Since 2012, Council Tax across Sefton has increased by around 43% with those in Band D properties now paying almost £2,000 per year.

It has long been the case that any proposed Council Tax increase of over 5% or more will have to be put to a public vote.

There are concerning reports in national media that in the forthcoming Budget, the Chancellor may grant local authorities powers to increase Council Tax by an unlimited amount without the need for a public vote.

Any such proposals would represent a significant change and lead to a democratic deficit within Sefton, with potentially huge increases being imposed on Sefton residents without a mandate from Sefton residents.

Council resolves to:

- Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor to ask for urgent clarification on any proposed changes to Council Tax and request that any proposed changes to legislation ensure that Council Tax rises of 5% or more are still subject to a public vote.
- Agree that any proposed increases in Council Tax of 5% or more are still subject to a public vote regardless of what changes might be brought in by central government.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the Motion be revised as follows:

Since 2012, Council Tax across Sefton has increased by around 43% with those in Band D properties now paying almost £2,000 per year.

It has long been the case that any proposed Council Tax increase of over 5% or more will have to be put to a public vote.

There are concerning reports in national media that in the forthcoming Budget, the Chancellor may grant local authorities powers to increase Council Tax by an unlimited amount without the need for a public vote.

Any such proposals would represent a significant change and lead to a democratic deficit within Sefton, with potentially huge increases being imposed on Sefton residents without a mandate from Sefton residents.

Council resolves to:

- Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor to ask for urgent clarification on any proposed changes to Council Tax and request that any proposed changes to legislation ensure that Council Tax rises of 5% or more are still subject to a public vote.
- Agree that any proposed increases in Council Tax of 5% or more are still subject to a public vote regardless of what changes might be brought in by central government.

- Press the incoming government to proceed with the long-awaited review of local government finance and taxation with a view to replacing council tax by a fair non-regressive revenue collection system tailored to citizen's means and needs that would not require subsequent adjustment.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Amendment was lost** by 9 votes to 39 with 5 abstentions.

Thereafter, the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote on the **Original Motion** and the Mayor declared that the **Original Motion was lost** by 12 votes to 39 with 2 abstentions.

50. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SIR RON WATSON - SOUTHPORT FLOWER SHOW

It was moved by Councillor Sir Ron Watson, seconded by Councillor Prendergast and unanimously

RESOLVED:

Southport Flower Show

Sefton Council recognises the significant contribution that the Southport Flower Show makes to the attractiveness of Southport for many visitors and local residents alike.

The Council is delighted to congratulate all those involved in the Flower Show having been in existence for 100 years this year.

The Council has been very sorry to learn of the passing of Mr Tim Timmerman who was responsible for the setting up of the current Southport Flower Show Company and without his huge amount of effort and ability to attract both business and voluntary support the Show would not now be in existence.

The Council therefore agrees to prepare an appropriate Certificate of Thanks and for this to be presented by the Mayor to his family at the earliest opportunity.