



## COUNCIL SUMMONS

To Members of the Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Councillor

You are requested to attend a Meeting of the Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to

be held on **Thursday 14th November, 2024 at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall, Southport**  
to

transact the business set out on the agenda overleaf.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. G.", written over a light grey textured background.

Chief Executive

Town Hall,  
Southport

Wednesday 6 November 2024

Please contact Debbie Campbell, Democratic Services Manager  
on 0151 934 2254 or e-mail [debbie.campbell@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.campbell@sefton.gov.uk)

We endeavour to provide a reasonable number of full agendas, including reports at the meeting. If you wish to ensure that you have a copy to refer to at the meeting, please can you print off your own copy of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

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

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

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

## **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

(Pages 5 - 26)

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024

## **4. Mayor's Communications**

### **Public Session**

## **5. Matters Raised by the Public**

To deal with matters raised by members of the public resident within the Borough, of which notice has been given in accordance with the procedures relating to public questions, motions or petitions set out in Paragraph 36 to 47 of the Council and Committee Procedure Rules in Chapter 4 of the Council Constitution.

(Details of any further petitions notified or questions submitted by members of the public will be circulated at the meeting).

### **Council Business Session**

## **6. Questions Raised by Members of the Council**

To receive and consider questions to Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Spokespersons for any of the Joint Authorities upon any matter within their portfolio/area of responsibility, of which notice has been given by Members of the Council in accordance with Paragraph 49 to 51 of the Council and Committee Procedure Rules, set out in Chapter 4 of the Council Constitution.

- 7. Maritime Corridor Scheme Phase 1 - Receipt of Capital Funding** (Pages 27 - 34)

Report of the Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection
- 8. Southport Eastern Access Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding** (Pages 35 - 42)

Report of the Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection
- 9. Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Receipt of Capital Funding** (Pages 43 - 48)

Report of the Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection
- 10. Treasury Management Position to September 2024** (Pages 49 - 60)

Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial
- 11. Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28** (Pages 61 - 78)

Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial
- 12. Honorary Freedom of the Borough - Sefton Council for Voluntary Service** (Pages 79 - 84)

Report of the Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships
- 13. Matters dealt with in accordance with Rule 46 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Call-In and Urgency) of the Constitution** (Pages 85 - 86)

Report of the Leader of the Council.
- 14. Membership of Committees 2024/25**

To consider any changes to the membership of any Committees etc.

15. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Prendergast - Bring Back Children's A&E Services to Southport** (Pages 87 - 88)  
Copy attached
16. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Prendergast - Supporting Southport Town Centre Businesses** (Pages 89 - 90)  
Copy attached
17. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Pugh - School Academies** (Pages 91 - 92)  
Copy attached
18. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Pugh - Emergency Care Services** (Pages 93 - 94)  
Copy attached
19. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Prendergast - Supporting Sefton's Pensioners** (Pages 95 - 96)  
Copy attached
20. **Motion Submitted by Councillor Howard - Sefton Council Commends Historic Budget October 2024** (Pages 97 - 98)  
Copy attached

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

## 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 Kelly, 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.

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## Southport Flower Show

Southport Flower Show celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> 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.

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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)

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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,



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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.

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## **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

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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:

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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

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- (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**

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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.

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- 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.



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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:

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## **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.

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

**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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COUNCIL - THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

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.

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:**

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

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.

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COUNCIL - THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

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.

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

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.

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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.



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- 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.

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## Cabinet / Council Report



**Report Title:** Maritime Corridor Scheme Phase 1 - Receipt of Capital Funding

Date of meeting:	Thursday 3 October 2024 Thursday 14 November 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Council		
Report of:	Assistant Director Highways and Public Protection		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways		
Wards affected:	Litherland; Molyneux; Netherton and Orrell; St. Oswald;		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

### Summary:

Schemes over £1m in value need Council approval and the necessary funding needs to be included within the Council's Capital Programme. The first Phase of the Maritime Corridor Scheme is expected to cost approximately £12.3m. Subject to approval from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, a Grant Funding Agreement will be received for this amount.

### Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Recommend to Council the approval of a supplementary capital estimate for £12.303m externally funded using the Levelling Up Fund and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for the delivery of Maritime Corridor Phase 1 pending the receipt and sealing of a grant funding agreement from the LCRCA.
- (2) Approve the delivery of the first Phase of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 scheme.

Council is recommended to:

- (1) Approve a supplementary capital estimate for £12.303m externally funded using the Levelling Up Fund and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the LCRCA for the delivery of Maritime Corridor Phase 1 pending the receipt and

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sealing of a grant funding agreement from the LCRCA.

## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

### Background

- 1.1 In January 2024 Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Procurement process of Phase 1 of The Maritime Corridor Scheme. This scheme includes a series of improvements centred around the A5036 and the A59 and the employment land in between. The proposals are intended to reduce congestion, improve safety and provide easier access to employment sites in the south of the borough. In the development of the proposals further consideration was given to how people walking or cycling could better access these sites and hence the scope of the scheme was increased to include active travel improvements.
- 1.2 This earlier report provided an update of the funding and delivery of the scheme. It explained that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) had submitted a Funding application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to secure Levelling Up funding (LUF) for a series of transport related improvements in Liverpool, Wirral and Sefton. As such elements of the Maritime Corridor work were included in the LUF Business Case. This Business Case has now been approved and funding made available to the LCRCA.
- 1.3 In addition, funding has been identified in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) allocation to the LCRCA, from the Department for Transport, for the Maritime Corridor Scheme.
- 1.4 The LUF allocation to the Maritime Corridor Scheme, of £9.5m, needs to be expended before March 2025 to meet the criteria set by government. Similarly, any CRSTS funding needs to be expended by March 2027.
- 1.5 A procurement route has been chosen, and subsequently approved by Cabinet, to give the best chance of meeting the spending target. Balfour Beatty, appointed through the Scape Framework, have entered into a Contract with the Council, to develop the scheme Target Cost and delivery programme based on the design information. In addition, a Social Value Plan is being developed with input from the Neighbourhoods Team. This Contract is for Early Contractor Involvement and is therefore limited in its scope. It does, however, enable the main works contract to be developed and the cost identified.

### Funding and Approvals.

- 1.6 The LCRCA recently undertook a re-baselining process to identify a total allocation to fund the Maritime Corridor scheme within the current CRSTS window, i.e. before March 2027. This amounted to £21.2m made up of Levelling Up Funding and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Funding.
- 1.7 To give the best chance of ensuring funding timeframes are met, the scheme has been split into 2 phases. The first phase is focussed on work that doesn't require third party land.
- 1.8 To secure funding from the LCRCA the Council needs to go through a 'Gateway assessment'. This is a process set up by the LCRCA to ensure that the schemes are

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delivering the appropriate outputs and that Local Authorities have the processes in place to deliver the projects.

- 1.9 A Gateway 3 application, aimed at securing funds to progress design work, early contractor involvement and other costs, has been successful. A Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) was received for the full amount requested. This was subsequently reviewed and approved in accordance with the delegated authority previously granted by Cabinet.
- 1.10 A Gateway 4 application, aimed at securing the cost of works delivery and associated costs, has been reviewed and accepted by the relevant Panel. A Grant Funding Agreement is now being drawn up for approximately £12.303m.
- 1.11 Cabinet, at its January meeting, gave delegated authority to the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with Cabinet Member, to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary funding to enable the construction stage of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 project to be undertaken. The same meeting also approved the delegation of the award of the construction contract to the Assistant Director - Highways & Public Protection, again following consultation with Cabinet Member.
- 1.12 Assuming the GFA is approved, the Council will receive an additional £12.303m. To comply with the Financial Regulations, Council approval is sought to include this additional funding within the Capital Programme.
- 1.13 The scheme was included in the Transport Capital Programme in 2024-25 and the scheme details, phasing and funding have been discussed with Cabinet Member.
- 1.14 The scope of the Phase 1 of the project was determined to ensure that and land required for construction was within Council ownership or Highway land. The three main elements are as follows;
  - Introduction of new cycle route on Netherton on Way linking the A5036 and Bridle Road
  - Modification of the junction of A5058, Netherton Way and Bridle Road incorporating pedestrian and cycle crossings.
  - With agreement with National Highways, introduction of a left turn lane from A5036, Dunnings Bridge Road, into Atlantic Park
- 1.15 The scheme details and associated consultation process were set out in the report to the Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee in November 2023 (see Background Papers). This recommendations in this report were approved.
- 1.16 It should be noted that negotiations have been in progress with National Highways for some years. They have approved the scheme in principle but are currently going through a formal technical review which will culminate in the issue of a formal agreement to enable the Council to complete works on the trunk road.

## Consultation

- 1.17 The wider scheme has been subject to two public consultation sessions, both completed following consideration from the Councils Public Consultation and Engagement Panel.

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- 1.18 Initial consultation was completed in 2021. This was aimed at informing residents and business of the potential for the delivery of the project as well as providing the opportunity for concerns and comments to be raised to help influence the scheme development.
- 1.19 Following the development of the proposals it was considered sensible to complete some more detailed consultation. This second consultation process was more to inform key stakeholders, those with a land interest and the general public about the design of the scheme and its objectives. Engagement was undertaken to secure comments and feedback to help inform the final detailed design process and the full business case.
- 1.20 This further engagement in 2023 was separated into two stages;
- Stage 1, which began in August 2023, focused on key stakeholders identified by the Council; and those who have an interest in the land on which the scheme will be delivered, either through a freehold, leasehold or statutory undertaking. This list was identified by the Land Referencing Company and confirmed by the Land Agent, commissioned to support the Council on this scheme. In total 65 letters were sent out to a private survey link on Your Sefton Your Say.
  - Stage 2 was the wider public engagement and - ran from September to October. This stage consulted the wider public area including residents, schools, college and businesses. All addresses which were adjacent to the improvements were identified via the Council's internal Mapping system and 608 letters were distributed to these addresses inviting them to complete the consultation. In addition, a Social Media campaign was launched on the Council's platforms as well as Press Release being released onto the Council' website. All Protected Characteristics Groups / organisation and regional / national cycling and walking organisations and charities were also invited directly by email to take part in the survey.
- 1.21 Some feedback on the main issues raised during consultation have been set out in the report to L&R Committee (November 2023) mentioned above. Details of feedback from the consultation process were also considered by Public Consultation and Engagement Panel (June 2024)
- 1.22 Ward Member briefings providing details of the consultation were provided and a number of meetings were held subsequently with Ward members.
- 1.23 Recognising the importance of ensuring that all members are fully briefed on the development of the scheme, its phasing, duration, likely implications during construction and ultimate benefits, including social value, that the scheme will deliver, a further meeting has been held with Ward Members to discuss some specific elements of the scheme. Ward Members will be provided with regular updates during the construction process.

## 2. Financial Implications

The Contract value is still being established through the Early Contractor Involvement stage of the procurement process previously agreed by Cabinet.

It is anticipated that the total scheme costs, which will include the Contract Target Cost, supervision and contract administration costs, statutory undertakers diversion costs and any legal or approval costs, will be approximately £12.303m.

The Grant Funding Agreement from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will set out the exact figure and a further supplementary estimate will be submitted for approval as per the Financial Procedure Rules for any variation to the £12.303m identified in this report. This will be received and reviewed prior to the works Contract being signed. It should be noted that Cabinet has previously given delegated authority to the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with Cabinet Member, to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary funding to enable the construction stage of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 project to be undertaken.

It should be noted that Cabinet, at its meeting on 4th January approved a supplementary capital estimate of £500k of Development Funding for inclusion within the Transport Capital Programme. This funding is in addition to £12.303m identified in this report.

## 3. Legal Implications

As determined by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the contract for the works will need to be sealed.

## 4. Risk Implications

Should Cabinet not recommend the funding for inclusion in the Capital Programme, the contract won't be signed and works not delivered. This will have a negative impact on the Council's reputation and ability to secure further funds from the LCRCA for transport projects.

There is a risk that the Works cost exceed the budget. However, further funding will be secured for Phase 2, so any additional costs over and above the cost plan will be funded from this budget, anticipated to be approved later in 2024. Furthermore a robust costed Risk Register exists to mitigate this risk. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

## 5 Staffing HR Implications

The management of the contract will be overseen by staff in Transportation Planning and Highway Development team. The contract administration and supervision will be undertaken by a team from the existing Transport Technical Services Supply Framework. The intention being that this team will administer and supervise several large capital schemes which are expected for delivery at the same time. The staff costs incurred prior to the award of the Contract will be funded from the Development Funding secured by the Council from the LCRCA which is contained within the Transport Capital Programme. Staff Costs, once the contract for the works is awarded, will be funded from the capital funding secured for the construction

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## 6 Conclusion

By approving the recommendations the Council is able to include the funding in the Capital Programme and let the Contract for the delivery of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 Works.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options have been considered

#### Equality Implications:

The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.

#### Impact on Children and Young People:

The Impact of the scheme cared for children and care experienced young people was considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment. Options for positive impacts will be considered in the development of the Social Value commitments that the Contractor will be expected to provide.

#### Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

The construction process will have negative impact in that new materials will be used and there will be a net carbon increase. There will also be a negative impact on traffic movements on the impacted streets whilst works are ongoing. However, the scheme when implemented, will improve accessibility and should encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport. This should reduce the carbon impact. The scheme is one of a number of schemes currently subject to a Whole Life Carbon Assessment which will be able to provide a definitive picture.

### What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

#### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7779/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5879/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

#### (B) External Consultations

Consultation on the highway proposals formed part of the wider consultation on The Maritime Corridor. This consultation was completePage 32 dance with the proposals approved by the



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Public Consultation and Engagement Panel in April 2021. Further detailed engagement with Ward Members, key stakeholders, residents and business has recently been completed in September and October 2023 and results appraised. Comments relating to the Phase 1 proposals were summarised in the recent report to Licensing and Regulatory Committee (Nov 23).

Recognising the importance of ensuring that all members are fully briefed on the development of the scheme, its phasing, duration, likely implications during construction and ultimate benefits, including social value, that the scheme will deliver, a further meeting has been held with Ward Members and some minor changes to the scope of the works completed.

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Andrew Dunsmore
Telephone Number:	07866176195
Email Address:	Andrew.Dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk

## Appendices:


None

## Background Papers:

Report to Licensing and Regulatory Committee – 6 November 2023

Report to Cabinet – Procurement Strategy for Maritime Corridor Scheme – Phase 1 – 4 January 2024

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<b>Cabinet/Council Report</b>	<b>Sefton Council</b> 		
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Southport Eastern Access Scheme – Receipt of Capital Funding</b>		
Date of meeting:	07 November 2024 14 November 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Council		
Report of:	Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways		
Wards affected:	Dukes; Kew; Norwood		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

Schemes over £1m in value need Council approval and the necessary funding needs to be included within the Council’s Capital Programme. Southport Eastern Access scheme is expected to cost approximately £19.97m. Subject to approval from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, a Grant Funding Agreement will be received for this amount.

**Recommendation(s):**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Recommend to Council the approval of a supplementary capital estimate for £19.97m externally funded using the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for the delivery of Southport Eastern Access scheme pending receipt and signing of a Grant Funding Agreement from the LCRCA.

Council is recommended to:

- (1) Approve a supplementary capital estimate for £19.97m externally funded using the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the LCRCA for the delivery of Southport Eastern Access scheme pending receipt and signing of a Grant Funding Agreement from the LCRCA.

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## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 In January 2024 Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Procurement process of Phase 1 of the Southport Eastern Access (SEA) scheme. This was a series of junction and link improvements on key routes on the eastern approach to Southport including the re-opening of Foul Lane. The proposals were intended to reduce congestion, particularly on days when large numbers of visitors are attracted to the town. The measures were also designed to improve safety and accessibility. In the development of the proposals further consideration was given to how people walking or cycling could better access the town centre and hence the scope of the scheme was developed further to include a significant active travel element.
- 1.2 This report provided an update of the funding and delivery of the scheme. It explained that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has, following a baselining process, confirmed an allocation of £16.8m in the current City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for the delivery of the Southport Eastern Access scheme. This needs to be expended by March 2027.
- 1.3 As the scheme is of a certain value, it is subject to the development of a Full Business Case (FBC). The Business Case has been externally scrutinised and approved.
- 1.4 A procurement route has been chosen, and subsequently approved by Cabinet, to give the best chance of meeting the spending target. Balfour Beatty, appointed through the Scape Framework, have entered into a Contract with the Council, to develop the scheme Target Cost and delivery programme based on the design information. In addition, a Social Value Plan is being developed with input from the Neighbourhoods Team. This Contract is for Early Contractor Involvement and is therefore limited in its scope. It does, however, enable the main works contract to be developed the scheme programmed and the cost identified.
- 1.5 Details of the likely phasing, land requirements, traffic management proposals and construction timescales are being developed to ensure, as far as possible, that schemes, up to the current funding allocation, can be delivered before March 2027.
- 1.6 The Early Contractor Involvement work has been progressed in parallel with the preparation of the FBC, which enabled the Council to build a more robust cost estimate for the scheme, which arrived at a total cost of £19.97m. This has been included in the FBC and the LCRCA have subsequently increased their funding allocation to match this amount.
- 1.7 To secure funding from the LCRCA the Council needs to go through a 'Gateway assessment'. This is a process set up by the LCRCA to ensure that the schemes are delivering the appropriate outputs, and that Local Authorities have the processes in place to deliver the projects.
- 1.8 A Gateway 3 application, aimed at securing funds to progress design work, early contractor involvement and other costs, has been successful. A Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) will shortly be received, it is expected that this will be for the full

# Agenda Item 8

amount requested. This will be reviewed and approved in accordance with the delegated authority previously granted by Cabinet.

- 1.9 A Gateway 4 application, aimed at securing the cost of works delivery and associated costs, has been submitted to the relevant CA Panel for scrutiny.
- 1.10 If both the FBC and Gateway 4 application is approved, this should generate a GFA for approximately £19.97m. The draft agreement has been drawn up and will shortly be forwarded.
- 1.11 Cabinet, at its January meeting, gave delegated authority to the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, following consultation with Cabinet Member, to sign the grant funding agreement for the necessary funding to enable the construction stage of the first phase of Southport Eastern Access to be undertaken. The same meeting also approved the delegation of the award of the construction contract to the Assistant Director of Place - Highways & Public Protection, again following consultation with Cabinet Member.
- 1.11 Assuming the GFA is approved, the Council will receive an additional £19.97m. Council approval is sought to include this additional funding within the Capital Programme.
- 1.12 The scheme was included in the Transport Capital Programme in 2023-24 and the scheme details, phasing and funding have been discussed with Cabinet Member.
- 1.13 Most of the design is complete, but there are some specific elements currently under development. This includes a series of safety and traffic mitigation measures planned for within the Norwood Ward where traffic patterns are likely to be influenced by the re-opening of Foul Lane to general traffic, which is one of the elements of the proposed scheme. Some further ground investigation works is also being undertaken on an area of the scheme where ground conditions are challenging.
- 1.14 The scope of the works likely to be delivered with the funding available is set down below.
  - localised widening at the junction of Bispham Road and Norwood Road
  - junction improvement including widening at the junction of Sussex Road and Norwood Road
  - the reopening of Foul Lane to traffic including cycleway proposals
  - a series of improvement and traffic mitigation measures in the Norwood area.
  - Improvements
- 1.15 A decision will be made shortly on the elements to form Phase 1 to enable works to commence as soon as possible following receipt of funding and the necessary approvals. Work will then progress on the securing of the land necessary to accommodate Phase 2.
- 1.16 The scheme details and associated consultation process will be set out in a report to the Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee in November 2024 for the

# Agenda Item 8

junction and active travel improvements and for the mitigation and safety measures in the Norwood Ward.

- 1.17 The wider scheme has been subject to two public consultation sessions, both completed following consideration from the Councils Public Consultation and Engagement Panel.
- 1.18 Initial consultation was completed in 2022. This was aimed at informing residents and business of the potential for the delivery of the project as well as providing the opportunity for concerns and comments to be raised to help influence the scheme development.
- 1.19 Following the development of the proposals it was considered sensible to complete some more detailed consultation. This second consultation process was more to inform key stakeholders, those with a land interest and the general public about the design of the scheme and its objectives. Engagement was undertaken to secure comments and feedback to help inform the final detailed design process and the full business case.
- 1.20 This further engagement in 2023 was separated into two stages;
  - Stage 1, which began in October 2023, focused on key stakeholders identified by the Council; and those who have an interest in the land on which the scheme will be delivered, either through a freehold, leasehold or statutory undertaking. This list was identified by the Land Referencing Company and confirmed by the Land Agent, commissioned to support the Council on this scheme. In total 65 letters were sent out to a private survey link on Your Sefton Your Say.
  - Stage 2 was the wider public engagement and - ran from 3<sup>rd</sup> November to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December. This stage consulted the wider public area including residents, schools, college and businesses. All addresses which were adjacent to the improvements were identified via the Council's internal Mapping system and 935 letters were distributed to these addresses inviting them to complete the consultation. In addition, a Social Media campaign was launched on the Council's platforms as well as Press Release being released onto the Council' website. All Protected Characteristics Groups / organisation and regional / national cycling and walking organisations and charities were also invited directly by email to take part in the survey.
- 1.21 Some feedback on the main issues raised during consultation have been set out in the report to L&R Committee (November 24) mentioned above. Details of feedback from the consultation process were also considered by Public Consultation and Engagement Panel (June 2024)
- 1.22 Ward Member briefings providing details of the consultation were provided and a number of meetings were held specifically with the members of Norwood Ward. Following these discussions a number of public consultation sessions have been held to help shape the mitigation measures which will form part of the final scheme. These measures will be subject to wider public consultation during the summer 2024.

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- 1.23 Recognising the importance of ensuring that all members are fully briefed on the development of the scheme, its phasing, duration, likely implications during construction and ultimate benefits, including social value, that the scheme will deliver. It is proposed to provide Ward Members with a summary note and invite to a briefing session (or sessions) prior to the main works contract being let. This should help confirm the elements design and approved and those areas where further development is planned and try and address any concerns raised.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 A decision is currently being made to determine the likely scope of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 will be target on land within the Council's control and can be delivered whilst land is being secured for the delivery of Phase 2
- 2.2 The Contract value of the works likely to form Phase 2 is still being established through the Early Contractor Involvement stage of the procurement process previously agreed by Cabinet.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the total scheme costs for both phases, which will include the Contract Target Cost, supervision and contract administration costs, statutory undertakers' diversion costs and any legal or approval costs, will be approximately £19.97m.

## **3. Legal Implications**

- 3.1 As determined by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the contract for the works will need to be sealed.

## **4. Risk Implications**

- 4.1 Should Cabinet not recommend the funding for inclusion in the Capital Programme, the contract won't be signed and works not delivered. This will have a negative impact on the Council's reputation and ability to secure further funds from the LCRCA for transport projects. There is a risk that the Works cost exceed the budget. However, further funding will be secured for Phase 2, so any additional costs over and above the cost plan will be funded from this budget. Furthermore, a robust costed Risk Register exists to mitigate this risk. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

## **5 Staffing HR Implications**

- 5.1 The management of the contract will be overseen by staff in Transportation Planning and Highway Development team. The contract administration and supervision will be undertaken by a team from the existing Transport Technical Services Supply Framework. The intention being that this team will administer and supervise several large capital schemes which are expected for delivery at the same time. The staff costs incurred prior to the award of the Contract will be funded from the Development Funding secured by the Council from the LCRCA which is contained within the Transport Capital Programme. Staff Costs, once the contract for the works is awarded, will be funded from the capital funding secured for the construction

## **6 Conclusion**

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- 6.1 By approving the recommendations the Council is able to include the funding in the Capital Programme and let the Contract for the delivery of the Southport Eastern Access Phase 1 Works.

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options have been considered

<b>Equality Implications:</b>
The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b>
The Impact of the scheme cared for children and care experienced young people was considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment. Options for positive impacts will be considered in the development of the Social Value commitments that the Contractor will be expected to provide
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>
The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact. The construction process will have negative impact in that new materials will be used and there will be a net carbon increase. There will also be a negative impact on traffic movements on the impacted streets whilst works are ongoing. However, the scheme when implemented, will improve accessibility and should encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport. This should reduce the carbon impact. The scheme is one of a number of schemes currently subject to a Whole Life Carbon Assessment which will be able to provide a definitive picture.

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD. 7814/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD. 5914/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

The external consultation has been completed with details set out in the boy of the report.

In summary, two public engagement sessions have been held in 2022 and 2023. Ward members have recently been invited to a session to further explain the details of the scheme/

## Implementation Date for the Decision:

Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Andrew Dunsmore
Telephone Number:	07866176195



# Agenda Item 8

Email Address:	Andrew.Dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk
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**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Report to Cabinet – Procurement Strategy for Southport Eastern Access Scheme –  
Phase 1 – 4 January 2024

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<b>Cabinet and Council Report</b>			
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Receipt of Capital Funding</b>		
Date of meeting:	07 November 2024 14 November 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Council		
Report of:	Assistant Director - Highways and Public Protection		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways		
Wards affected:	All Wards		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

Allocations of additional funding over £1m in value need Council approval. This report seeks a Cabinet recommendation to Council to add £1.067m of Local Electric Vehicle Charging (LEVI) funding to the Council’s Capital Programme. Subject to confirmation from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, a Grant Funding Agreement will be received for this amount.

**Recommendation(s):**

Cabinet is recommended to;

- (1) Recommend to Council the approval of a supplementary capital estimate for £1.067m, externally funded using LEVI funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for the delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure across the borough.
- (2) Note the progress of the development work in support of a submission to the LCRCA to identify the programme of roll out of new infrastructure.
- (3) Note the progress of the development of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy for the borough.

Council is recommended to;

- (1) Approve the receipt of a supplementary capital estimate for £1.607m, externally funded using LEVI funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for the delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure across the borough.

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## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Various strands of work in relation to promoting lower carbon emissions from transport across the Borough are being developed, with Electric Vehicles (EVs) being an integral element. Promoting the adoption of EVs supports the national policy stance, alongside Sefton's own Climate Emergency Declaration and Local Plan. Regionally it also aligns to the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in updating the Local Transport Plan.
- 1.2 There is an expectation that the private sector will help deliver Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) as future demand increases at more commercially viable sites. It is recognised that Local Authorities play an important role in helping to provide a fair and open public charging network, which allows residents without driveways / private parking the opportunity to be able to own and charge an electric vehicle. Council implemented EVCI will therefore likely be at sites less commercially attractive and be designed to bridge the gaps in distances to chargers and costs for local communities.
- 1.3 There is an opportunity for Sefton Council to obtain funding from the Office for Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV) for EV charging points infrastructure. This is via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's (LCRCA) submission for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. The key principle of LEVI is to bridge inequalities gaps for EV users without access to private driveways / parking.
- 1.4 The regional bid was submitted in November 2023 with initial draw-down on 90% of the funds now taking place and the remaining 10% to follow once procurement tender documents are completed. The LCRCA has successfully secured an indicative award of £9,647,000 in total to fund EV infrastructure projects across the Liverpool City Region. Whilst a final decision has yet to be made, it is expected that the LCRCA will split the funding received equally across the Local Authorities. This would result in the receipt of £1.067m for Sefton.
- 1.5 All Local Authorities within the City Region were expected to set out a likely approach to the provision of EV infrastructure to meet the requirements of the LEVI funding and submit these to the LCRCA who will then consult with OLEV.
- 1.6 In the submission made it was proposed that the approach to the roll out in Sefton would be a prioritised approach to EVCI procurement and implementation. This would look at Council owned car parks and potential community hubs firstly; whilst gathering more information around the potential for on-street residential charging options. It was considered that more evidence was needed to be able to consider future on-street residential charging, including lessons learnt from neighbouring and other Local Authorities. It should be noted that some other Local Authorities are favouring an On-Street Charging approach. This will provide a blend of approaches across the LCRCA.
- 1.7 It is proposed that once developed further an agreed approach will be consolidated into a Sefton Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy, which will provide the Vision and Objectives and shape the future decision-making process around EVCI. The EVCI Strategy will be supported by policy context, analytical mapping evidence and future scenario predictions. It is

proposed to develop the EVCI Strategy with key stakeholders, including Cabinet and Ward Members, internal departments and specialist external partners initially.

- 1.8 The details of the roll out of infrastructure will be shared with Cabinet for approval along with the Strategy document. The proposals included in the initial bid for the LCRCA was based on evidence from previously commissioned study to look at the viability of EVCI within the Council-owned car parks. The study produced an extensive list of potential sites based on, location, numbers of spaces, opening times, proximity to existing charging points and the number of households within a 10-minute walking distance. This produced a long list of 22 car parks, which was then further buffered to an approx. 5-minute / 400m walking distance for 1,000 households, to produce a prioritised short list of 8 car parks.
- 1.9 Further mapping work is now being commissioned to look more in-depth at the long list of potential sites, types of chargers and overall viability against the LEVI criteria. In addition further community sites, such as leisure centres and land which may be developed into community hubs are being explored. This will enable the Council to move towards the LEVI procurement process with a full list of sites with good viability for LEVI funding potential. There is also an awareness that any future funding arrangements with Charge Point Operators (CPO) will likely include a mixture of public sites which are or are not commercially attractive and this may not be apparent until procurement conversations begin.
- 1.10 It should be noted that the LCRCA have informed the Local Authorities that they will lead on the process to secure a CPO to install and manage the infrastructure across the City Region. The exact model of operation, implications for the Local Authorities and likely receipt of income, will be determined in due course and be subject to approval. It is expected that each Authority will be responsible for managing the relationship with the CPO and the roll out of infrastructure in each district and all associated payments. As such it has been agreed in principle that each Local Authority will receive a share of the funding.
- 1.11 The programme for procurement, appointment and roll out is being agreed. The most recent information received suggests that tender documents will be discussed between the LCRCA and OZEV between November and December. The procurement process, which is likely to be 2 stage will be between Feb to August 2025 with Autumn 2025 being the earliest likely delivery.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The costs associated with the development work to map potential sites and submit information to the LCRCA have been met from the relevant budget line within the agreed Transport Capital Programme. Once a formal Grant Funding Agreement is signed, then this LEVI funding can be used to fund any further development costs in addition to the infrastructure costs.
- 2.2 It should also be noted that some specific, separate funding, secured by the LCRCA from OLEV, has been used to fund two fixed term Project Manager posts to provide some additional capacity to the LA's. Each post allows development work across 3 Local Authorities.

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2.3 The charging mechanism for each EV charging point and the distribution of income is unknown and this stage and will be considered further after Procurement and before implementation.

## 3. Legal Implications

3.1 The LCRCA will lead on the procurement process to secure a CPO. There is likely to be a contract or formal relationship between the CPO and The Council which should be based on documentation developed by the LCRCA. There will be a need for some Legal support from the Council in the formalising of this Contract.

## 4. Risk Implications

4.1 The details of the relationship between the Council and the prospective CPO will be determined in a further report to Cabinet to ensure all risks are understood.

4.2 No LEVI funding will be expended until the Grant Funding Agreement or similar is reviewed and signed. This process will only be undertaken when a risk review has been undertaken.

## 5 Staffing HR Implications

5.1 The development input into the bid and in the subsequent liaison with the LRCA has been from staff within the Highways and Public Protection Department supported by the Transport Technical Services Supplier as appropriate with funding provided from the Capital Programme.

5.2 The existing team will be supplemented by the LCRCA appointed part time Project Manager.

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 This report seeks approval to accept the allocated LEVI Funding into the Council's Capital Programme. This will facilitate the remaining steps of the process and help avoid delays in using the funding. Further report(s) will confirm the Council's EV Strategy, final details of the priority list for the roll out of EV infrastructure and the details of the Contractual relationship with a Charge Point Operator, when all those matters have been determined.

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The Council could decide not to participate in the LEVI delivery scheme but this would limit the ability to provide EV infrastructure for those residents without off-street parking.

<b>Equality Implications:</b>
The use of LEVI funding will help people without off-street provision charge Electric Vehicles.
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b>
The report has no direct impact on Children and Young People.
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>
The recommendations within this report will have a Positive impact.

The provision of infrastructure for EVs should help promote EV vehicles and hence reduce the Carbon output across the borough

## **What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

### **(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7811/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5911/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### **(B) External Consultations**

Consultations have been held with the LCRCA over scope of Sefton's proposed offer for the LEVI funding.

It is proposed that the EV Strategy, once further developed, is subject to Consultation.

### **Implementation Date for the Decisions:**

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Cabinet decision; and Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Andrew Dunsmore
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### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Papers:**

None

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**Report Title: Treasury Management Position to September 2024**

Date of meeting:	7 November 2024 14 November 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Council		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All wards		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

This report provides Members with a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 30th September 2024.

**Recommendation(s):**

Members are requested to note the Treasury Management update to 30th September 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.

**The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations**

To ensure that Members are fully appraised of the treasury activity undertaken to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and to meet the reporting requirements set out in Sefton’s Treasury Management Practices and those recommended by the CIPFA code.

**1. Introduction**

1.1. As recommended under CIPFA’s revised 2021 Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Public Services, the Council’s Treasury Management Policy and Strategy document for 2024/25 (approved by Council on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024) included a requirement for regular updates to be provided on the investment activity of the Authority. This report is the second of such reports for the year and presents relevant Treasury Management information for the period ending 30th September 2024.

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- 1.2. The report includes information on the investments held / entered into during the period and the interest rates obtained (with a comparison of performance against a standard benchmark figure). In addition, the report highlights whether there has been any variance from the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the Council's approved Prudential Indicators (the operational boundaries within which the Council aims to work).

## 2. Investments Held

- 2.1. Investments held at the 30/09/2024 comprise the following:

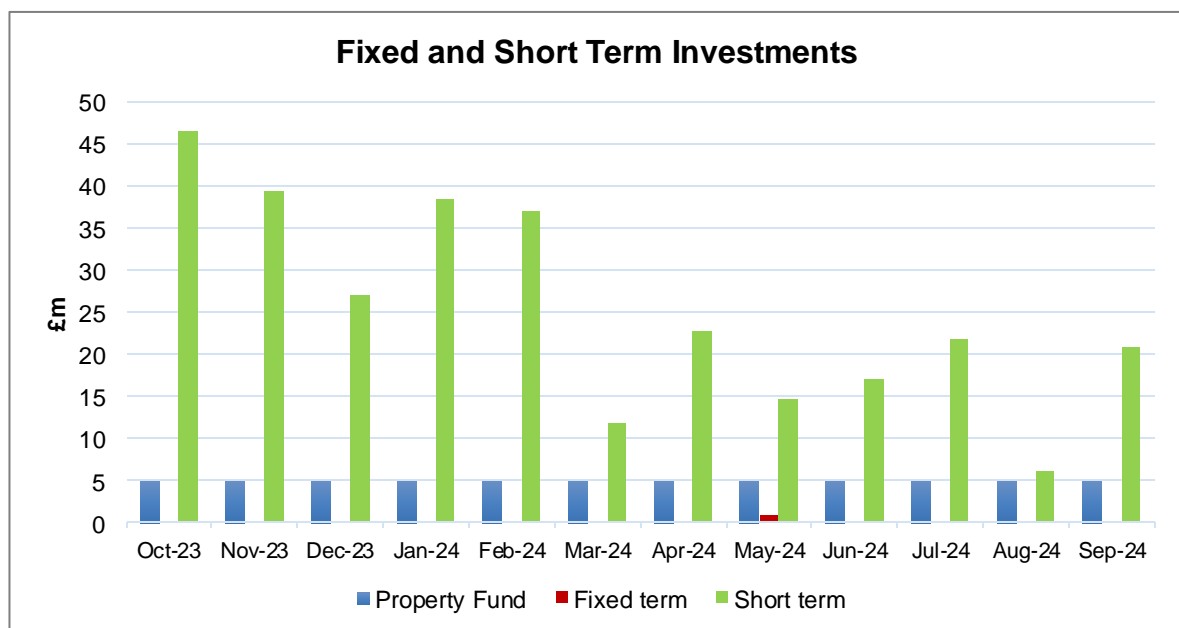
Institution	Deposit £m	Rate %	Maturity	Rating
<b>Money Market Funds:</b>				
Aberdeen	2.58	4.96	01.10.24	AAA
Aviva	2.58	5.01	01.10.24	AAA
Blackrock	0.20	4.90	01.10.24	AAA
BNP Paribas	2.58	4.96	01.10.24	AAA
Goldman-Sachs	2.58	4.92	01.10.24	AAA
Invesco	2.58	5.00	01.10.24	AAA
Morgan Stanley	2.58	4.94	01.10.24	AAA
Federated	2.58	5.03	01.10.24	AAA
Insight	2.58	5.01	01.10.24	AAA
Total	20.84			
<b>Property Fund:</b>				
CCLA	5.00	5.21	n/a	n/a
Total	5.00			
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>				
	<b>25.84</b>			

- 2.2. The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing grant income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. The cash is initially held in a number of highly liquid Money Market Funds to ensure security of the funds until they are required to be paid out. This approach is consistent with the Council's approved Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2024/25. The balance of investments is therefore expected to fall over the coming months as the income is fully expended.

- 2.3. All of the investments made since April 2024 have been with organisations on the current counterparty list. The maximum level of investment permitted in the Treasury Management Strategy in any one institution, or banking group, is currently £15m. Whilst the maximum should be retained, in light of current economic conditions, a day to day operational maximum of 10% of the total portfolio is currently being imposed for investments. This will spread the risk for the Council but will have a small detrimental impact on the returns the Council will receive in the future. The Council has remained within that boundary during the year. At present, it is not expected that there will be any need to review this limit.

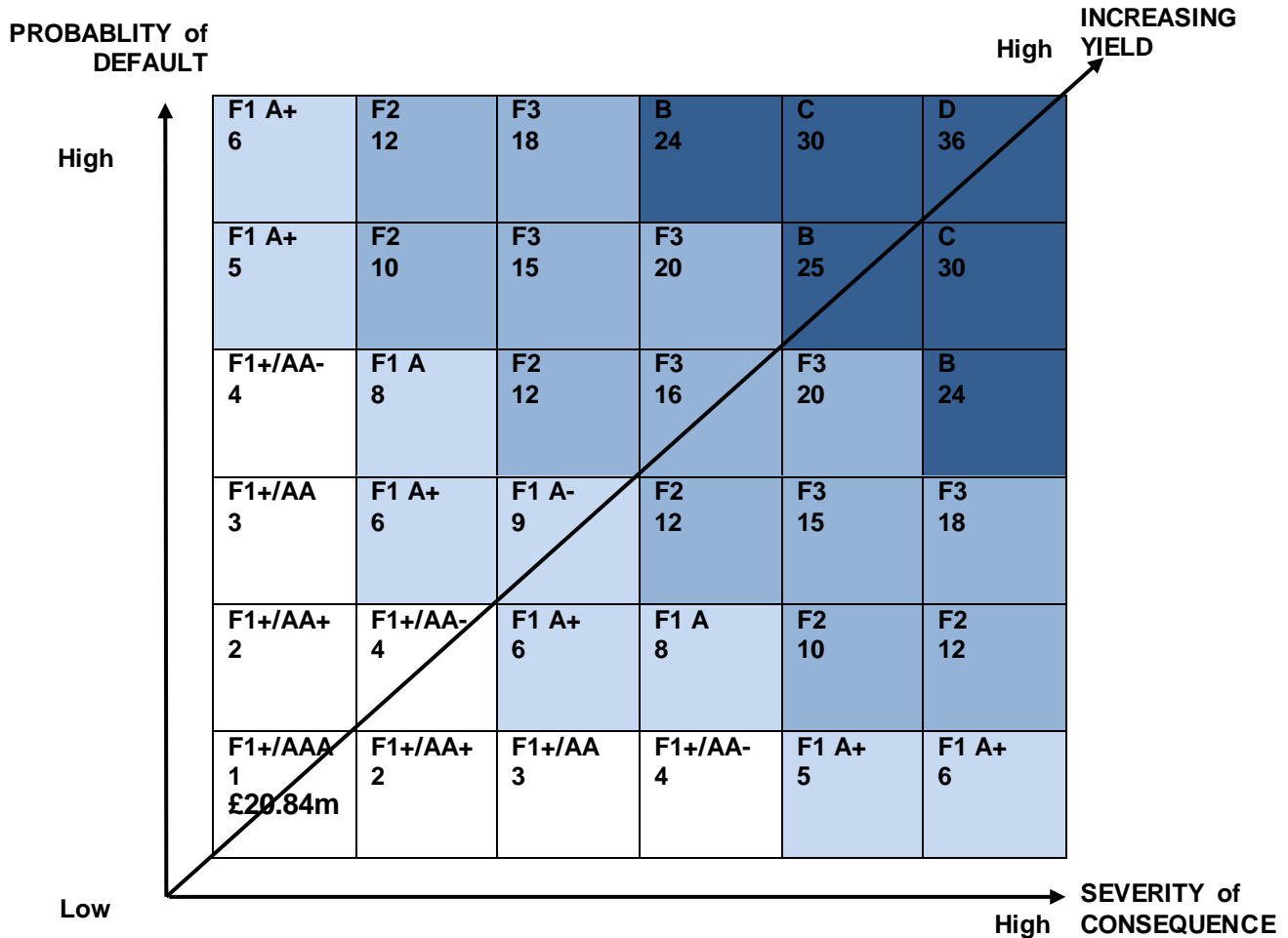
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- 2.4. The Council will only invest in institutions that hold a minimum Fitch rating of A- for banking institutions, or AAA for money market funds. The ratings applied to investment grade institutions, and the much riskier speculative grade institutions, as defined by Fitch, have been placed into a risk matrix (paragraph 2.8).
- 2.5. An investment has been made with the Church, Charities and Local Authority Investment Fund (CCLA) in June 2014. CCLA invest in commercial property which is rented out to enterprises such as retail units, warehousing, and offices. The majority of properties owned are in the south of the country where the market is often more buoyant than the north. The Council has in effect bought a share of the property portfolio and returns paid are in the region of 4%. This is seen as a long-term investment with the potential for the capital value of the investment to vary as property prices fluctuate.
- 2.6. The Net Asset Value (NAV) of the Property Fund has decreased over a 12-month period to September 2024 from 282.48p per unit to 276.04p per unit, a decrease of 2.3%. The fund is considered to be a long-term investment and fluctuations in value are to be expected with this type of asset. The situation will continue to be monitored closely however, and advice taken from the Council's treasury advisers should its position in the fund need to be reviewed. The income yield on the Property fund at the end of September 2024 was 5.21% which, is higher than returns received in the past and represents a reasonable return on the Council's investment.
- 2.7. The ratio of overnight deposits (short term) to fixed term investments and the property fund is shown below:



- 2.8. The matrix below shows how the Council has set its risk appetite by being risk averse and putting security and liquidity before yield when investing:

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**SEFTON RISK TOLERANCE:**

Risk Level	Score	Grade	Amount Invested
LOW	1 - 4	Investment Grade	<b>£20.84m</b>
LOW - MEDIUM	5 - 9	Investment Grade	-
MEDIUM	10 - 20	Investment Grade	-
HIGH	21 - 36	Speculative Grade	-

2.9. The Council will continue to maximise any investment opportunities as they arise although it is not envisaged that any substantial increase in returns can be achieved for the remainder of the current financial year as balances available for investment will be held in short term deposits to allow the council to respond to any exceptional demands for cash as they arise. The security and availability of cash will be prioritised over improved yields as per the agreed Treasury Management Strategy and advice received from Sefton’s treasury management advisors.

### 3. Interest Earned

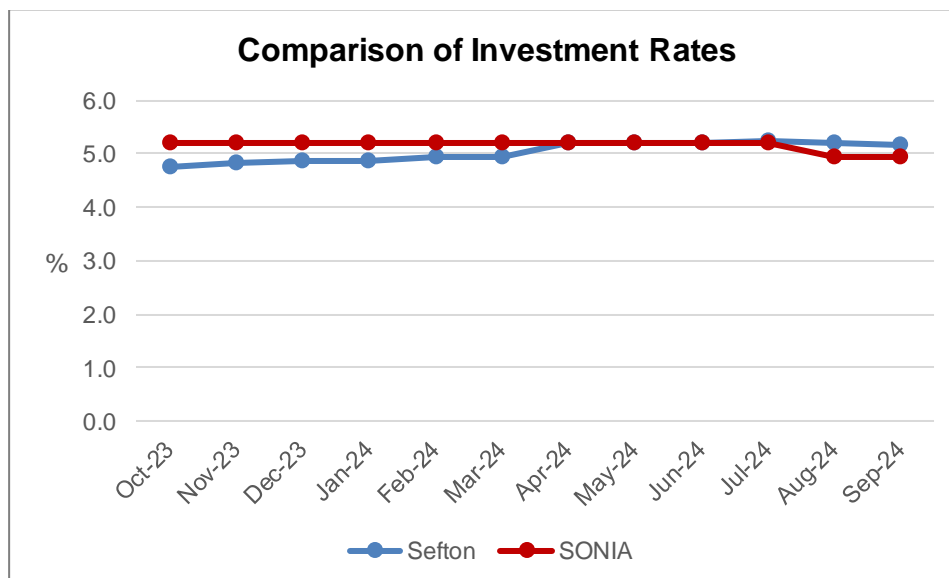
3.1. The actual performance of investments against the profiled budget to the end of September 2024 and the forecast performance of investments against total budget at year end is shown below:

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	Budget £m	Actual £m	Variance £m
<b>Sep-24</b>	0.605	0.680	0.075

	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Variance £m
<b>Outturn 2024/25</b>	1.343	1.537	0.194

- 3.2. The forecast outturn for investment income shows the level of income to be above target against the budget for 2024/25. Investment rates had remained at a higher level over the past twelve months (see 3.4. below) when compared to previous years largely in response to previous rises in interest rates. The budgeted income for 2024/25 was therefore set at a higher level when compared to prior financial years.
- 3.3. As mentioned in paragraph 2.9, it is not envisaged that improved rates will lead to a significant increase over and above the current forecast income from investments during 2024/25. Investment rates have begun decreasing as central banks have cut rates towards the second half of 2024. Sefton expects to be a net borrower in future years and therefore cash balances are diminishing and will be held in short term deposits which are low risk but return a lower level of investment income.
- 3.4. The Council has achieved an average rate of return on its investments of 5.2%. The chart below shows the average rate of return plotted against the SONIA benchmark.



- 3.5. As can be seen from the chart above, Sefton's investments have performed in line with the SONIA to the end of September 2024.

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## 4. Borrowing Strategy

- 4.1. As outlined in the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council in February, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.
- 4.2. After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data.
- 4.3. The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the half year period to September and 4.79% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.18%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 5.57% during the half year, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.40%.
- 4.4. The Council has PWLB loan maturities of £8.846m scheduled during 2024/25 comprising several historic loans. The Council has pursued a strategy of internal borrowing in recent years as per the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council. Cash balances have therefore been reduced to replace maturing loans where possible and when interest rates on deposits remain lower than PWLB borrowing rates. This position is however, considered temporary and may be reversed at any time in response to the ongoing liquidity needs of the Authority or when exceptional demands for cash may arise.

### Impact of the High Needs Deficit:

- 4.5. Cabinet receives regular reports on the Council's High Needs Budget and the current deficit position that has been increasing over a number of years due to rising demand for provision coupled with a shortfall in funding made available from central government. The deficit position reported to Cabinet on 25 July 2024 was £38m as at the end of 2023/24 financial year. Due to the increased pressure the High Needs Deficit has placed on the availability of cash balances the Council has taken additional short-term borrowing of £15m and one longer term loan of £5m during the period to September 2024. These loans were taken in the Local Authority to Local Authority market at below PWLB rates.
- 4.6. The High Needs Deficit is fundamentally impacting the Council's treasury management activity and budget activity. It is forecast that the Council could be servicing a deficit that will be around £59m at the end of the financial year that will arise from the cumulative effect of High Needs expenditure incurred in excess of Dedicated School Grant (DSG) funding from central government over several years. It is anticipated that further external borrowing will therefore be required in 2024/25 to further reverse the Council's internal borrowing position and maintain prudent levels of liquidity.

4.7. Officers have sought clarification from MHCLG on the application of DSG debt costs and have been advised that this must be charged to the General Fund. The estimated revenue account impact of the High Needs Deficit over the next three years could therefore be £1.5m in 2024/25, £3.2m in 2025/26, and £4.0m in 2026/27. Funding diverted to servicing these additional costs will reduce the amount of funding available for core services.

4.8. Officers will continue to take advice from the Council's external treasury advisers when undertaking new borrowing in order to ensure borrowing remains prudent and affordable and to minimise the financial impact to the Council.

## 5. Interest Rate Forecast

5.1. Arlingclose, the Council's treasury advisors, have provide the following interest rate view as at September 2024:

	Current	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>													
<b>Upside risk</b>	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<b>Central Case</b>	5.00	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
<b>Downside risk</b>	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50

### Underlying assumptions:

- As expected, the MPC held Bank Rate at 5.0% in September. While the “no change” majority of eight to one was unexpectedly strong, the minutes suggested some policymakers believed a gradual approach to loosening policy was warranted given the persistence of services inflation, rather than no loosening at all.
- This is in line with our long-held view that Bank Rate will initially reduce gradually before a more rapid decline in 2025 as services inflation eases.
- CPI inflation remained just above the 2% target in August, the Bank expects this to rise to 2.5% by the end of the year as prior falls in energy prices drop out of the annual comparison and reveal the prevailing persistence of domestic inflationary pressures. Private sector wage growth has eased back but remains elevated and services inflation remains high at 5.6%. However, both will continue to decline over time.
- UK GDP growth has been relatively strong in the first half of 2024, although this partly reflects a rebound from the first half of 2023 technical recession. Underlying growth is weaker, but risks around domestic demand lies to the upside due to recovering consumer demand (although the announcement of higher taxes in the upcoming Budget could damage confidence). Stronger economic activity amid a continued tight, albeit easing, labour market could leave wage growth and inflation persistently higher.
- Official ONS Labour market data continues to be unreliable but wider indicators suggest the market is loosening as labour demand cools. Anecdotal evidence has suggested lower private sector pay growth for some time, and we expect a weaker labour market situation to hasten that outcome.
- We expect that the continuation of restrictive monetary policy and the appreciation in sterling will bear down on activity and will require more substantial loosening in 2025 to boost activity and inflation.
- Global bond yields have reduced in anticipation of US monetary loosening, duly delivered by the Federal Reserve. However, US interest rate expectations seem relatively aggressive compared to policymakers' own expectations, which raises the risk of continued US-policy induced volatility in gilt yields. Moreover, there remains a heightened risk of fiscal policy, credit events and/or geo-political events causing additional volatility in yields.

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## Forecast:

- In line with our forecast, the MPC held Bank Rate at 5.0% in September.
- The MPC will continue to cut rates to stimulate the UK economy but will initially be cautious given lingering domestic inflationary pressure. We see another rate cut in 2024 (Q4), but more significant monetary easing in 2025, with Bank Rate falling to a low of around 3%.
- Upside risks to inflation remain which could limit the extent of monetary easing.
- Long-term gilt yields have fallen alongside US monetary policy expectations. Arlingclose's central case is for yields to be volatile around a relatively narrow range, reflecting the likelihood for monetary policy loosening in the Eurozone, UK and US.

## 6. Compliance with Treasury Management Limits

- 6.1. As at the end of September 2024, the Council has operated within the treasury limits for borrowing and investments set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.
- 6.2. Liability Benchmark: the Council monitors its levels of external debt (excluding long term liabilities) against a prudential indicator for the liability benchmark. The benchmark for 2024/25 and the following two financial years is shown below compared to the Council's forecast level of borrowing:

Liability Benchmark	31.03.25 Estimate £m	31.03.26 Estimate £m	31.03.27 Estimate £m
Loans CFR *	236.4	229.8	242.1
Less: Balance sheet resources	-57.0	-31.7	-28.5
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	<b>179.4</b>	<b>198.1</b>	<b>213.5</b>
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.0	10.0	10.0
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>189.4</b>	<b>208.1</b>	<b>223.5</b>
<b>Forecast Borrowing</b>	<b>173.8</b>	<b>194.5</b>	<b>213.0</b>

\* CFR excluding other long-term debt liabilities

- 6.3. The Council's forecast borrowing has remained broadly in line with the benchmark although this may be exceeded from time to time due to temporary liquidity requirements and where there is a need to reverse the Council's internal borrowing position. As mentioned in 4.5 above, additional borrowing has been required due to exceptional demands from the High Needs deficit and a prudent estimate of this demand has been included above. The level of forecast borrowing will not exceed the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for 2024/25 agreed by Council in February.
- 6.4. Maturity Structure of Borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:



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<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing:</b>	<b>Upper Limit %</b>	<b>Lower Limit %</b>	<b>Actual %</b>
<b>Under 12 months</b>	20	0	14
<b>12 months to 24 months</b>	20	0	7
<b>24 months to 5 years</b>	20	0	10
<b>5 years to 10 years</b>	30	10	22
<b>10 years to 15 years</b>	50	10	14
<b>15 years +</b>	50	30	33

- 6.5. External Debt: This indicator shows the levels of actual debt compared to the authorised limit and operational boundary set for the current financial year:

<b>External Debt:</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>
<b>Authorised limit for external debt</b>	200
<b>Operational boundary for external debt</b>	175
<b>Actual external debt 30.09.24</b>	157

- 6.6. Long-term Treasury Management Investments: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

<b>Long-term Treasury Management Investments:</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>	<b>No fixed date £m</b>
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	15	10	5	15
Actual principal invested beyond year end	0	0	0	5

- 6.7. Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term. As at the end of September 2024, Sefton holds £5m with the CCLA Property Fund as a strategic investment with no fixed maturity date.

- 6.8. Interest Rate Risk Indicator: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. A target is set for the one-year impact of a 1% rise and a 1% fall in interest rates on the revenue account. This is measured by examining the parallel shifts in yield curves on borrowing net of treasury investments. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

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Interest Rate Risk Indicator	Limit £m	Forecast £m
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	1.0	0.4
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	1.0	0.4

## Financial Implications

A surplus in investment income has been experienced for 2024/25.

## Legal Implications

The Council has a statutory duty under the Local Government Act 2003 to review its Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Activities.

## Corporate Risk Implications

Treasury management risks are assessed and managed under the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the Treasury Management Practices. Having operated with the limits and parameters set at the beginning of the year, the Council has remained within its agreed risk appetite and there are no additional risk implications to be considered.

## Staffing HR Implications

None

## Conclusion

The Council has acted in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and has reviewed its Prudential Indicators to comply with legislation and is acting prudently in that its capital expenditure proposals remain affordable.

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

### Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

### Impact on Children and Young People:

None.

### Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact.

The Council has during 2024/25, invested its reserves and balances overnight with either banks or money market funds in order to maintain high security and liquidity of such balances. It has not had the opportunity to invest in longer term financial instruments or investment funds for which there may be a chance to consider the impact on the Council's Climate Emergency motion.

In the event that the Council has more surplus balances available in future that may lead to longer term investing, the Council will take account of the climate emergency when discussing the options available with the Treasury Management Advisors.

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**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

**(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD 7806/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 7805/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**(B) External Consultations**

The Council's external Treasury Management Advisors: Arlingclose have provided advice with regards to Treasury Management activities undertaken during the financial year.

**Implementation Date for the Decision:**

Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Graham Hussey
Telephone Number:	0151 934 4100
Email Address:	Graham.Hussey@sefton.gov.uk

**Appendices:**

There are no appendices to this report.

**Background Papers:**

There are no background papers to this report.

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### Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28

Date of meeting:	7 November 2024 14 November 2024
Report to:	Cabinet Council
Report of:	Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial
Portfolio:	Corporate Services
Wards affected:	All
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Is this a key decision:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No

#### Summary:

To inform **Cabinet** and **Council** of: -

1. The update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2027/28 taking account of all currently available information.
2. To provide an update on other areas that informs financial decision making including the Council's reserves position, its growth programme, its position on its wholly owned council companies and the High Needs budget as these are all interlinked with the MTFP.

#### Recommendation(s):

**Cabinet** is recommended to: -

- 1) Note the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 to 2027/28 and any assumptions made.

**Council** is recommended to: -

- 2) Approve the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 to 2027/28 and any assumptions made.

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## **1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations**

In February 2024 Council approved a one-year budget plan for 2024/25. As part of this report, an indicative budget gap of £19.2m for 2025/26 to 2026/27 was reported, before any decisions on the level of Council Tax. The MTFP for this period has subsequently been updated to reflect the latest information available and to reflect the ongoing service pressures the Council is facing. The MTFP period has also been extended by a further year to 2027/28. In approving the recommendation laid out in this report, the Council will continue to ensure resources are well managed and reflect the key priorities of the residents of Sefton.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is presented to Members each year with a view to outlining the strategic approach that the Council will take to managing its financial matters. As with previous years, this plan will need to take account of the significant change that is being experienced within Local Government both in terms of the manner and level of funding that is made available to councils and also the roles and responsibilities that it is required to fulfil.
- 1.2 As such this report sets out the specific financial challenges facing the Council over the next three years and how it plans to meet these. The approach to setting the Council's three-year revenue budget for the period 2025/26 -2027/28 and all other key financial issues that require consideration are also set out in the report.
- 1.3 There has been great uncertainty and change in the last 12 months with regard to the Central government funding that would be made available to local government and the financial parameters that councils should work within. The local government finance settlement for 2024/25 provided no indication of funding that will be made available for 2025/26 and future years. It remains critical however that the Council makes estimates of the position that it could be in and develops a three-year budget package that can be updated as it progresses. The change in Government in July 2024 will inform not only the financial resources available to the Council but will also define its roles, responsibilities and policies that are to be followed.
- 1.4 The Chancellor announced the Autumn Budget on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Although announcements relating to local government funding 2025/26 were made, this was at a national level, so no detail was available. Officers have made an initial assessment of the potential implications for Sefton, and these are included in the MTFP update below. As with previous years the full detail of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 is expected at council level just before Christmas 2024, although a Local Government Finance policy statement is expected before the end of November which should provide more details on the measures announced in the Autumn Budget Statement. The Chancellor has previously announced that there will be a three-year Comprehensive Spending Review in late 2025 which will provide indications of local government funding in 2026/27 and beyond.
- 1.5 A MTFP update for future years was included within the Budget report in February 2024 and this report provides Members with the latest information available to support 2025/26 to 2027/28 budget planning.

## 2. Approach to Budget Planning and Financial Sustainability

### Financial Management Context

- 2.1 The Council has effective financial management arrangements which has enabled the delivery of significant savings over the last 14 years that has enabled the Council to set robust, deliverable and sustainable budgets while delivering priority services. Financial sustainability has been at the heart of this approach and this needs to continue over this three-year budget cycle.
- 2.2 In this approach the Council needs to be cognisant that the complexity and range of issues that it will need to address is becoming ever wider. In addition to the normal General Fund budget setting, it is critical that there is a full financial understanding that informs decision making of the Council's reserves position, its growth programme, its position on its wholly owned Council companies and the High Page 63 dget as these are all interlinked.

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- 2.3 In 2024/25 the Council continues to face significant challenges driven by the conditions in the national economy, especially the continued pressure within the demand led budgets of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care and Home to School Transport. These are being managed at the same time as an agreed savings programme is being delivered in the wider Council. The budget monitoring reports for 2024/25 have considered these in detail, with Children's Social Care and Home to School Transport again being prominent and key pressures during the year. Whilst these maybe common issues across the sector it is critical that Sefton addresses these and when sustainable budgets are agreed and set they are delivered as the previous years' calls on reserves to offset these two areas is no longer an option in the context of the financial sustainability of the Council.
- 2.4 The challenges facing the Council over the coming three years are likely to be equally as significant as those of recent times, with demand for services rising exponentially. At present over 70% of the Council's revenue budget is allocated to Adults and Children's Social Care plus Home to School Transport (with this budget having increased from £8.5m in 2021/22 to £14.5m in 24/25). This means there is less than 30% of the budget for all remaining services. At a time of increased demand led growth it is essential that a three-year budget strategy is developed in order to support not only financial sustainability but also these services who for a number of years have had no growth in budget size, have contributed significant savings and at times worked within a vacancy freeze in order to support short term savings. This context as stated is critical for both budget planning but also service delivery and the delivery of the Council's new Corporate Plan.
- 2.5 The next three-year budget planning cycle will also take place at the same time as the Council's Children's Service Improvement Plan is delivered - this is the priority for the Council. As Members will be aware, a recommendation in the Commissioner's report was that the MTFP should be aligned with that Improvement Plan for a period of five years. That process was conducted and reflected in the budget report of February 2024, and this will again be a key feature of this MTFP. Substantial ongoing work is continuing on this budget, with the Chief Executive, s151 officer and Executive Director of Children's Services working collaboratively on the management of the in-year position and longer-term budget plan. This will continue over the course of this budget planning process, will take full account and will continue to be aligned to the Improvement Plan and will inform the three-year budget plan. This will in turn inform budget allocation, budget realignment in the service as required and how this will influence other budgets across the Council and longer-term investment opportunities.
- 2.6 The sections that follow in this report will therefore set out the national challenges facing all councils, the Council's forecast position and the steps taken to set a budget for the next three years.

## Local Government Financial Environment

- 2.7 This Medium-Term Financial Plan sits against a continued backdrop of financial uncertainty and challenge for local authorities. The Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25 provided no information to support financial planning for 2025/26 and future years. The Chancellor's Autumn Budget Statement provided some information on local government funding for 2025/26 but funding beyond that point won't be known until the Government announces its three-year Comprehensive Spending Review in late 2025.



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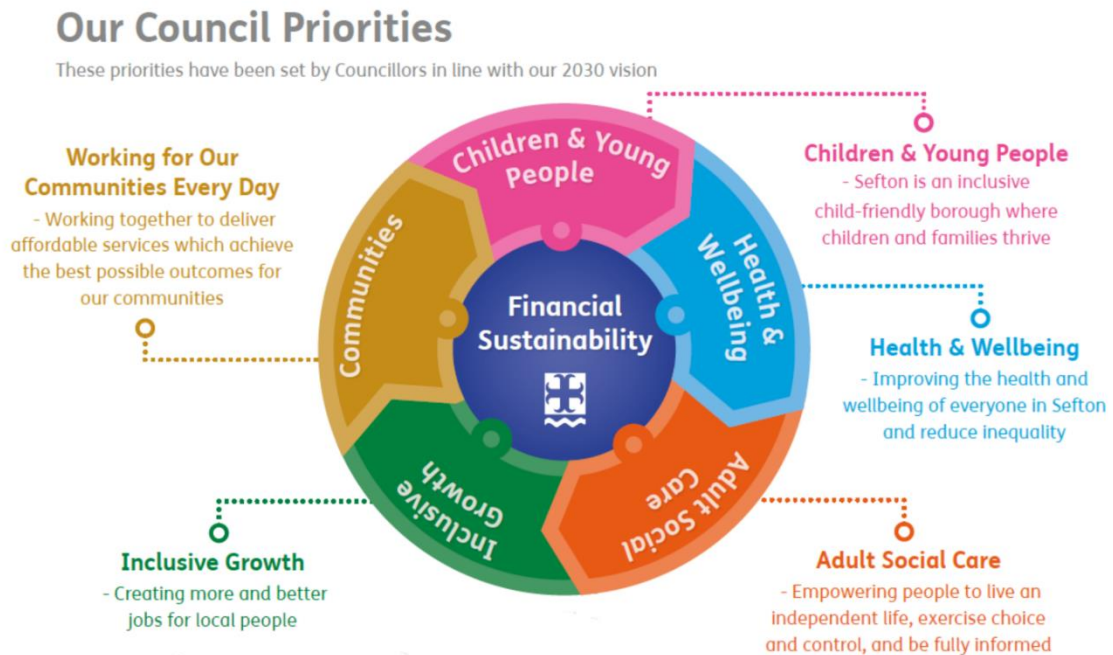
- 2.8 Whilst the funding that will be made available from central government remains difficult to forecast, the financial environment the Council operates within at present is equally difficult to navigate and is extremely volatile, and this is reflected in 18 councils across the country now in receipt of 'exceptional financial support'. This is reflected in:
- Despite inflation now being between 2% and 3%, due to the issues of the last three years, there is now inherent cost pressure from inflation of over 20% built into the current costs of the Council for which additional funding was not made available.
  - Continued cost pressures relating to Adult Social Care and Children's Services including Social Care. The demand for, and cost of, social care and home to school transport continues to increase exponentially across both adults and children's services, far outstripping historical funding allocations.
  - The long-awaited Review of Relative Needs and Resources (formerly the Fair Funding Review) was due to review and reset councils' funding baselines according to local need. It has been delayed for several years by Central Government and had been expected to be the subject of consultation in Spring 2022 but there has been no progress to date- the new government has promised this will be the subject of review but clearly this won't be possible to inform 2025/26 so may impact later in the three-year cycle,
  - As part of the Review of Relative Needs and Resources, the Council would expect the Business Rates Retention gains the Council has made since the last reset would be lost. In addition, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Pilot Agreement the Council has retained a 99% share of growth in Business Rates since April 2017. It is unclear what will happen to Business Rates Pilot schemes if the Review does not go ahead.
  - The level at which the Council Tax referendum limit would be set up until 2024/25 was confirmed in 2022. The policy is that council tax could increase by 2.99% per annum and a further 2% can be levied for Adult Social Care each year. This was reflected in the Spending Power calculation for each council. There is uncertainty however as to whether the new Government will continue or revise this policy.
  - Health Integration – This integration is intended to bring together key functions such as social care, mental health services and public health advice, to deliver 'joined up care' for its local population, improve people's health & wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.
- 2.9 The level of uncertainty nationally makes planning ahead for the medium-term very difficult and makes it one of the most difficult years to be setting a budget. As such it is important that councils ensure they are appropriately prepared for a range of outcomes.

## The Sefton Approach- Corporate Plan and Transformation Plan

- 2.10 The Council, in approaching this three-year budget cycle, will do so in the context of the delivery of the refreshed Corporate Plan, and will use its new Transformation Plan as the delivery vehicle for investment and savings. The Council's priorities, which will be reflected in the Three-Year Budget Plan, are illustrated in the following diagram:

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## Council Priorities



## Outcome and Key Issues arising from the Autumn Budget Statement

2.11 On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made the Autumn Budget Statement, which included a number of announcements relating to local government funding for 2025/26.

- Core Spending Power for local government would increase by around 3.2% in real terms.
- This will include inflationary increases in locally retained Business Rates and Council Tax flexibilities. Whilst there was no additional detail in what Council Tax flexibilities means, it is estimated that this will equate to a 5% increase in Council Tax if Core Spending Power is to increase by 3.2% in real terms. It is also unclear whether referendum principles will continue, or whether councils will have total flexibility to increase Council Tax.
- As part of the increase in Core Spending Power, there will be an additional £1,300m grant funding made available to councils. Of this, at least £600m is new grant funding for social care, with the balance for other pressures. It is estimated that, using previous allocation methodologies, Sefton would receive in the region of £7.5m. This assumption has been built into the MTFP update below.
- Local authorities are also expected to receive £1,100m of new funding in 2025/26 through the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme to improve recycling outcomes from January 2025. However, the amount each local authority will receive going forward isn't certain (although exceptionally for 2025/26 the Government will guarantee that if income isn't in line with a central estimate, then it will provide top-up funding during the year). Also, it is uncertain as to what additional costs will be incurred by the Council to improve recycling outcomes. The potential additional funding has therefore not currently been included in the MTFP update.

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- Funding of £1,000m will be made available to extend the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments into 2025/26.
- An additional £233m will be made available to fund homelessness pressures. As with existing funding, the allocation received by the Council will be added to the Homelessness budget.
- A £1,000m uplift to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision funding. This will be part of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding.
- It has also been confirmed that funding has been set aside to protect local government from our changes to employer National Insurance Contributions, and the impact they will have on their direct staffing costs.

2.12 The Government have also stated that they will update and improve the approach to funding allocations within the Local Government Finance Settlement by redistributing funding to ensure that it reflects an up-to-date assessment of need and local resources. This will be a long-term programme of recovery and reform which will start with a deprivation-based approach in 2025/26 with additional funding targeted to the places that need it most. This approach has long been requested by local authorities in the Liverpool City Region in their submissions to Government. More detail will be made available when the Local Government Finance policy statement is published later in November. However, the impact this will have on the funding available to Sefton will only become known when the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in late December 2024.

## Updated financial Position 2025/26 to 2027/28

2.13 As previously mentioned, the Council has over the last 14 years had a commitment to making all key decisions that would deliver financial sustainability. This is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and the range of issues and functions that need to be considered and addressed continues to increase. This has been compounded by the unprecedented issues within the Children's Services budget in recent years which have led to £23m of reserves and balances being used to fund pressure in this area in addition to the £32m of investment that has been made.

2.14 The Budget Report approved in February 2024 set out an estimated net funding gap over the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 of £19.2m, excluding any potential increases in Council Tax. In developing this Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Council has sought to update this overall financial position based upon the latest information available including information from the autumn statement. Central to this exercise has been a review of all assumptions underpinning the funding shortfall including all funding streams, both centrally allocated and locally generated, and all inflationary and demand led cost pressures.

2.15 As with any financial forecast the assumptions contained within it will be continually updated as additional information becomes available or assumptions are confirmed. Particular consideration must be given to the impact on future year budget requirements of demand increases, the pressures emerging in year linked to inflation and the delivery of savings. Members will be informed at regular intervals of the budget setting process as to the impact of any of these changes.

2.16 Some of the areas that will be the subject of continued review during this period will include the financial impact arising from:

- Inflation, including the impact of workforce shortages in some areas on pay levels.
- Pay awards.
- Level of contingencies required.
- Use of reserves.
- Capital financing.

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- Trading position of Council companies.
- Funding the High Needs Deficit
- Demand led pressures relating to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care; and
- Impact of regeneration and other Council sponsored major developments.

2.17 Taking into account the latest available information relating to funding, and having considered and refreshed all other planning assumptions, the estimated overall gross funding gap facing the Council over the next three years is in the region of £40.630m (excluding any potential increases in Council Tax and savings previously approved by Members). This is summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Overall Funding Shortfall over MTFP period 2025/26 to 2027/28

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'m	£'m	£'m
<b>Investment:</b>			
Home to School Transport- growth in demand	3.200	1.600	1.600
Additional investment in Transformation, Corporate Landlord and Corporate Support	1.481	0.000	0.000
Growth Programme (indicative net additional costs and phasing)	0.436	1.346	1.208
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>5.117</b>	<b>2.946</b>	<b>2.808</b>
<b>Inflationary Pressures:</b>			
Provisions for Pay, Contract Inflation, etc.	6.850	5.950	5.950
Assumed increase in Care Provider costs re. ASC	5.500	5.500	5.500
Assumed increase in Care Provider costs re. CSC	1.250	1.250	1.250
Assumed increase in Home to School Transport	0.300	0.300	0.300
Energy Costs – assumed permanent increase	1.000	0.000	0.000
External Audit costs	0.225	0.000	0.000
<b>Total Inflationary Pressures</b>	<b>15.125</b>	<b>13.000</b>	<b>13.000</b>
<b>Other MTFP Changes:</b>			
Council Tax Base	-1.320	-0.500	-0.500
Car Parking – permanent loss of income	0.500	0.000	0.000
Academisation – permanent loss of income	0.690	0.210	0.000
Insurance – increased contributions to the Fund	2.100	-1.100	0.000
Loss of investment income due to High Needs Deficit	2.000	-2.000	0.000
ICT Refresh	0.100	0.000	0.000
Provision for In-Year budget overspends	0.000	3.000	0.000
Impact of Budget Decisions in Previous Years	-0.500	-0.500	-0.500
<b>Total Other MTFP Changes</b>	<b>3.570</b>	<b>-0.890</b>	<b>-0.763</b>
<b>Additional Funding:</b>			
Social Care Grant	0.000	0.000	0.000
Services Grant	0.454	0.000	0.000
New Homes Bonus	-1.250	1.250	0.000
Settlement Funding Assessment	-2.000	-2.000	-2.000

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Rates Baseline			
Estimate of Additional Funding announced in the Autumn 2024 Budget Statement	-7.500	0.000	0.000
	<b>-10.296</b>	<b>-0.750</b>	<b>-2.000</b>
<b>Revised MTFP Funding Gap excluding Council Tax and budget savings</b>	<b>13.516</b>	<b>14.306</b>	<b>12.808</b>
<b>Total MTFP Funding Gap</b>			<b>40.630</b>

2.18 As part of the budget setting process for 2024/25, in February 2024 Budget Council agreed a number of savings that would be achieved from 2025/26 and in future years. The impact of these savings is shown below:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Impact of Budget Savings agreed February 2024	<b>-2.465</b>	<b>-4.115</b>	<b>-0.263</b>

2.19 It should be noted that this position assumes that no additional rightsizing of budgets will be required on an annual basis. This assumption is critical in developing next year's budget. The table above includes provision for rightsizing the home to school transport budget for the pressure identified at mid-year review in the current year (as reported elsewhere on this agenda), however it does not include provision for any structural overspending in 24/25 in Children's Social Care. This budget was rightsized, had further investment and then had substantial budget re-alignment to reflect a new staffing structure that is to be implemented in-year based on increased investment in that structure and a reduced number of residential placements that would reduce that budget. This reduction has not been experienced hence the budget pressure. Therefore, in November 2024 a fundamental review of the budget and what is required for 2025/26 will be made by the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education and s151 officer and this may require an updating of the MTFP figures reported.

2.20 The other key point is in respect of Adult Social Care- the strategy within the service is Better at Home and this is reflected in the transformation planning and figures and savings within the MTFP. As can be seen in the current year's budget monitoring, residential numbers and costs are increasing hence the budget pressure being experienced- a review of the current and forecast performance data for the next two years will be required alongside the transformation programme in order that robust information can be used for budget planning-again this will be done during November 2024. Both of these issues will be critical to budget planning to ensure the budget reflects the latest forecast information produced by the service and alignment with the transformation plan.

2.21 Within this position it can be seen that there are £52m of Council wide cost pressures across the three years including the following:

- Children's Social Care – additional resources of £3.750m to funding inflationary pressures.
- Home to School Transport - additional resources of £7.300m to fund inflationary pressures (£0.900m) and potential increases in demand for the service (£6.400m).
- Adult Social Care – additional resources of £16.500m to fund the net cost of inflationary provider fee increases.
- Other Inflationary Pressures – additional resources of £19.975m relating to the additional costs of funding pay awards, pension contributions, contract inflation and levy increases.

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- o Growth Programme – additional resources of £2.990m to fund investment in Council assets.

2.22 The funding gap presented of £40.630m is **before** taking into consideration any additional locally generated income in the form of Council Tax which is currently estimated to raise an additional £26.522m subject to Member approval (and assuming the referendum principles from 2023/24 and 2024/25 remain in place) and savings previously approved by Members.

2.23 The previous referendum principles allowed for a 2.99% increase in the general Council Tax rate plus a 2% Adult Social Care Precept, and the figures presented include a refreshed council taxbase reflecting forecast housing growth, collection rates and the anticipated cost of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As mentioned in paragraph 2.11, the Autumn Budget Statement didn't specifically refer to referendum principles. However, it is assumed that the council tax flexibilities included in the calculation of the increase in Core Spending Power includes an increase of 5%. The resources an overall 4.99% Council Tax increase could potentially generate, is shown below:

Table 2: Potential Resources generated from Council Tax Increases 2025/26 to 2027/28

	2025/26 £'m	2026/27 £'m	2027/28 £'m	Total £'m
Core increase (2.99%)	-5.056	-5.323	-5.513	-15.892
Adult Social Care Precept (2.00%)	-3.382	-3.561	-3.687	-10.630
<b>Total</b>	<b>-8.438</b>	<b>-8.884</b>	<b>-9.200</b>	<b>-26.522</b>

2.24 The growth in business rates reflects an annual increase in the nationally set Multiplier which is directly linked to the Consumer Price Index. In recent years businesses have been protected from these inflationary increases and Central Government has reimbursed councils via a grant for the lost income and it is assumed that this will continue to be the case.

2.25 As stated previously, forecasts will continue to be refined as further government announcements are made and clarity received on funding streams and cost pressures.

2.26 In light of the anticipated funding gap over the MTFP period, the Council is developing strategies in order to meet the challenges faced. Given the financial uncertainty the focus will be on developing a balanced and sustainable budget for the next three years to provide some stability to the organisation taking full account of the transformation programme.

2.27 As discussed earlier in this report, the Council has a demonstrable track record in developing deliverable budget packages that facilitate the delivery of sustainable services to the residents of the Borough and ensure effective and efficient financial management. This is becoming increasingly challenging, and has been especially so in Children's Services which, as outlined earlier in this report, has seen additional investment over the last four years of £32m. This has been based on the service's view of the resources required to deliver the Improvement Plan and also to reflect demand and yet despite this, overspending has resulted in an additional £23m of reserves and balances being utilised. As such, in approaching this budget cycle, the Council will once again require a comprehensive approach to developing a budget package as the size of the financial challenge is significant. As part of this three-year budget cycle, it will also be important that the Council can demonstrate how it continually demonstrates that it achieves value for money in the delivery of services. The use of comparative

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Council will identify key themes, trends and analysis which will be used to inform budget decisions over the three-year period.

- 2.28 The scale of the financial challenge facing the Council over the next three years will require key long term policy decisions to be made at the earliest opportunity if the Council is to remain financially well managed.
- 2.29 The Council's new Corporate Plan sets out the Council's ambition, which will guide the development of the budget package to ensure it is closely aligned to these priorities. These are:
- Children & Young People – Sefton is an inclusive child friendly borough where children and families thrive.
  - Health & Wellbeing - Improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Sefton and reduce inequality.
  - Adult Social Care - Empowering people to live an independent life, exercise choice and control, and be fully informed.
  - Working for Our Communities Every Day - Working together to deliver affordable services which achieve the best possible outcomes for our communities.
  - Inclusive Growth - Creating more and better jobs for local people.
  - Financial Sustainability
- 2.30 The process must, as always, remain a careful balance between balancing the budget in the short term whilst still maintaining prudent financial management over the longer term.

## 3. **Climate Emergency**

- 3.1 As Members will be aware, the Council has declared a climate emergency with the aim of being net zero at 2030. Progress on the project has been positive to date and firm progress towards this goal has been made and is on target. Over the course of this MTFP period, the remaining activities that will deliver on this net zero aim include the replacement of fleet and decarbonisation of a number of buildings including all Leisure Centres. Decarbonisation plans are in place and the Council clearly understands what is required to meet this target, however the estimated cost of the required fleet, boilers, etc., is estimated at £30m. If borrowed this would amount to around £1.5m additional cost per annum. This figure is currently not in the MTFP calculations as the Council seeks to determine what grants / funding will be made available from central government. This is a key feature of this MTFP.

## 4. **Member Engagement in the Budget Setting Process**

- 4.1 In order to facilitate the development of a budget package the Council will utilise a clear budget planning process involving key officers. A series of engagement and update sessions will be held throughout the budget cycle with the outcome being reported to Cabinet Members, on a collective basis, and in advance of February 2025 Budget Council in order that a progressive and informed budget package is developed.
- 4.2 The final budget package is scheduled in the committee diary to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) Committee on 11 February 2025, Cabinet on 13 February 2025, and Council on 27 February 2025.

## 5. **Public Consultation**

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- 5.1 The Council will ensure that as a budget is developed, appropriate consultation, engagement and communication takes place on the proposals for 2025/26 to 2027/28 in the final quarter of 2024.
- 5.2 Feedback will be shared with members and inform the budget package put forward to be agreed by Council on 27 February 2025.

## 6. **Financial Resilience**

- 6.1 The financial resilience of councils is something that has gained a higher profile in recent years, with an increasing number of councils now facing financial difficulties, and with some of these being in receipt of exceptional financial support. In addition to the continued uncertainty surrounding Local Government funding and the pressures facing social care services for both adults and children, the current cost of living crisis and increasing inflationary pressures, has the potential to impact further on the financial resilience of many councils.
- 6.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) publish a Financial Resilience Index that measures the financial resilience of councils. The latest results were announced in May 2024 based on data from financial year 2022/23.
- 6.3 From this work there are two key issues for the Council. Firstly, the Council has a relatively high risk due to the high amount (in percentage terms) of its budget it spends on its two largest demand led services, e.g., Adults Social Care and Children's Social Care. This is considered high risk as if spending pressures increase either in this area or other areas there is little flexibility to meet this pressure. As reported earlier there is approximately 70% of the Council's budget spent in these areas and this budget cycle needs to have this as a primary consideration, not only due to this risk but also as the Council has a large number of other services it needs to provide. A further increase in the proportion of the budget allocated to these demand led areas will increase the financial risk the Council faces and compromise financial sustainability.
- 6.4 The second key issue is around the level of reserves the Council holds. The Council's Reserves Strategy aids longer-term financial stability and mitigates the potential impact of future events or developments which may cause financial difficulty. The Council now has an appropriate level of General Fund Balances but has a low level of earmarked reserves, and therefore total reserves, compared to other councils. Critically though the Council cannot continue to overspend on key services, such as Children's Services, as it has done in the last three years, hence the principle of all budget assumptions being signed off by services in addition to confirming that they will work within the approved cash limit approved by Members. It was agreed in the last budget report, that following the substantial increase in General Fund Balances that if these were to be used for budget pressure they would need to be repaid in the next financial year- this principle is common in the sector and must be adhered to.
- 6.5 General Balances and Earmarked Reserves are a key measure of the financial resilience of the Council. Any use of General Fund Balances would need to be reimbursed over the medium-term planning period to ensure that the Council continues to hold a level of Balances within the risk assessed range. Further information on the current level of reserves is set out later in this report.
- 6.6 The Council closely monitors its finances with routine reports being considered by Members on a monthly basis, with quarterly reports including comprehensive performance and risk sections. Remedial action is taken **Page 72** required to offset emerging budget pressures.



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All savings proposals are regularly reviewed for deliverability and are risk assessed by officers throughout the year. The Council also undertakes regular reviews of its balance sheet risks and takes appropriate action as necessary.

- 6.7 As such the Council has a very strong record of sound financial management and has continued to deliver budget savings each year throughout the last 14 years. These have ensured that it has been able to protect core service provision and remain in a strong position financially.
- 6.8 Planning ahead for the medium-term enables the Council to make strategic and well considered decisions in relation to its finances and service provision. There continues to be uncertainty about the future funding levels for the Council going forward alongside the significant impact caused by the current cost of living crisis and increased inflation and the pressure and Improvement Plan with Children’s Services making this approach more important than ever.
- 6.9 The Council does not underestimate the significant challenges faced both nationally by the Local Government sector as well as locally and recognises that dealing with these challenges is becoming increasingly difficult against a backdrop of uncertainty around economic recovery and Central Government support.

## 7. Capital Programme

- 7.1 In addition to developing a revenue budget package the Council also needs a Capital Programme that continues to invest in both existing operational assets and the development of larger infrastructure projects that will enhance facilities for everyone within the Council’s boundaries in addition to the Borough’s economy.
- 7.2 As part of the budget package agreed in February 2024 an indicative Capital Programme for the next three years was approved and this aligned with the Council’s Capital Strategy. The Council has a Growth Programme now in delivery that includes the Southport Town Deal programme and investment in Bootle via the government Levelling Up Programme. This total Programme will need robust financial management to ensure it remains affordable and deliverable and in particular that:
- the Capital Programme is set within Prudential borrowing limits and in line with the Council’s Capital Financing Strategy as approved by Members in February 2024.
  - That capital plans, funding strategies and affordability is continually reviewed as a result of the current and forecast economic issues that exist such as high inflation and supply chain issues; and
  - the investment supports the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan.
- 7.3 In 2025/26, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £71.484m. The table below identifies the scale of planned Capital expenditure over the medium-term.

Table 3: Estimate of Capital Expenditure over MTFP period 2025/26 to 2027/28

<b>Capital Expenditure</b>					
	2022/23 £m Actual	2023/24 £m Actual	2024/25 £m Page 73	2025/26 £m Estimate	2026/27 £m Estimate

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TOTAL	38.705	40.937	80.905	71.484	33.467
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- 7.4 The estimated levels of expenditure above represent those elements approved by Council and which have been included within the Capital Programme. A summary of the Council's current Capital Programme was included as part of the Council's main budget report and was published alongside the Capital Strategy document. This continues to be updated as future capital decisions are made. These updates are reported as part of the monthly budget monitoring reports presented to Cabinet.
- 7.5 One of the fundamental requirements and drivers to maintain and continually update the Council's Capital Strategy is the greater emphasis on locally generated income (e.g., Council Tax and Business Rates) to support local government funding. The reliance on this income to support the delivery of frontline services means that it is important that the Council, working with its partners, optimises the opportunity. As a result, development of economic growth is important in ensuring that financial sustainability for the Council is achieved, and the ambitions as set out in Vision 2030 are met.
- 7.6 Funding for the Capital Programme is derived from variety of sources including external grants, contributions and capital receipts.
- 7.7 The Southport Town Deal projects – which were approved by the former Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) – have been included within the estimates of capital expenditure above. Southport is set to receive £37.5m in government grant funding for a range of projects across the town centre and seafront following the successful bid and the award represents one of the largest Town Deals that the government has agreed nationally and across 101 towns.
- 7.8 Additional funding of £20m for Bootle has also been provided as part of the government's Levelling Up Programme which will support the regeneration of the town centre.

## 8. **Council Wholly Owned Companies**

- 8.1 The Council wholly owns three companies who provide services on its behalf. These are Sandway Homes Limited, Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited and Sefton New Directions.
- 8.2 While they operate at arms-length from the Council, the Council remains at least partially responsible for their performance and can be impacted by financial pressures they face and risks they carry. As such it is prudent for the Council to recognise potential cost pressures the companies face in its financial scenario, to the extent that they may affect the Council's future budgets.
- 8.3 Within the current financial environment of the UK there are two sectors that are under substantial financial pressure- the adult social care market and the housing sector. The main risks over the current financial planning period therefore relate to Sefton New Directions and Sandway Homes Limited. Sefton New Directions is facing financial challenges around staff costs, inflation and providing care, and a fundamental review of that business and its medium-term financial plan has been undertaken and will be presented to Cabinet in December 2024. Similarly, Sandway Homes has and is being impacted by cost of construction, supply chain issues and the timing and pace of sales of homes due to interest rate increases in the last three years- again a comprehensive report will be presented to the Cabinet meeting in December 2024.

## 9. **Next Steps/Timetable**

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- 9.1 Given the period of this Medium-Term Financial Plan the intention is to set a three-year budget covering this period. The key next steps are as follows:
- Budget planning sessions to be held to refine the budget package and bridge the funding gap.
  - Continue to review and refine the financial scenario in light of the latest information available.
  - Budget engagement.
  - Consider the budget package in light of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement expected in December 2024; and
  - Finalise a budget package with the draft Budget Report to be considered in February 2025 by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet before full Council.

## 10. **General Balances and Earmarked Reserves**

- 10.1 As part of its financial management process, the Council ensures it has set aside resources in General Fund Balances to fund unforeseen costs that may arise. In addition, the Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which have been provided for specific existing plans and commitments. The Council's approach to managing these balances and reserves was set out in the Budget Report approved by Council in February 2024.
- 10.2 Following the risk assessment undertaken at that time it was considered an appropriate level of General Balances for the Council would be in the region of 11% of the net revenue budget. Therefore, General Fund Balances of around £30m would be considered prudent as a target for March 2025.
- 10.3 As at 31 March 2024 the Council held General Balances of £16.300m and Earmarked Reserves of £32.680m (£15.590m of which relates to unutilised Revenue Grants and Contributions). The budget for 2024/25 included a contribution to General Balances of £13.977m so balances are budgeted to increase to £30.277m by 31 March 2025. This amount of General Balances is in line with the risk assessed range at this time, however the risks facing the Council continue to increase, therefore it is likely that this sum will also need to increase. This report provides for a further £3m being added to balances each year from 2026/27 with the aim being to reach £40m within the next 4 years. (and importantly if any are used then they should be replenished in the same period). This higher level also reflects that unlike some other councils, Sefton does not have a historically high level of Earmarked Reserves that it could call on should there be an immediate or unforeseen financial shock.
- 10.4 It can be seen from the mid-year review that balances of over £6.5m will be required to be used due to forecast overspending in 2024/25. Based on the Council recommendation, if this forecast materialises then these will need to be replenished within this MTFP period- this aligned to any structural pressure from Children's Services from 2024/25 into 2025/26 are two key issues which require immediate resolution as part of budget planning. It can be seen that pressure within the overall budget is significant therefore consideration will be given to services that require balances to meet in-year pressure repaying these where appropriate based on transformation delivery (i.e., savings are delivered from budgets previously under pressure) or demand reduction.
- 10.5 In May 2023 DLUHC provided an update on levels of reserves and balances held by councils and whilst the Council's General Fund Balances are now higher than the median level across the country which is positive (at 11% vs 6%), as stated the Council has Earmarked Reserves that are substantially lower than the same comparator local authorities. The Council has always taken the view that Earmarked Reserves should only be held for a specific purpose, hence the continual review. However this level does mean that the flexibility reduces if an adverse situation develops which would require the redirection of resources.

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From the current analysis it is estimated that only a low number of Earmarked Reserves could be redirected to support the Council's wider budget position should a financial shock be experienced. As such it is important that the General Fund Balances are at a level that compensates for this lower level of Earmarked Reserves.

10.6 As part of this budget setting process the Council will again review all of its Earmarked Reserves with due regard being given to the impact of any emerging issues and any other strategic financial decisions that will be made over the next four years.

## 11. High Needs Deficit

11.1 In addition to the Council's General Fund Balances and Earmarked Reserves there are also those in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant. As has been reported continually over recent years, the key issue and risk within this is the deficit balance in respect of the High Needs Budget. This has grown gradually since system reform in 2013. Up until 2019/20 the growth in the deficit was £1m-£2m per year so that the total was £5.4m at the end of 2019/20. This rate of increase however has grown significantly since that point with the deficit increasing by £19.3m in 2023/24 and forecast to increase by a higher amount in 2024/25. The deficit will therefore be over £57m by the end of 2024/25. This has been driven by the number of EHCP's increasing from 1,765 at the start of 2020 to 3,655 by October 2024.

11.2 With this being an issue for a number of councils across England the Council has been part of the Delivering Better Value programme. This programme estimates that without intervention the deficit on the High Needs Block will increase to over £100m by 2028. A recent survey across the country has suggested that at the end of 2027/28 deficits across England could amount to £8bn with the annual figure rising exponentially.

11.3 There is currently a statutory override in place until March 2026, that ringfences this deficit and the advice is that this should not impact on the General Fund of councils, however the risk is that when this override finishes the General Fund will have to fund the deficit. The Council has and will continue to lobby that this is a DSG issue, and the impact should either be met from the DSG or from central government funding or reform, however this risk is real and cannot be ignored.

11.4 When the deficit was increasing at a modest amount annually the Council could realistically have put in a recovery plan to meet this over, for example, a similar time period to which it has built up, e.g., a decade, but with annual increases of up to £20m per annum this is not possible. Therefore, engagement is required across the sector and with central government departments on how this will be addressed post 2026.

## 12. Debt / Borrowing

12.1 Members will recall from the Treasury Management Strategy approved in February 2024 that over the last decade, due to the prevailing market conditions, the Council has previously chosen not to undertake any long-term borrowing to support its capital expenditure. This is with the exception of the purchase of the Strand Shopping Centre and some other nominal amounts. The Council has instead chosen to temporarily fund capital expenditure by internally borrowing resources from its cash balances.

12.2 When long term interest rates (which determine interest payable on new long-term loans) are significantly higher than short-term interest rates, and this situation is expected to prevail for the foreseeable future, then a policy of internal borrowing is appropriate as it minimises the net cost of interest payable by the revenue budget over the medium-term. A policy of internal borrowing also reduces the credit risk faced by the Council.

12.3 At 31 March 2024 the Council had £138.459m of external borrowing (loans advanced from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)) and in the region of £90m of internal borrowing.

12.4 However, the Council's cash balances have now reduced to levels that it can no longer internally borrow – this is as a direct result of the High Needs Deficit which has to be financed. This will also require additional borrowing to be taken out, reversing some of the internal borrowing previously used. In addition, the Council will need to borrow for the Growth Programme and for the part funding of major capital schemes. The Council will take advice from its treasury management advisor, Arlingclose, on the most appropriate borrowing strategy. This will be reported to Budget Council and Audit and Governance Committee.

## 2. Financial Implications

All financial implications are reflected within the report.

## 3. Legal Implications

None

## 4. Corporate Risk Implications

This report highlights the financial position of the Council in 2025/26 to 2027/28, which supports its Financial Sustainability in 2025/26 and future years.

## 5 Staffing HR Implications

None

## 6 Conclusion

The report indicates that a total budget gap of **£40.630m** is currently forecast for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28, prior to decisions about Council Tax, savings previously approved by Members and any further budget savings being made. However, there is considerable uncertainty around some of the assumptions made, particularly around government funding in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

<b>Equality Implications:</b>
There are no equality implications.
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b>
The report highlights the additional resources included within the Medium-Term

# Agenda Item 11

Financial Plan relating to services provided for Children and Young People.
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<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>
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The recommendations within this report will have a <b>Neutral</b> impact.
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## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial is the author of this report (FD7834/24).

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5934/24) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

None

## Implementation Date for the Decision:

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting and immediately following Council.


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## Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers for inspection.

<b>Council Report:</b>			
<b>Report Title:</b>		Honorary Freedom of the Borough - Sefton Council for Voluntary Service	
Date of meeting:	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2024		
Report to:	Council		
Report of:	Executive Director – Operations and Partnerships		
Portfolio:	Communities and Partnership Engagement		
Wards affected:	All wards		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

Under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to grant the Freedom of the Borough to a person or a service unit of distinction who have rendered eminent service to the Borough and this report sets out proposals for Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (Sefton CVS) to be granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough.

**Recommendation(s):**

- (1) In accordance with Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, this Council wishes to place on record its high appreciation of Sefton Council for Voluntary Service as a strategic partner for the Council over the last 50 years and to recognise and celebrate all of its achievements over this time in supporting Sefton’s communities; and
  
- (2) the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Commercial be authorised to take all the necessary actions associated with (1) above and arrange a civic reception for Sefton CVS and to take place at the rising of an Extra-ordinary Council meeting in Bootle Town Hall on a date to be arranged.

# Agenda Item 12

## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Under Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to grant the Freedom of the Borough to a person or a service unit of distinction who have rendered eminent service to the Borough and it is proposed that Sefton CVS be granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough.
- 1.2 The conferring of the Freedom of the Borough upon any individual or service unit is the highest honour the Council can bestow and when the Freedom of the Borough is granted to a service unit, they are given the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough on all ceremonial occasions with colours flying, bands playing, drums beating, and bayonets fixed.
- 1.3 The scrolls of Honorary Freedom and organisations awarded Freedom of Entry to the Borough are displayed in both the Mayors Parlours at the Town Hall, Bootle and the Town Hall, Southport. Honorary Freeman/Freewomen may attend and take part in such civic receptions and functions to which all Members of the Council are invited. However, Freeman/Freewomen shall not have the right, as such, to attend meetings of the Council or a Committee, or to receive any such allowances or payments to which Councillors are entitled.
- 1.4 Past recipients of the Freedom of the Borough have been:

2004 - Donald "Ginger" McCain

2006 - James Carragher

2022 – Alex Greenwood

2023 - Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust,

2023 - Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust,

2023 - Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust,

2023 - Southport & Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

- 1.5 The Freedom of the Borough (Freedom of Entry) has also been bestowed on the following Service Units:

1982 - No. 238 (Sefton) Squadron, 156 Regiment, Royal Corps of Transport, which was subsequently succeeded by No. 238 (Sefton) Squadron, 156 (North West) Transport Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers) in 2001.

2011 - RAF Woodvale

2017 – Duke of Lancaster's Regiment



2023 - HMS Mersey

## **2.0 Sefton Council for Voluntary Service**

2.1 Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (Sefton CVS) have worked tirelessly across Sefton communities for the last 50 years. They are a strategic partner of the Council and play a key role in assisting and supporting voluntary community and faith sector (VCF) activity across Sefton, Merseyside. Their vision is to develop a vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector that encourages and supports independent, resilient and sustainable communities.

2.2 Sefton CVS's key activities are to:

- Provide support services to the VCF sector.
- Promote partnerships within the sector, and between the VCF sector and other sectors.
- Provide a channel through which the VCF sector is represented.
- Develop new ideas, strategies and organisations.
- Support and develop volunteering opportunities.
- Promote equality of opportunity and access, and the value of diversity.

2.3 Sefton CVS have provided critical support to the Council and Sefton communities in the most difficult of times – including the Covid pandemic and the tragic events in Southport earlier this year. Their leadership and compassion across all sectors and their ability to work in true partnership to support recovery has been outstanding.

## **3.0 Conferment of Freedom of the Borough**

3.1 In order to confer the Freedom of the Borough upon an individual or service the Council would need to pass a resolution by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose, where notice of the object of the meeting has been given.

3.2 If the Council was minded to grant the Freedom of the Borough to Sefton CVS, they would be advised and arrangements made for the Freedom of the Borough to be bestowed upon them, on a date to be determined in 2025.

3.3 A scroll bestowing the honour would need to be ordered and produced, and arrangements made for a civic reception for Sefton CVS to take place at the rising of the Extraordinary Council. The costs of the scroll and reception could be financed from the Mayoral Hospitality budget provision.

## **2. Financial Implications**

### **(A) Revenue Costs**

The cost would be met from the Council's curPage 81e budget provision.

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## (B) Capital Costs

None

### Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

There are no additional resource implications to those identified in Section A above.

### 3. Legal Implications

**Legal Implications:**

Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972

### 4. Risk Implications

There are no risk implications.

### 5 Staffing HR Implications

None

### 6 Conclusion

The awarding of the Freedom of the Borough to Sefton CVS is recommended.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

**Equality Implications:**

There are no equality implications

**Impact on Children and Young People:**

This area of the work of Sefton CVS involves the development of a co-ordinated, strategic approach to local services, seeking to embed best practice to deliver quality outcomes for children, young people and families, with a focus on multi-agency working and integrated processes. The Every Child Matters Forum, which has 430 members, facilitates VCF sector representation, enabling the sector to provide service solutions to the needs and priorities identified locally and nationally

**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 & Commercial (FD.7801/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5901/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**(B) External Consultations**

Not applicable

**Implementation Date for the Decision :**

With immediate effect.

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**Appendices:**

There are no appendices to this report

**Background Papers:**

None

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## COUNCIL – 14 NOVEMBER 2024

### REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

#### COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – RULE 46 (WAIVING CALL-IN) PROVISIONS

I wish to report that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) gave her consent, under Rule 46 (Waiving Call-In) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution. The report was in relation to the Procurement of a Temporary Package of Care and it was not subject to call-in on the basis that the decision could not be reasonably deferred because it would result in the breach of Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as the call-in period would delay the commencement of the re-procurement.

#### CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024

##### 51. Procurement of a Temporary Package of Care

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education seeking approval to re-procure an existing care and support package for a child for up to a period of 6 months, to allow time to conduct a procurement to identify longer term care and support. The procurement exercise would call off the Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS) which had been approved for the Liverpool City Region. The report indicated that the current contract would expire on 12 October 2024 and also sought permission to procure longer term care and support for the child.

##### Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Families be delegated the authority to conduct a procurement exercise for an individual package of care and enter a contract with the selected provider for a maximum period of 6 months (until the end of the 2023/24 financial year) with an annual value of up to £811,200 whilst longer term arrangements are procured. This care and support arrangement is jointly funded between Sefton Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Sefton Place who will be party to the procurement exercise;
- (2) any inflation or additional costs relating to the lifetime of the 6-month contract and the longer term 3-year contract which will follow be delegated to the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Children Schools and Families, within financial standing orders and within the current scheme of delegation;
- (3) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Children Schools and Families, be granted delegated authority to award the contract resulting from the procurement

# Agenda Item 13

exercise outlined above and the procurement of the long-term care, with Cheshire and Merseyside ICB party to the decision-making relating to this procurement;

- (4) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Children Schools and Families, be delegated authority to enter longer term contracting arrangements of up to 3 years with Cheshire and Merseyside ICB for the care and support for the child. The Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director) and the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Leader be consulted in respect of the longer-term arrangements leading to the transition to adult services;
- (5) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education be delegated authority to identify another provider should the care break down over the life of the contract; and
- (6) it be noted that the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) had given their consent under Rule 46 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules for this decision to be treated as urgent and not subject to "call in" on the basis that it would result in the breach of Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as the call-in period would delay the commencement of the re-procurement.

## **Reasons for the Decisions:**

The recommended proposal would ensure that:

- (1) The Council carried out its duty in relation to cared for children under the Children Act 1989, to ensure they were safeguarded and welfare promoted.
- (2) It would allow adequate care support to be in place while an appropriate, longer-term placement was sought, in consultation with Adult Social Care.
- (3) The Council's spend was compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations following the expiration of the current waiver on 12 October 2024.
- (4) The re-procurement activity provided the opportunity to achieve better quality and value through increased competition.

## **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Option 1 – To extend the current waiver. Extending the current waiver by any more than 2 days would take the contract amount over the threshold and would be in breach of the Contract Procurement Regulations.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

**Proposed by: Councillor Mike Prendergast**

**Seconded by: Councillor Mike Morris**

#### **Bring Back Children's A&E Services to Southport**

Since 2003, Southport has not had a dedicated Children's A&E Service. The nearest service is based in Ormskirk which closes between the hours of midnight and 8 am.

During those hours, the nearest Children's A&E Services are based in Liverpool, around a 45 minute journey from Southport. For a town of over 90,000 people, it is unacceptable that families have to travel so far to receive emergency care for their children.

Southport needs, and local residents and families deserve to have, a 24 hour Children's A&E Service fully integrated with adult emergency care services in our town.

Council hereby resolves:

- To support longstanding calls for the reinstatement of 24 hour Children's A&E Services at Southport Hospital, removed in 2003, and for those to be fully integrated with adult emergency care provision.
- To write to the Members of Parliament for Southport and Sefton Central to ask that they raise the issue on behalf of Southport and Sefton residents in Parliament and with the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care calling for the reinstatement of 24 hour Children's A&E Services at Southport Hospital, integrated with adult emergency care provision, and for adequate capital funding to be made available to provide investment in Southport Hospital.

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

### COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

**Proposed by: Councillor Mike Prendergast**

**Seconded by: Councillor Mike Morris**

#### **Supporting Southport Town Centre Businesses**

As a town, Southport is one of the economic engines of Sefton with a vibrant tourism and hospitality sector attracting around 9 million visitors per year, generating £550 million to the local economy. Nearly 7,000 jobs depend on this sector alone.

Southport also has a well developed retail and service sector with many local people working in these sectors in and around Southport Town centre.

However, many Southport town centre businesses, across all sectors, are struggling, with many reporting drops in footfall of between 70-75% over the last few months.

One of the factors, which can be addressed by this Council, impacting local businesses is town centre car parking. This Council recognises the impact that parking charges, and previous increases in those charges, has had on local businesses and resolves to explore a range of options to address this issue.

Council hereby resolves:

- To prepare a feasibility report in order investigate the potential benefits of introducing a free parking scheme in Southport town centre and for this report to be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) . This could, for example, include free parking during off peak times (October – March) for a set number of hours (for example 2/3 hours free).
- To engage with town centre businesses on the issue of town centre parking and the impact it has on them when competing with online retailers, retail parks and other nearby towns that offer free parking for set periods or at certain times of year.
- To recognise that successive increases in parking charges in Southport Town Centre have impacted town centre businesses.
- To work with local businesses to address parking and other issues with a coherent strategy for Southport Town Centre and our local economy.

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

### COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Moved by: Councillor Pugh

Seconded by: Councillor TBC

#### School Academies

This Council

(1) Notes the sharp increase in local schools seeking and gaining academy status and the detrimental impact on the council's budget and ability to provide statutory services and special needs provision

(2) Believes that the current direction of travel both locally and nationally leads to a less accountable and less manageable and more wasteful education system

And therefore, request the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson informing her of the difficulties experienced by this and other councils to review current legislation in order to achieve greater efficiency and better transparency and accountability, and ensure that money intended by the taxpayer to support children's education is wisely spent.

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

### COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Moved by: Councillor Pugh

Seconded by: Councillor TBC

#### Emergency Care Services

This Council

(1) Notes that there is an ongoing review of Emergency Care Services in Southport, Formby and Lancashire

(2) Recognises that there is a long standing demand from residents to end the protocol that requires in most circumstances all children to be denied access to the Accident and Emergency Department of Southport Hospital

(3) Applauds the pivotal role played by Alder Hey in supporting the safe configuration of Children's Hospital Services across the region

And therefore, requests the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board to ensure following the review

(a) that Southport Hospital retains a full Accident and Emergency Department and

(b) following the practice of nearly every other A&E department in the country allows children to be treated and triaged there when appropriate and clinically safe

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

### COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

**Proposed by: Councillor Mike Prendergast**

**Seconded by: Sir Ron Watson CBE**

#### **Supporting Sefton's Pensioners**

As a result of the Labour Government's decision to penalise pensioners with an income as little as £13,000 per year by removing the Winter Fuel Allowance from around 10 million pensioners nationally, Sefton Council is determined to mitigate in any way possible the harmful effects of this policy on the elderly.

The need for pensioners to keep warm in the winter months should be a clear health priority for our society and around 56,000 pensioners in Sefton are going to suffer great hardship due to the arbitrary withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance.

The effect of the measure on the country's finances amounts to no more than 0.0183% of the total national budget and will have no discernible impact on the overall financial position of the country.

There is overwhelming evidence that one of the key elements to keeping warm and healthy in winter is protective clothing. This is an issue this council can help with.

Council hereby resolves:

- To introduce a scheme in conjunction with private sector retailers to provide those pensioners affected with a lined hoodie type top to help them deal with the adverse impact of the Labour Government's policy.
- To work with major retailers who will be invited to quote for the provision of such garments and identify a means of distribution based on identity with an appropriate method of recording the transaction to avoid abuse of the scheme. Preliminary estimates of cost indicate that they will be in the region of £150000 to £200000 and can be met by using some of the £30 million held currently in unused balances.
- To ensure that those who need support the most Sefton council confirms that the scheme will not apply to the small number of pensioners whose overall income results in them paying the higher rate of Income Tax.
- To make it clear that Sefton council has the best interests of all pensioners at heart, particularly health as a critical element of council policy.

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## **Motion for Meeting of Sefton Council – 14 November 2024**

**Proposed by: Councillor Howard**

**Seconded by: Councillor Lappin**

## **Sefton Council Commends Historic Budget October 2024**

Sefton Council commends the historic budget delivered by the Labour Government on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

For the first time in many years, we welcome a new co-operative and collaborative way of working with Local Government. Over the last 14 years Local Government has felt the full force of austerity which as in turn seriously impacted on all Sefton residents, we look forward to the next five years with confidence and a government which will unleash the power and innovation of local government which in turn will enable our local residents to enjoy improved living conditions. This budget will:

- Improve the health of Sefton residents by allocating an extra £25.7bn to the NHS over this year and the next, representing the biggest increase in NHS spending since 2010, excluding COVID-19 years.
- Tackle in-work poverty for Sefton residents by increasing the minimum wage for millions of workers, representing a £1,400 increase for an eligible full-time worker.
- Breaks down barriers to opportunity for Sefton children through a £1.8bn expansion in funding to childcare, a £1bn uplift to SEND funding and a £30m funding commitment to set up breakfast clubs.
- Will enable the re-building of crumbling Sefton schools through the provision of £1.4bn, targeting 50 rebuilds a year nationally.
- Will increase the number of affordable homes in Sefton through provision of an extra £500m to the Affordable Homes Programme.
- Protects Sefton pensioners in their retirement by increasing the state pension by 4.1%, increasing the full basic state pension by £360 annually.
- Protects a vital green space in Sefton by cancelling of the Port of Liverpool Access Road through Rimrose Valley.
- Finally, helps to set Sefton Council back on the road to financial sustainability through the provision of £1.3bn of new grant funding for local authority services, including £600m in new grant funding for social care.

This council welcomes this investment in Sefton and resolves to work closely with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to achieve the best possible outcomes for Sefton residents.

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