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Sefton Council 

MEETING: CABINET
DATE: Thursday 5th September, 2024
TIME: 10.00 a.m.
VENUE: Birkdale Room, Town Hall, Southport

DECISION MAKER: **CABINET**

Councillor Atkinson (Chair)
Councillor Dowd
Councillor Doyle
Councillor Harvey
Councillor Howard
Councillor Lappin
Councillor Moncur
Councillor Roscoe
Councillor Veidman

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Debbie Campbell
Democratic Services Manager
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The Cabinet is responsible for making what are known as Key Decisions, which will be notified on the Forward Plan. Items marked with an * on the agenda involve Key Decisions

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution, is: -

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

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

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

Items marked with an * involve key decisions

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Subject/Author(s)</u>	<u>Wards Affected</u>	
1	Apologies for Absence		
2	Declarations of Interest Members are requested at a meeting where a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest arises, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests, to declare any interests that relate to an item on the agenda. Where a Member discloses a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, he/she must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest, except where he/she is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of a dispensation. Where a Member discloses a personal interest he/she must seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or staff member representing the Monitoring Officer to determine whether the Member should withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest or whether the Member can remain in the meeting or remain in the meeting and vote on the relevant decision.		
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting		(Pages 5 - 16)
	Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024		
* 4	Day Opportunities Contracts	All Wards	(Pages 17 - 20)
	Report of the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director)		
* 5	Child Poverty Strategy	All Wards	(Pages 21 - 58)
	Report of the Executive Director (Operations and Partnerships)		

* 6	Green Waste Composting Contract Extension 2026/27 Report of the Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services	All Wards	(Pages 59 - 62)
7	Southport Business Recovery Fund Report of the Assistant Director Economic Growth and Housing	Kew/Norwood	(To Follow)
8	Appointment of Representative on Outside Bodies Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	All Wards	(Pages 63 - 66)
* 9	HR and Payroll System Procurement Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial	All Wards	(Pages 67 - 70)
* 10	Corporate Cloud Telephony Contract Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial	All Wards	(Pages 71 - 76)
* 11	Financial Management 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2024/25 – September Update Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial	All Wards	(To Follow)

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THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST 2024. MINUTE NO.S 27 (6) TO (9) INCLUSIVE ARE NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON 25 JULY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Atkinson (in the Chair)
Councillors Doyle, Harvey, Lappin, Moncur, Roscoe
and Veidman

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Sir Ron Watson

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowd and Howard.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

21. HIGH NEEDS MONITORING

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education that provided an update on the Council's position in respect of the High Needs Budget and resulting deficit. The report outlined:

- The current position nationally.
- Demand within Sefton.
- What this demand means for council services.
- The agreed programme of work that has been derived from the Delivering Better Value Programme.
- The Councils SEND transformation programme and how this supports continued service development.
- Current sufficiency work and planned capital investment; and
- The resulting financial position.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Delivering Better Value programme
- Governance Structure

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Reference was made to funding of Special Educational Needs and the intention to review the funding process, and a request was made for the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families to be fully involved in this process.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the update regarding the high needs funding deficit and the development of the quality assurance systems being put into place to address the monitoring of the spend, be noted;
- (2) the increasing number of children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are educated in independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS), be noted;
- (3) the agreed Delivering Better Value Submission be noted and received and that progress reports be provided to the Cabinet and Council every 6 months;
- (4) future projects to increase sufficiency across Sefton and the ambition to create more special school places be noted;
- (5) a High Needs Recovery Plan be presented within the next report to the Cabinet in December 2024.

Reasons for the Decisions:

- 1) To provide an updated on the 2023/24 High Needs budget financial position.
- 2) To provide Members with a provisional update of the potential deficit budget forecast against the High Needs budget in 2024/25.
- 3) To provide an update on the sufficiency programme to provide sustainable and effective SEND support for pupils within the available resources allocated through the Dedicated School Grant – High Needs Block.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not Applicable.

22. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 146 of 6 April 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets indicating that the Council published its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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Strategy for 2023-2027 following approval at the Cabinet meeting on 6 April 2023. The Cabinet had requested an annual report on progress against the strategy and action plan. The report provided a summary of progress over the first 12 months since approval of the Strategy against its objectives and action areas and outlined the breadth of activity and level of progress being made across the Council in all areas, recognising the strategy's focus on the Council's role as an employer as a priority in the short term. It was also recognised that there remained much to do in this important area of work as the Council continued to aim to improve all aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as an employer, a provider of services, a commissioner and as a place leader.

Reference was made to the need to ensure that any training provided was up-to-date and for Members to be included in any training provision.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the content of the report and the approved Strategy be noted;
- (2) key issues and opportunities arising, together with areas of potential interest for further review and focus in future years be noted; and
- (3) the next annual report on performance against the strategy and action plan be received in 12 months' time.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

The recommendations would support the effective and transparent governance of the Council's approach to inequality, diversity and inclusion, and its performance to date against the approved Strategy and Action Plan.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The alternative option of not producing an annual report was not considered.

23. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODY

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the appointment of the Council's representative to serve on the Outside Body named within the report for the remainder of 2024/25.

Decision Made:

That the proposed appointment to the Outside Body indicated below, for the remainder of 2024/25, be approved:

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Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Conalty to replace Councillor Hart

Reasons for the Decision:

The Cabinet had delegated powers set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 40 of the Constitution to appoint the Council's representatives to serve on Outside Bodies.

In order for the Council to have on-going representation on the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Joint Health Scrutiny Committee,

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

24. FINANCIAL AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE 2023/2024

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial on the revenue and capital outturn position in relation to the 2023/24 financial year. The report outlined key variations and, where appropriate, any impact on future years' financial performance. In addition, the report provided details of the Council's Corporate Performance for 2023/24 and current corporate risks.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Corporate Performance Report 2023/24
- Appendix B – Corporate Risk Register – June 2024

Decisions Made:

That

Revenue Outturn

- (1) the fact that the General Fund net surplus of £4.309m for 2023/24 will increase the Council's General Balances by £0.114m less than was budgeted for, be noted;
- (2) the increase in Schools' balances of £2.381m for 2023/24 and the net reduction of non-schools centrally retained DSG balances of £19.489m., be noted;
- (3) the overall deficit on the High Needs Budget of £37.996m. be noted;
- (4) the changes to Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24 be noted.

Capital Programme

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- (5) the total capital outturn of £40.937m for the financial year 2023/24 be noted;
- (6) the successful delivery of a number of schemes, as set out in section 10 of the report, which have supported the delivery of the Council's core purpose, be noted;

Corporate Performance

- (7) the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2023/24 and the latest Corporate Risk Register alongside the financial outturn for the year be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The production of a revenue and capital outturn report is a key feature of effective financial management and will allow Members to make informed decisions that will support service delivery and medium-term financial sustainability.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

25. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2023/24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial providing a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken during 2023/24 and an update to 30 June 2024. The Cabinet received the outturn report to allow monitoring against the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and Prudential Indicators approved by the Cabinet and Council in March 2023. The report was also provided to the Audit and Governance Committee, whose role it was to carry out scrutiny of treasury management policies and practices.

Decision Made:

That the Treasury Management position during 2023/24 and the update to 30 June 2024 be noted, together with the review of the effects of decisions taken in pursuit of the Treasury Management Strategy and consideration of the implications of changes resulting from regulatory, economic and market factors affecting the Council's treasury management activities.

Reasons for the Decision:

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

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Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

26. CORPORATE PLAN

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial indicating that the Sefton Corporate Plan (2023 to 2026) was approved in January 2023. It set out the Council's six strategic priorities agreed by the Cabinet and the corporate objectives to deliver those priorities. The report set out the refresh of the Sefton Corporate Plan (2024 to 2027), with revised corporate objectives to deliver the Council's agreed strategic priorities, as set out at Appendix A.

The report also set out an updated Service Planning and Performance Management framework, aligned to the refresh of the Sefton Corporate Plan (2024 to 2027), for embedding the service level improvements in performance management, and to inform regular, collective and cross-cutting performance discussions at Cabinet, as set out at Appendix B.

In April 2024, the Council received a letter from Simon Hoare MP, the then Minister for Local Government, requesting it to produce Productivity Plans, set out in the Local Government Finance Settlement, and setting out some guidance along with the timeframes for local authorities to submit their first iterations of the plan. The local authority was requested to submit its plan detailing ways to 'improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure' by Friday, 19 July 2024. The Council's Productivity Plan would be refreshed on an annual basis, informed by the Corporate Plan and following the same reporting mechanism set out in the Service Planning and Performance Management framework. The report set out the first iteration of the 'Sefton Productivity Plan 2024', as set out at Appendix C.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- The Sefton Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027, set out at Appendix A.
- The Service Planning and Performance Management framework, set out at Appendix B.
- The first iterations of the 'Sefton Productivity Plan 2024' to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 19 July 2024, as originally requested by the former government, if still required to do so by the new government.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the refresh of the Sefton Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027, set out at Appendix A to the report be noted;

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- (2) the updated Service Planning and Performance Management framework, as set out at Appendix B to the report be noted.
- (3) the first iterations of the 'Sefton Productivity Plan 2024' to be submitted to the Ministry for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 19 July 2024, as set out at Appendix C to the report be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Corporate Plan set out the Council's strategic priorities for the short to medium term, aligned to the medium-term financial planning process. It described where overall the Council is headed (Council priorities) and outlined a roadmap to get there (corporate objectives).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

27. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2024/25 TO 2027/28 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2024/25 – JULY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial informing the Cabinet of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2024/25.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of June 2024:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects.
- 4) The latest prudential indicator information for 2024/25.

Appendix A to the report set out the Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

Decisions Made:

That

Revenue Outturn

- (1) the current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget be noted;

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- (2) the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position, be noted;
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2024/25 revenue budget be recognised and it be acknowledged that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved;

Capital Programme

- (4) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme, as set out at paragraph 7.1 of the report, be noted;
- (5) the latest capital expenditure position as at 30 June 2024 of £12.106m, as set out at paragraph 7.12 of the report, and the latest full year forecast is £85.497m, as set out at paragraph 7.13 of the report, be noted;
- (6) **the Council be recommended to approve** a supplementary capital estimate of £0.022m for the Enterprise Arcade project funded by capital receipts, as set out at paragraph 7.7 of the report;
- (7) **the Council be recommended to approve** a supplementary capital estimate of £0.498m for the ICT Cyber Security project funded by external borrowing, as set out at paragraph 7.8 of the report;
- (8) **the Council be recommended to approve** a supplementary capital estimate of £0.128m for the Committee Meeting Microphone and Live Streaming System funded by external borrowing, as set out at paragraphs 7.9 – 7.10 of the report;
- (9) **the Council be recommended to approve** a supplementary capital estimate of £0.040m for the Red Rose Park works funded by capital receipts, as set out at paragraph 7.11 of the report;
- (10) it be noted that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director - Corporate Services and Commercial to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as set out at paragraphs 7.16-7.18 of the report; and

Prudential Indicators

- (11) the forecasts for the Prudential Indicators relating to capital expenditure and financing as at 30th June 2024 be noted.

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Reasons for the Decisions:

To ensure the Cabinet was informed of the current position in relation to the 2024/25 revenue budget.

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

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

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

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they could be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

To ensure the Cabinet was informed of prudential indicators, key performance information and key risk management areas.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

28. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To comply with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, notice had been published regarding the intention to consider the following matter in private for the reason set out below.

Decision Made:

That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

29. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Decision Made:

Due to members of the public refusing to leave the committee room the meeting was adjourned and moved venue temporarily whilst the exempt item was considered.

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30. ASSET DISPOSAL - PENDLE DRIVE, LITHERLAND - EXEMPT APPENDICES

The Cabinet considered exempt information provided by the Executive Director - Regeneration, Economy and Assets in relation to the Asset Disposal - Pendle Drive, Litherland (Minute No. 32 below refers). The exempt information provided affected St. Oswald Ward.

Decision Made:

That the exempt information be considered as part of the report in relation to the Asset Disposal - Pendle Drive, Litherland (Minute No. 32 below refers).

Reasons for the Decision:

The exempt information was required to be considered with the information in the public domain in order that an informed decision might be made.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None – alternative options within non-exempt part of report.

31. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

Decision Made:

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

32. ASSET DISPOSAL - PENDLE DRIVE, LITHERLAND

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Regeneration, Economy and Assets requesting approval to enter into a conditional contract for the asset disposal of land and buildings at Pendle Drive, Litherland to Aldi Stores Ltd. Following the disposal, a new food store development would be brought forward pending planning approval. The report indicated that in January 2020, the Cabinet approved the disposal of the first phase of surplus assets to generate capital receipts in support of the Growth and Strategic Investment and Framework for Change Programmes. Officers were provided with the authority to negotiate terms and conditions for each disposal in line with delegated authority set out in the Council's Asset Disposal Policy. Brooklea House, Pendle House, and Pendle Drive were three unoccupied buildings located on the site known as Pendle Drive, Litherland ("Pendle Drive"). The site was in the first phase of the disposal programme. In 2019, the Council was approached by a food store operator to acquire part of the site, however the operator withdrew from the deal in June 2023. Since that date a separate approach had been made by Aldi Stores Ltd in January 2024 to

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acquire part of the site for a food store scheme. Principle Heads of Terms had been agreed subject to Council approval and intrusive site investigations were in progress as part of the feasibility work to inform a planning application.

The following exempt appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Heads of Terms for Freehold Disposal
- Appendix 2 – Site Plan – Land to be acquired by Aldi Stores Ltd

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the sale of the Council's freehold interest in land at Pendle Drive (shown edged red on the plan within Appendix 2) to Aldi Stores Ltd on the basis of the Heads of Terms detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the deduction of up to 4% of the eventual capital receipt to cover the professional fees and incidental costs of disposal as set out in Capital Accounting Regulations, be approved;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be authorised to complete the necessary legal formalities in relation to the completion of land sale contracts;
- (4) it be noted that demolition of all buildings at Pendle Drive (including those on the land to be retained by the Council) will be demolished under licence agreement in autumn 2024; and
- (5) it be noted that officers in Property Services and Housing and Investment Services are exploring options for the disposal of the remainder of land (c.1.14acres) in the Council's ownership for housing development. A proposal will be brought forward to Members in line with delegations for future consideration.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The disposal would maximise the land receipt to support the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme. Alternative use value (residential) would not generate a capital receipt of a comparable level. The opportunity cost would be the loss of a capital receipt as currently projected in the disposal programme.

The disposal of land adhered to two criteria: that each capital receipt forecasted represented financial "best consideration" and where the loss of other opportunities was quantifiable and did not undermine wider service delivery and economic development/ regeneration priorities.

The Heads of Terms required that Aldi Stores Ltd demolished all buildings across the site, including Pendle House which was located on the retained

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land. This ensured that the Council had no capital expenditure ask to progress demolition work and was left with a de-risked opportunity.

The final disposal price would meet best consideration requirements in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and complied with the approved processes within the Asset Disposal Policy. An independent valuation would be commissioned once abnormal costs had been confirmed.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Option 1 – “Dispose of the whole site to a Registered Provider”: market all the Pendle Drive site to Registered Providers/ housing developers.
Risk: The site had marginal financial viability for residential use and this option was discounted as it secured only a nominal land receipt. The Council would likely have to commit capital up front to progress demolition works to de-risk the site. Redevelopment of part for a retail store was the only way to secure a significant capital receipt to the Council.

Option 2 – “Do minimum - demolish buildings”: to reduce site management liability and risk of antisocial behaviour.

Risk: This option was not favoured as there would be ongoing management and maintenance costs to the Council. The asset was in the disposals programme – the disposal of the site had previously been approved for the very purpose of generating a land receipt to support the delivery of the Framework of Change programme.

Option 3 – “Market the site more widely for sale”: the Council would commence a formal marketing process seeking financial offers.

Risk: a financial appraisal showed that a residential development scheme would only generate a modest land receipt. Officers commissioned a marketing report completed in 2023, which provided no substantive evidence that there were any alternative credible purchasers.

Report Title: Day Opportunities Contracts

Date of meeting:	5 th September 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet		
Report of:	Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member Adult Social Care & Health & Deputy Leader		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

To seek approval to extend existing Day Opportunities contracts.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to approve and note the following:

- (1) The extension of existing Day opportunities contracts for a maximum twelve-month period from 1st October 2024, consisting of an initial six-month extension with the option to extend for a further six-month period, and give authorisation to the Executive Director Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing to approve any extensions beyond the initial six-month extension period.
- (2) Note the ongoing work outlined in this report regarding the establishment of longer-term commissioning arrangements for Day Opportunities.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

1.1 Day services are places and opportunities for supporting people with an assessed need during the day. They can be offered within a building-based location or within the community.

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- 1.2 They help people to have a fulfilling life: they provide the opportunity to take part in various interests and activities, make friends, develop relationships, gain new skills and enable people to make a positive contribution to the community. Day opportunities also provide support to carers by means of creating respite so that they can pursue their own interests outside of their caring role.
- 1.3 Sefton Adult Social Care currently has thirteen contracts in place with Providers and in September 2023 Cabinet approved the extension of these interim contracts for a further twelve months whilst a procurement exercise was being formulated.

Current Position

- 1.4 Current contracts expire on 30th September 2024, and work on formulating the future procurement approach is ongoing with the procurement opportunity scheduled to be advertised in October 2024, with the new commissioning framework envisaged to commence on 1st April 2025.
- 1.5 The new framework will encompass the issuing of new contracts to those Providers accepted onto it, which will be underpinned with an updated service delivery model.
- 1.6 This model has been co-produced with People who use Services and their Advocates to ensure that it:
 - Focusses on the individual, their strengths, choices, assets and goals through person centred planning.
 - Focusses on the outcomes that people in receipt of services and carers wish to achieve.
 - Provides support that enables the person to access a range of opportunities in the wider and their own community as an active and equal citizen.
 - Maximises the opportunity to use personal budgets or direct payments to access support or activities of the person's choice.
 - Makes the most of a vibrant borough, ensuring access to the wide range of opportunities Sefton has to offer.
- 1.7 To ensure that the model is fully developed, to both reflect the above and consider wider issues such as the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on both demand for services and the types of services and support people want, finalisation of the procurement approach and its implementation has been delayed.

2. Financial Implications:

Revenue costs will be met from the existing Adult Social Care budget. There are currently thirteen contracts with a combined total current annual contract value in the region of £2.575m. There are no capital costs associated with the recommendations contained in this report.

3. Legal Implications:

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance

4. Corporate Risk Implications:

These are historic contracts which are being further extended. The Council seeks to manage and mitigate any risks by commencing a procurement exercise for a new commissioning framework. The six-month extension is intended to allow the Council time to run a compliant procurement process.

5. Staffing HR Implications:

None.

6. Conclusion:

- 6.1 There is a need to extend current contractual arrangements in place with Providers to ensure continuation of formal contracts whilst the new commissioning framework is being implemented.
- 6.2 As the current contracts are scheduled to expire on 30th September 2024 and the new framework would be established on 1st April 2025, it is proposed that new interim contracts are issued for this six-month period.
- 6.3 However, to consider any potential delays to the establishment of the new commissioning framework, it is also proposed that authority is given to issue these new interim contracts for the initial six-month period but to include a provision within them for a further potential extension of up to six months.
- 6.4 It is also recommended that delegated authority is given to the Executive Director Adult Social Care, Health & Wellbeing to issue the new interim contracts and to authorise any potential further extension periods to them.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not extending contracts – this option was rejected as there is a need to ensure that formal contractual arrangements remain in place, despite the historic nature of these contracts. The Council seeks to manage and mitigate this by commencing a procurement exercise for a new commissioning framework. The six-month extension is intended to allow the Council time to run a compliant procurement process.

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

(Please note that Council have agreed care Page 19 should be treated like a

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protected characteristic.)

Impact on Children and Young People:

None. Services will continue to be delivered in the same way to people, including younger adults aged 18 and above.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD7735/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5835/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Engagement has taken place with Day Opportunities providers regarding extension of contracts and ongoing engagement will take place as part of the future procurement exercise as outlined in this report.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

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

Contact Officer:	Rebecca Bond
Telephone Number:	0151 934 3253
Email Address:	Rebecca.Bond@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Report Title: Sefton Child Poverty Strategy:

Date of meeting:	5 September 2024 11 September 2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Health and Wellbeing Board		
Report of:	Executive Director (Operations and Partnerships)		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing Cabinet Member - Children Schools and Families		
Wards affected:	All wards		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress and next steps of the [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#)¹, by reporting on the following.

- A brief overview of the child poverty strategy’s goals, priorities, and suggested actions.
- A review of progress using the accountability framework.
- Overview of findings and recommendations of the LGA Health in All Policy Team (July 2024).
- Discussion on arrangements for implementation, governance, and monitoring.

A communications plan to raise the profile of the Child Poverty Strategy.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet

- (1) Recognise the progress made to date and support plans to further progress action on child poverty in Sefton.
- (2) Note the plans set out in this report to raise the profile of the Sefton Child Poverty

¹ [Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](http://sefton.gov.uk)

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Strategy and strengthen governance.

Health and Wellbeing Board

That the report be noted.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Cabinet has a governance role to provide oversight and support for the delivery and progress of Sefton Council priorities². This report sets out information about progress in the year and a half following its launch and plans for its further implementation in 2024 and beyond, including feedback from an independent review by the Local Government Association, and a communications plan.

1.1 Introduction.

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress and next steps of the [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#)³, by reporting on the following.

- i. A brief overview of the child poverty strategy's goals, priorities, and suggested actions.
- ii. A review of progress using the progress and accountability framework.
- iii. Overview of findings and recommendations of the LGA Health in All Policy Team (July 2024).
- iv. Discussion on arrangements for implementation, governance, and monitoring.
- v. A communications plan to raise the profile of the Child Poverty Strategy.

1.2 Brief overview of the child poverty strategy's goals, priorities, and suggested actions.

The Council declared a poverty emergency in 2021. The Sefton Child Poverty Strategy was developed during 2022 and launched that December. Staff in the public health team led and co-ordinated the development process, which brought together a broad range of evidence and experience. A more detailed description of the strategy's background and development is provided in a recent report to the Health and Wellbeing Board.⁴

² [Sefton Council Corporate Plan 2023 to 2026](#)

³ [Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Health and Wellbeing Board 06/03/2024 14:00 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#) Item 7, page 49, 1.1



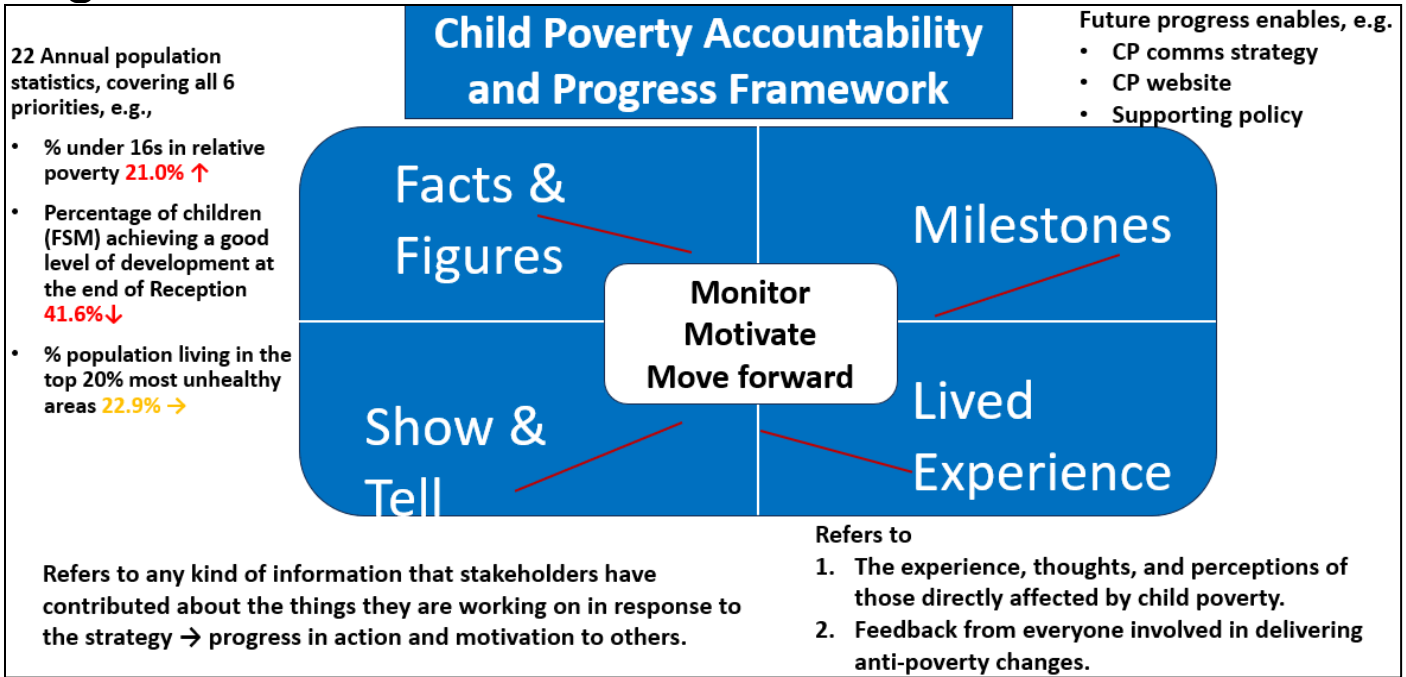
The image above shows the goals, themes, and priorities in the Child Poverty Strategy and how these relate to the suggested actions listed under each of six priority areas. Important points to note are:

- The **goals 1-3**, address prevention of both root causes and unequal effects of child poverty, in the present and future lives of today's children.
- The **pockets, prospects, and places themes**, used to group the **six priorities** were inspired by Scottish strategy on child poverty and help to structure a complex issue.
- The strategy has a **long lifespan (to 2030)** in keeping with the scale and range of changes that are needed, but this does not rule out necessary updates. The temporal context for child poverty reduction is often (rightly) described as being 'inter-generational'. However, many meaningful improvements in the lives of children can be achieved more quickly than this.
- The intended **audience** for the strategy is not limited to Sefton Council.
- The **actions** that were suggested and endorsed during the drafting process are presented in more general, rather than specific terms. They do not constitute a true action plan since they are not tied to specified timescales or action owners.
- The strategy has been developed with a focus on **assets-based changes** that can be **initiated and driven by partners working at a Sefton level**.

1.3 Review of progress using the progress and accountability framework.

The Child Poverty Strategy is monitored and driven forward using its own progress and accountability framework, which comprises four domains that help reflect the complexity of the challenges. The graphic below serves to illustrate the complementary nature and purpose of each domain.

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1.3.1 Facts and figures

This element of the framework is currently comprised of 22 quantitative indicators (appended to this report), linked to the strategy’s six priorities, which are sourced from the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot indicator dashboard, Fingertips data profiles from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), and the Thriving Places Index. Due to the lag in data collection and reporting no data is yet available to describe changes in year one of the strategy (2023/24). This highlights the importance of including other sources of information to help develop a picture of need and progress.

1.3.2 Milestones

In a paper presented to health and wellbeing board in March 2024, the following year two milestones were identified:

Year two milestone	Progress report
Develop a year 2 communications strategy, including Sefton.gov micro-site, and topic plus timing for the next child poverty ‘conference’ event or alternative.	See Communications plan (appendix). A further topic for a learning or conference event has not been decided upon. The strategy has a dedicated webpage. The communications plan will include proposals for developing this function.
Identify and share simple tools to enable frontline and other services to systematically mitigate disadvantages associated with child	Members of the public health team and education excellence have commissioned a poverty-proofing© intervention from Children North East, aimed at education

<p>and family poverty.</p> <p>Consider funding a Poverty Proofing⁵ audit for school/s or another frontline Council service.</p> <p>Consider commissioning practically focused training to support more equitable design and delivery.</p>	<p>settings and cultural settings (see appendices for a summary). This will involve training, and learning about practical low or no-cost changes organisations can make to limit the effects of growing up in a low-income household.</p> <p>If the two-year pilot is successful, this will be mainstreamed across all settings. The public health team has had some initial discussions about the potential to commission training resources that could be included as part of the CLC’s offer.</p>
<p>Identify one or two other policy changes, e.g., introduction of a health impact assessment policy.</p>	<p>Initial support and insight from the LGA Health in All Policy Team has been the first step towards achieving this milestone.</p>

1.3.3 Show and Tell

The ‘Show and tell’ section refers to any kind of information that stakeholders have contributed about the things they are working on or intending to work on in response to the strategy. Sharing innovation and good practice, which is gathered as part of progress monitoring also has a role to play in spurring others to act. A short ‘Your Sefton, Your Say’ online survey was distributed ahead of the most recent Place themed event on 18 January 2024. Some of the achievements shared by Council staff and partners are listed below:

- New group set up to work on **housing needs of young care leavers**
- The Atkinson **Young Curators Programme** engages young people in art and culture as audience member and active participant
- Multi-agency **pilot to reduce risks of lung illness** in childhood – cold, damp, pollution etc
- **Library service** pioneering a digital programme and issuing free data at 3 libraries
- Council departments and NHS, local business are working with the **Caring Business Charter and Sefton@work** to provide training and employment opportunities to our young people in care.
- **Sefton@work** and others are helping people overcome barriers to accessing work, e.g. back to work starter pack
- From Jan 24, people with care experience who apply for a job with Sefton Council have been eligible for a guaranteed interview if they meet the essential criteria of a job post and reference their care experience in their application form.
- The council has recruited an **affordable living officer**

⁵ [Poverty Proofing© Services - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](#)

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- Free and discounted leisure services are available to vulnerable children and **families**, including our **children in care**.
- **Sefton housing services** have set up the Sefton Strategic Housing Commissioning **Group** as part of the new housing strategy.
- Progress made in bringing public health, communities, NHS and voluntary sector partners together to address **infant food insecurity**
- NHS Cheshire and Mersey Integrated Care Board have signed up to the **care leaver covenant**, amongst other things this facilitates care experienced young people into NHS careers.
- Alder Hey Children’s Hospital have committed to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families. This includes the mobilisation of **Sophy’s legacy** which addresses hunger in siblings of those children using services and targeted free parking for families living with low income.
- **Elevate have been working with care experienced young people** to enhance awareness of employment and training opportunities. This includes work experience, finding bespoke placement.
- **Housing associations** are supporting families, signing posting to sources of advice and practical assistance.

1.3.4 Lived experience

Below, are some examples of quotations and themes from the in-depth ‘Understanding Child Poverty in Sefton’ commissioned from Drs Rust-Ryan. A formal proposal for changes to the strategy resulting from this important information needs to be developed following the publication of the report. The essential importance of understanding and listening to the priorities and experiences of children and families is emphasised in the findings of the LGA report.

Theme	Example evidence (<i>direct quotations</i> and report extracts)
Trade-offs	<i>“The taxi to the community pantry costs £5.”</i>
Poverty awareness.	<i>“Some people have more money than they know what to do with, some manage and are okay, some struggle, and some have nothing. It’s those with too much money who make the rules and don’t know what it is like for everyone else. It shouldn’t be like this. Everyone should be okay.”</i>
Fear and safety.	<i>“We don’t play out at the front – Mum says it’s not safe. It’s not safe here. People drive fast and there are gangs. There’re nice places around here, but some people start trouble and some smash things.”</i> ‘Only two of the 20 families could afford household insurance.’

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Sacrifice and guilt.	Children spoke about wanting to relieve their parents of the challenge of living on a too low income. <i>“I want to be a member of the government so that I can change how they are doing things... Then people like my mum won’t have to struggle and worry about money anymore.”</i>
Gratitude.	Children were often keenly aware of the things their parents went without to give them the things they need. ‘They spoke about how their parent(s) wanted them to do well at school because it would help them secure a good future for themselves despite their family’s current situation.’
Money and influence.	‘Parents felt that growing up in a family facing financial hardship clearly impacted on children’s life-chances. Having sufficient money was regarded as being an important determinant of future success as it ‘opened doors’ in relation to education, training, and employment. Also, where families live was regarded as determining opportunities.’
Shrinking world.	‘She talked about how families with more money can afford to go on holiday and enjoy leisure activities. This meant that families with more money could go places and do more, while poorer families are limited to places such socialising at home or at family or friends’ houses.’
Change and ideas.	‘[One] child said that she would like to see families giving away things they do not need to people who might need them: <i>“...whatever you don’t want in your house, you could give it to them”</i> . <i>“Financial struggles not only have financial impacts on children and adults, but also on people’s mental health – adults need help as well as children.”</i> [Sefton child]

1.4 Overview of findings and recommendations of the LGA Health in All Policy Team (July 2024).

Below is a summary of the key findings reported.

- There is a strong consensus amongst Council Members, officers and leaders, and partners who were interviewed that child poverty is a priority for Sefton.
- Elected members acknowledged the value of the strategy but want to see more evidence of action leading to impactful change.
- Council leaders were not clear about the leadership, governance and monitoring arrangements for the strategy.
- The launch, prospects and places conferences were very well received and enabled partnership working and relationship building.
- There was widespread recognition that public health has achieved a lot with a small team, but that no team can effectively deliver the strategy on its own.
- Partners identified the influence of the strategy, including adopting child poverty as a priority in the Children and Young People’s plan, and a respiratory pilot with Alder Hey clinicians, which works on poverty-proofing this

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In the comments on areas for further development the LGA noted the Council should,

- Decide who is best placed to lead on the continued development, coordination and implementation of the Strategy and provide the necessary resources and support for them to do so.
- Agree which priorities will have the biggest impact on children living in poverty and should provide the focus for partners over the next few years.
- Consider whether the strategy should be more of an overarching document, aligning strategy, influencing and shaping policy and activity, and driving change through doing things differently,
- Or, whilst not mutually exclusive, consider whether the strategy needs a delivery plan with clear actions, initiatives, targets, outcomes and performance reports to assess impact.
- Identify how people experiencing or at risk of child poverty could be more effectively engaged and involved in the strategy, so their experience and insight can be utilised to develop and target interventions and assess impact.
- Continue with the pockets, prospects and place network conferences on a regular basis, using them to report on progress, maintain momentum, nurture engagement, review the strategy and ensure efforts to tackle child poverty remain aligned and visible to partners and residents.

1.5 Discussion on arrangements for implementation, governance, and monitoring.

1.5.1 Implementation

To date, public health has led and co-ordinated implementation and monitoring of the strategy from within its own financial and staffing resource. This work has been positively supported by other Council and partnership leaders. In the future, public health's leadership on improving health determinants and inequalities will be supported by a Public Health Advanced Practitioner for wider determinants, whose role will include programme development and management for child poverty reduction.

1.5.2 Governance

Previously, updates on the progress of the child poverty strategy were received by the Cabinet Member Reference Group and the Health and Wellbeing Board. Now, oversight and reporting will be linked to the Children and Young People's Board, which has identified addressing child poverty as one of its priorities, and thereby to the Health and Wellbeing Board. A child poverty steering group will be created to co-ordinate the delivery of an annually agreed set of priority milestones, and to ensure that work is conducted in line with the principles of good governance and good quality. The Director of Public Health will report progress to the Children and Young Peoples Board.

1.5.3 Monitoring

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As briefly described in section 1.3 of this report above, a multi-dimensional framework has been developed that is appropriate to the needs of the strategy. This approach was designed with the following qualities in mind, to

- **Enable progress that is flexible and responsive** rather than becoming overly and rigidly focused on numerically measurable outcomes.
- **Minimise duplication** of established reporting and monitoring. Use information that is already collected, or which can be collected incidentally through activities that also support dissemination and delivery of the strategy, e.g., stakeholder events.
- **Be lean** – monitoring processes and activities are adequate and sufficient; not unduly burdensome or liable to pull focus away from driving anti-poverty changes.
- **Add value** – by acting as an invitation to others to share things that they are doing differently to tackle child poverty, the framework can act as an exchange, taking in valuable learning and inspiration that can be used to promote change elsewhere. In time, this can become a visible and meaningful way of holding one another to account.
- **Monitor progress as well as outcomes.**
- **Capture the voice of the child and families** and reflect what matters.
- Demonstrate dimensions of **quality**⁶.

It is important to recognise that outside of a research study, it is not possible to definitively attribute changes in the level of child poverty or young people's health and educational outcomes to actions initiated by this strategy. It is still appropriate and important to monitor child poverty statistics, but it is also necessary to look to other types of information that can reflect where progress is and is not being made and how this is being felt in the lives of local families and communities.

1.6 Communications plan to raise the profile of the Child Poverty Strategy.

The initial impetus to develop the child poverty strategy came from a rapid review of child poverty in Sefton in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. Sefton's local child poverty strategy has been positively received, including by staff from the Institute of Health Equity and the membership of the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot Communities Steering Group.

On 19 July 2024, a draft report – 'A rapid situational analysis on child and family poverty in Cheshire and Merseyside', prepared by staff from the public health collaborative, Champs, was presented to Directors of Public Health. Sefton's leading work on developing a child poverty strategy and commitment to tackle poverty as a whole system issue, was mentioned in the report and acknowledged at the accompanying workshop.

The Government has recently announced the creation of a new Child Poverty Task Force, led by ministers for education and the department of work and pensions, and a Child Poverty Unit in the Cabinet Office which will begin work on developing a Child Poverty Strategy for England.

This context shows there is an important opportunity to promote and share Sefton's learning and experience of developing a local child poverty strategy at a regional and national level, and potential to influence policy decisions. A summary communications plan for the child poverty

⁶ [Quality in public health: a shared responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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strategy is included in the appendices of this report and addresses how the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy will be promoted and publicised. Aside from identifying external routes of influence, the plan also covers more operational aspects of communications that are inherent to the delivery of largescale action and change. For example, change-makers must,

- Understand **they can act** on child poverty.
- Know about options for **what they can realistically do**.
- Be **sufficiently motivated** to act.
- **External change-makers** must be able to **access the knowledge and know-how** to select and implement pro-equity, anti-poverty changes in how they work or deliver services. (An element of information self-service e.g., via an online micro-site needs to be supported).
- **Council-based change-makers** must know what tackling child poverty means for their role and day to day work. (Communicating about training and learning options, recognising successes, and supporting change in practice)
- **Everyone, including children and family themselves** must be **able to see (and have others see) how small and bigger changes benefit low-income families and the community more widely**. This 'show and tell' element of communications is important to motivate and sustain new anti-poverty ways of operating.

2. Financial Implications

There are no new significant revenue costs associated with the contents of this report.
There are no new capital costs associated with the contents of this report.

3. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

No corporate risk has been identified.

5 Staffing HR Implications

The actions and intentions in this report are intended to be achieved from within the existing resources of the Council and its partners. Implementation of actions to achieve the goals of the Child Poverty Strategy is founded on an assets-based approach.

The strategy proposes changes that are achievable through adjustments in practice stemming from greater awareness of child poverty and simple actions to mitigate impacts.

6 Conclusion

There is a strong case for consolidating the strategy and enabling all departments to take responsibility and action on the issue of child poverty.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

An alternative was not considered. The Council's vision and core purpose demonstrate its continued commitment to support the most vulnerable, reduce poverty and its short- and long-term impacts, and to foster prosperity and good prospects for all. Advancing strategic and co-ordinated action on the issue of child poverty is aligned with the Council's responsibilities towards children and has co-benefits across the priorities expressed in our Core Purpose and Council Values

Equality Implications:

The equality implications have been identified and risk remains. Inequality is inherent in the subject matter of this report concerning child poverty. An equality impact assessment was completed alongside the current child poverty strategy, and mitigations to maximise inclusivity and diversity are ongoing considerations in the implementation of the strategy.

Impact on Children and Young People:

Set out in full in the report.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact.

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. However, implementation of Place actions and priorities as set out in the Child Poverty Strategy are considered supportive of the Council's work to reduce the scale and impact of climate change, particularly unequal impacts on health.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7737/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5837/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Local Government Association (LGA) were engaged to review the ongoing development and implementation of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy, specifically,

- Awareness of the strategy, its purpose, priorities and actions amongst partners
- Commitment from partners to the Strategy and working together to ensure its implementation and delivery
- Understanding what partners are dPage 31port the implementation of the strategy

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- Identifying any opportunities and barriers to successful implementation

The LGA team's findings and recommendations are included in section 1.4 in the main body of this report.

Implementation Date for the Decision :

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Helen Armitage Anna Nygaard
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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Summary of communications plan

LGA report

Synopsis of poverty-proofing proposal

Child poverty annual data tracker

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

The Sefton Child Poverty Strategy with supporting documents is published on the Sefton Council website [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#).

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Summary of Communications Plan for Child Poverty

July 2024

Introduction

Sefton’s child poverty communications plan sets out how Sefton Council will communicate it’s work around childhood poverty in line with the aims set out in its Child Poverty Strategy. It is a high-level document which covers all key aspects of communications and sets out ambitions for delivery over a phased approach.

The plan covers the key areas of internal and external communications, brand management and promotion, campaign work, consistency, digital communications, stakeholder engagement, research and learning and will include a specific focus on the priority areas we have identified in phase one which will be the focus of our work for the next two years. This will include, education and schools’ communications, culture and leisure communications, charity communications, healthcare and community and is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Priority work areas identified as ‘Phase 1’

Area of Work	Date
Education & Schools Children’s NE Commissioned Programme	October 24 – October 26
Respiratory Programme	January 24 – March 26
Culture Services Children’s NE Commissioned Programme	Sept 24
VCF Parenting 2000 & Living Well Sefton	April 24 - March 29
Corporate Training Team	TBC
Healthcare Social Prescribing	TBC
Recruitment of Advanced Practitioners – Social Determinants	July 24 Appointment due Jan 25
Creation of Steering Group to Tackle Child Poverty	September - December 24
Sound City Apprenticeships AW to insert date	Date

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Context

In 2021 Sefton Council declared a poverty emergency and in December 2022 published its Child Poverty Strategy. Led by the Council's Public Health team, the Child Poverty Strategy was informed by a broad range of evidence including epidemiology, local insight, national surveys, examples of local child poverty strategies developed elsewhere and a discrete piece of local research, funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership's Marmot Communities Programme. This funding was used to commission a qualitative insight study to capture the voices of individuals with first-hand and near experience of living in poverty.

Over the last two and a half years, three senior level conferences have now taken place and the recommendations from over three hundred delegates have been considered as opportunities to tackle child poverty. The Public Health Team have taken a whole system partnership approach with a focus on asset-based changes that can be initiated and driven by partners working at a local level. It is obvious that a clear and area specific communications plan is now required to support our internal and external communications.

The focus of the strategy crosses three core themes:

- **Pockets** – maximising the financial resources of families on low incomes.
- **Prospects** – improving the life chances of children in poverty.
- **Places** – creating connected, inclusive and distinctive environments where everyone can enjoy the good things in life.

The aims of the strategy are:

- reducing the level of poverty and time spent in poverty now.
- minimising the harmful effects of poverty on educational achievement, health and wellbeing now and later in life.
- Preventing future poverty for today's children and young people.

The Approach

The communications plan describes the consistent, organisation-wide approach the Council will take to tackling the causes and effects, immediate and long-term effects of growing up with poverty and how Sefton Council will communicate this work to a range of audiences. All communication related to Sefton Council's Child Poverty Strategy will have the objective of improving the prospects of children and young people in Sefton affected by poverty. It will build upon our research and understanding of these issues and our work with those people directly affected by them and the sharing of good practice and new ways of working that are shown to make a positive difference.

The plan outlines roles and responsibilities across the Corporate Communications Team, Council staff and partners and the Child Poverty Steering Group and makes clear the support and resource required to deliver the communications for the Child Poverty Strategy.

The plan emphasises that no one organisation can successfully implement the Strategy, therefore endorses the importance of different departments and organisations working together more effectively in key areas such as jobs, skills, housing and health. This work will be coordinated by recruitment of an Advanced Practitioner in Public Health and directed by a multi-agency partnership Child Poverty Steering Group. Communications and marketing, future priority setting, performance management and evaluation will be managed within this group and all liaison with Sefton's Corporate Communications Team will be coordinated through this route. Creation of a Steering Group with appropriate governance will ensure communications are coordinated and on message. The Steering Group will also be responsible to capture what has been delivered and achieved as a direct result of the Strategy and how it will act as an influencer and driver for change for doing things differently.

A strong brand will support additional resources funding and investment, recruitment and retention, as well as providing reassurance to staff and the wider community about the Council's commitment to tackle child poverty. Through this communications plan, we will outline the approach to raising the profile of child poverty and position Sefton as a local centre of learning and best practice, a nationally leading Council, and as a trusted voice that challenges child poverty both regionally and nationally.

We will work to ensure that all interactions with both the Council and our Sefton partners whether as resident, family member, visitor, stakeholder or staff member ensures child poverty remains central to our work through a focus on the different communication channels including printed materials, the Council environment, support information, the recruitment

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process, digital media including the Council website, social media and staff intranet. We will work with teams across the borough to improve processes and outputs where possible through communications – for example, the recruitment and retention journey, resident communications, and the Council experience.

Evaluation

This plan will be supported by an additional phased and specific delivery plan which will specify the detailed approach to achieving the objectives and goals identified within this document. As an internal document, the delivery plan will be reviewed on a biannual basis to ensure it remains current and aligned with the changing landscape and needs of the Council. It will be measured against its objectives and qualitative and quantitative metrics.

Communications will be a standing item for the Steering Group and will include key metrics around external and internal communications, social media and digital as well as regular updates to Sefton Council's Executive Director, Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

It is recommended that these processes are continued, with additional evaluation metrics identified and reported on, dependent on further work around key objectives and deliverables.

Sefton

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Espoke support – Development and implementation of the Sefton
Child Anti-poverty Strategy

April – June 2024

Marcus Warnes, Andrea Fallon and Colin Maclean – LGA Associates

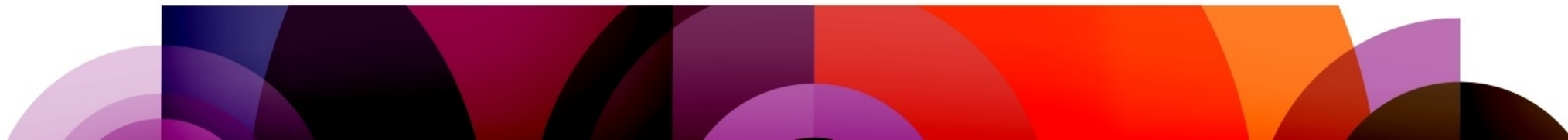
Approach

- The scope agreed for bespoke support to Sefton MBC and partners is to review the ongoing development and implementation of the Sefton Child Anti-poverty Strategy, specifically:
 - Awareness of the Strategy, its purpose, priorities and actions amongst partners
 - Commitment from partners to the Strategy and working together to ensure its implementation and delivery
 - Understanding what partners are doing to support the implementation of the Strategy
 - Identifying any opportunities and barriers to successful implementation
- We held non-attributable conversations with leaders and other key stakeholders
- We agreed to provide initial feedback to senior executives
- We agreed to provide a final report and feedback a presentation containing key messages, areas for consideration and next steps



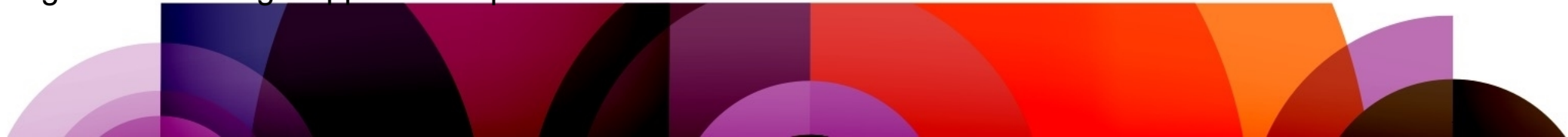
Key Messages

- Everyone we spoke to was aware of the Strategy, its priorities and principles. People recognised that poverty is complex and multi-faceted, but the strategy has a lot in it, and it may be beneficial to initially focus on the priorities that would deliver the greatest benefit to children in poverty.
- People said they were committed to tackling child poverty and to implementing the Strategy. However, the level of commitment varied and more could be done taking a whole system approach with partners to align planning, decision making and investment with the Strategy.
- It is not clear where leadership of the Strategy sits. Some felt that it is a corporate responsibility, others that the Council's public health team was best placed to lead and coordinate delivery. Most people were unable to say what had been delivered and achieved as a direct result of the Strategy. Is it a compendium of existing activity, or a catalyst for new initiatives to tackle child poverty? Some said this didn't matter, that the Strategy should influence as a driver for change and doing things differently. Others wanted a delivery plan with actions, metrics and performance reports.
- People recognised that no one organisation can successfully implement the Strategy. Whilst many were acutely aware of the constraints posed by national policy and funding restrictions, they identified opportunities for the Council and its partners to work together more effectively in key areas such as jobs, skills, housing and health.
- People were very positive about the work done in raising awareness of the Strategy, most notably the network conferences, but more could be done to directly engage with people living in poverty.



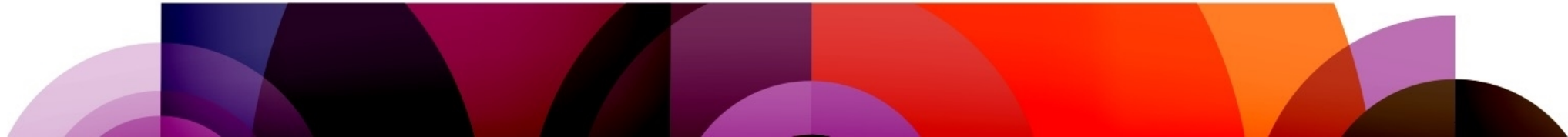
Awareness of the Strategy

- Most people both within and external to the Council said they are aware of the Strategy and understood its purpose. We heard a consistent articulation of its priorities and principles and examples of where different Council departments are responsible for the delivery of actions. We heard support for the public health team and their leadership in developing the Strategy.
- Several people said that the Strategy recognised that poverty is complex and multi-faceted, but consequently there is a lot in it with too many priorities. It might benefit from a focus on those that would deliver the most impactful and tangible benefits to children and their families.
- People generally recognised that the Strategy is very ambitious, intentionally given the scale of the challenge. Also, that strategies had sometimes been developed in silos and this Strategy needed to cut across and be embedded in organisations' core business if it was to make a difference and deliver change.
- We heard that the focus on pockets, prospects and places sought to avoid stigmatising and blaming people for being in or at risk of poverty, instead demonstrating a commitment to developing pathways out of poverty into employment, education, skills and training.
- Many people said that the priorities were well-evidenced, had benefitted from extensive consultation and had been well-communicated amongst partners and communities. However, others said that careful consideration should be given as to what is communicated to whom and why, as high-level strategy will have no relevance to those most affected by poverty and we need to demonstrate the difference it is making.
- We heard from some that there needs to be a greater connection between the Strategy and children's services, which are rated inadequate, and the children's improvement plan. The work to improve children's services is seen as somewhat separate, understandably focussed on immediate improvements and would benefit from a longer-term strategic approach to prevention.



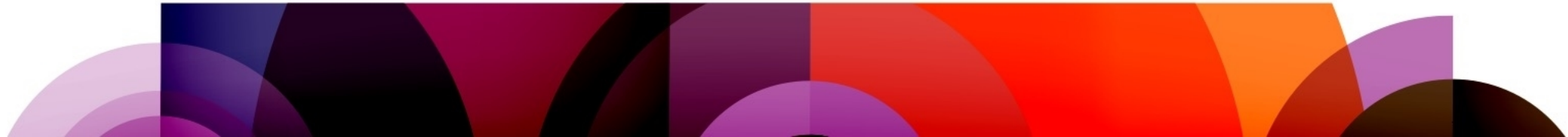
Commitment to the Strategy

- We heard clear commitment to tackling child poverty from people and organisations, and that the Strategy is integral to that. However, we heard that commitment varied across and within sectors and that the links to it are not always made when planning and investment decisions are made, children's services being an area mentioned by some people. Also, that more needs to be done to capture activity and local interventions making a difference, e.g. third sector initiatives around warm spaces, food security and the cost of living; schools around free meals and clothing.
- We heard that many partners are very committed to the Strategy and its implementation. The Council's Corporate Plan is being refreshed, the Strategy and its priorities will be embedded within it and reflected in executive's objectives and responsibilities. The ICB has protected its inequalities funding and is investing in line with local priorities in Sefton.
- We were given examples of work across partners, departments and portfolios to a joined-up approach to tackling immediate issues and longer-term strategy, and its impact on core business, e.g. action with partners to address air quality and damp and mould in houses and the consequent respiratory conditions and illness; PCN primary care hubs. Some people questioned where the leadership of the Strategy is coming from. We heard that whilst child poverty is everyone's business, someone needs to lead on it, coordinating delivery and reporting on progress. Some saw this as the responsibility of the public health team. Others that this was a shared, corporate leadership responsibility of executives. Others that this sits with elected members, specifically cabinet members and portfolio holders, ensuring linkages across jobs, training, education, housing, etc. Some people suggested that it should sit with the DCS and be closely linked to the children services improvement plan, to raise its profile and embed it in core services.
- We were told by some that recent changes in political leadership could impact commitment from the Council. Others that elected members remain committed, tackling child poverty was at the heart of Council decision making and that the changes present an opportunity to refresh that commitment and relaunch the Strategy.



Action to support implementation

- Whilst we heard that the Strategy and approach to tackling child poverty is widely supported, some people questioned whether anyone was doing anything different as a result. We heard very few examples of actions taken as a direct result of the Strategy.
- Some people said that existing activity and initiatives had largely been rebranded and presented in line with the Strategy. That the Strategy has become a compendium of existing activity rather than the Strategy being a driver of change resulting in new, impactful initiatives. For example, that initiatives aimed at getting people into employment would have happened with or without the Strategy. Likewise, the development of integrated care teams in the PCNs.
- Some people questioned whether this mattered, as rather than delivering specific, new actions, the Strategy is about doing things differently, influencing through its priorities and principles, ensuring they were considered when setting policy, making decisions and committing investment, e.g. refresh of the Council's housing strategy.
- Other people did want a specific action plan for the Strategy that was performance managed, with a delivery dashboard of key output and outcome metrics that is reported to the Council and partners.
- We heard that while the Strategy was well-understood, it could have more impact and influence, acting as a vehicle to challenge the Council and its partners around 'are we doing enough and what more could we do?'
- Most people are clear that the Council can't deliver the Strategy on its own and while some areas were more within its control, e.g. social care, housing, planning and economic development, other areas such as health were not, and the contribution of partners is key to implementation and delivery.
- We heard examples where this is happening, such as collaboration with health partners to identify children and families in or at risk of poverty, a social prescriber to address housing issues, and early intervention to support people to stay away from the front door rather than escalating through pathways into services and long-term care.



Action to support implementation (cont.)

- We heard support for the development of a child poverty unit, led by the public health team, with a post in the VCSE, as some thought partners need to do more to support the implementation of the Strategy. The public health team is small, and we were told that the approach to date has been somewhat piecemeal given competing priorities.
- Some felt there should be more interaction with schools as anchor institutions, whilst being mindful about how much they can sustainably commit in terms of capacity and resource. We were told that support is offered by multi-disciplinary teams working with clusters of schools. Family hubs were also mentioned by several people, delivering one stop services, signposting and referrals to debt, food and family law advice. Both services could be better aligned with the Strategy, as well as collecting data and reporting on outcomes that contribute to its priorities.
- We heard general support for 'poverty-proofing', but more needs to be done to ensure there is a shared understanding across partners.
- Some people said that whilst communication and celebrating achievements is important, more important was that ward councillors and front-line staff are advocates for the Strategy and develop and maintain ongoing conversations with local people and communities to support implementation. We heard that the VCSE sector is key to this with their existing networks and links with communities and service and support offers.
- We heard that NHS organisations were very involved in the Sefton Partnership and a lot of work has gone into understanding the needs of children and families in poverty and working with partners to integrate and tailor services to better meet their needs.



Opportunities and barriers

- We heard that there are wide-ranging opportunities for the Strategy, its priorities and principles to influence and shape initiatives and investments, even if this wasn't explicit in its action plan or a direct consequence of the Strategy.
- People said that the Strategy has been used to influence the Children and Young People Partnership with child poverty as one of the five priorities in its plan. Partners are actively considering what more they can do to support implementation of the Strategy, e.g. understanding why people do not engage with services or access appointments and assessments due to factors such as the cost of transport and providing outreach services as alternatives.
- We heard about opportunities in health and care, making connections with child poverty priorities, such as tackling poor air quality which disproportionately impacts disadvantaged communities with a higher incidence of children living in or at risk of poverty.

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We heard about opportunities to influence the City Region around job creation and skills development, e.g. garnering support for Sefton's Cradle to Career initiative, which is hyperlocal and focussed on developing skills in target wards in line with the Strategy.

- Some people said that the Council and its partners could do more to listen to the people most impacted by child poverty, using a 'you said, we did' approach to communicate progress and impact. This could engender greater involvement that could inform the development of the Strategy and Council's Corporate Plan, and those of partners.
- The network conferences were cited as examples of where this is happening and should continue, raising the profile of child poverty and the Strategy amongst residents, staff and partners, and actions agreed as a result.
- Most people said that action to tackle child poverty was constrained by budgets, investment and cuts in public spending, e.g. 75% of the Council's budget now goes on adults and children's social care, leaving less to invest in employment, skills and other areas that would have a real impact on developing routes out of poverty.



Opportunities and barriers (cont.)

- We heard that there are untapped opportunities to develop a greater role for the VCSE. This could be through better alignment of pathways into services and integrated care using asset-based approaches. We were told that more localised pilots to understand the impact and illustrate benefits of interventions, along with examining how work around families supports anti-poverty outcomes would add value. The use of external grants accessible only to the VCSE to match and maximise the impact of public sector funding was cited as a missed opportunity. People said that some VCSE contracts were relatively dated and a review of how the VCSE is commissioned in line with the strategy was due.
- People are clear that this needs to be a long-term Strategy. We heard that more could be done to engage partners to ensure a whole system approach, to embed the Strategy's priorities and principles and better align partners' strategies, plans and core business with the Strategy. This would help facilitate the bold steps required to change cultures and shift investment to drive sustainable improvements and change for children living in or at risk of poverty. We heard about the crucial role that high quality, affordable housing plays in tackling child poverty. Also, that whilst many of the barriers to meeting housing demand result from national policy, people said that the Council re-entering the social housing market as a provider is important and will help to replace lost privately rented supply. Working closely with people in poverty impacted by poor housing quality and supply to better understand and meet their needs provide a tremendous opportunity to effect change and positively impact their day-to-day experience.
- The role of ward councillors, front-line services, workers and volunteers is seen by some as a clear opportunity to implement the Strategy and understand its impact. We heard that using workforce development to support new roles and making ways of working more sensitive and supportive of children and families in poverty is important, e.g. participation workers, connector posts, local community panels and the use of community assets (services and buildings).



Areas for further consideration

From the conversations we have had, we suggest you:

- Agree which priorities will have the biggest impact on children living in poverty and should provide the focus for partners over the next few years.
 - Decide who is best placed to lead on the continued development, coordination and implementation of the Strategy and provide the necessary resources and support for them to do so.
- Consider whether the Strategy should be more of an overarching document, aligning strategy, influencing and shaping policy and activity, and driving change through doing things differently; Or, whilst not mutually exclusive, consider whether the Strategy needs a delivery plan with clear actions, initiatives, targets, outcomes and performance reports to assess impact.
- Identify how people experiencing or at risk of child poverty could be more effectively engaged and involved in the Strategy, so their experience and insight can be utilised to develop and target interventions and assess impact.
 - Continue with the pockets, prospects and place network conferences on a regular basis, using them to report on progress, maintain momentum, nurture engagement, review the Strategy and ensure efforts to tackle child poverty remain aligned and visible to partners and residents.



Next Steps

- Feedback to the public health team
- Wider sharing of our initial feedback, e.g. with execs, cabinet/elected members and other stakeholders
- Discuss with the LGA any further support that may be required once the report has been shared



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Outline of Poverty Proofing© audit and improvement activity in Sefton educational and cultural settings in partnership with Children North East

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to outline a 2-year programme of Poverty Proofing© audit and improvement in Sefton educational and cultural settings, which has been funded by Public Health and commissioned from Children North East (CNE).¹

2. Strategic context

Sefton Child Poverty Strategy

The strategy has a time horizon up to 2030. Currently, activity is moving from the inception and launch stage to creating the policy and practice conditions for delivery within and close to the Council, and increasingly more widely. Three very successful conference/learning events have helped to cultivate interest, and a sense of common purpose around tackling child poverty. It is essential that this momentum should not be lost. Poverty Proofing© schools is an ideal exemplar of hands-on, sector-led change to introduce now.

The concept of poverty proofing© is included under the **Pockets pillar** of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy² (maximising financial resources of families on low incomes) and the **Prospects pillar** (improving the life chances of children in poverty), which prioritises,

‘Poverty-proofing the way that education, training, and employment opportunities are resourced, designed, and delivered – striving for equity.’

Specific actions suggested by stakeholders which are now included in the strategy are:

- Conduct a Poverty Proofing© audit to ensure that the design and delivery of services and support minimises hidden barriers to participation and maximises benefits.
- Develop and/or adopt a simple framework to help organisations Poverty Proof© design and delivery of services and support.

Education Excellence Strategy

A priority in the strategy is sharpening the focus on disadvantaged pupils including those children living in poverty. The relevance of child poverty is the negative impact it has on pupils’ educational attainment, their wider wellbeing, and their future life chances.

Sefton schools are at the forefront of the cost-of-living crisis and do support children and their families. Adopting a Poverty Proofing© approach to the school day provides a structured way to further minimise school costs for families and increase pupil participation in all aspects of school life.

3. Local need

A briefing on local need supplied to the CNE included the data below, which shows that in 2022 Sefton had larger disadvantage gaps than most local authorities at Key Stage 4 and at age 16-19, and that increases since 2019 were in the middle of the range compared to other LAs in England. One of the largest increases in learning gap at Early Years Foundation Stage since 2019, means that Sefton now has the third largest disadvantage gaps in England (6.8 months) at the end of reception. The

¹ [Poverty Proofing© Services - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://www.children-ne.org.uk/poverty-proofing-services)

² [Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/childhood-poverty-strategy-2022)

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compound increase from a 6.8mths learning lag at age 5 to almost two years at age 16 is striking and concerning.

Data published by the Education Policy Institute³ in 2023 compares the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English local authorities to the attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally and expressing the difference in months of learning or grade points.

Educational stage	Disadvantage gap England, 2022	Disadvantage gap Sefton, 2022	Change in disadvantage gap since 2019, Sefton
Early Years Foundation Stage – end of reception	4.8mths	6.8mths 3 rd largest in England	+2.4mths 2 nd largest change in England
Key stage 2 – end of primary school	10.3mths	10.7mths Mid-ranking gap	+1.0mth Mid-ranking change
Key stage 4 – end of GCSEs	18.8mths	21.8mths Upper third of England LA figures	0.6mth Mid-ranking change
16-19 years education	3.5 grades	4.5 grades Upper third of England LA figures	0.1 grade Mid-ranking change

4. Schools programme outline

The ambition is for all schools in Sefton to participate in Poverty Proofing© audit and to change areas of policy and practice with scope for anti-poverty improvement. The expectation is that in the first round of audit (year one of two) schools would be self-selecting based on prior uptake of the universal learning offer.

Discussions with CNE have concluded that a planned approach focusing on schools and allowing time for consolidation and evaluation would give the best basis upon which to consider scope to extend the programme into other settings, e.g. pre-school/nursery, SEND settings, further education, and family Hubs.

Universal Offer: A calendar of short webinars at convenient times, e.g. lunch hour, evening, and weekend so that interested staff from schools and the Council Education team can learn about child poverty and the concept of Poverty Proofing©. Online Poverty Awareness Training lasting 1 hours 15 minutes will be delivered remotely online by Children North East.

There will be three key touch points each year with 5 dates scheduled at varying times per topic. There will be a focus on celebrating successes and looking to recruit for next round of five schools. This can be delivered alongside the delivery partner model which uses train the trainer methodology (see below).

The three topics covered in the universal training offer will be:

1. **Poverty awareness raising:** a brief introduction to the themes explored in the full Staff Training delivered in participating schools. Themes: definitions of poverty, causes and consequences of poverty, starting to think about Poverty Proofing© and inadvertent barriers that may be in education settings.

³ [Local authority gaps - Education Policy Institute \(epi.org.uk\)](https://www.epi.org.uk)

2. **Disseminating common themes** arising from the early schools' audits, discussing place specific challenges and co-creating some solutions. Staff will be given some key questions to think about. Examples of impact and promising practice will also be highlighted and shared.
3. **Reflection and What next?** – a session that will including speakers from settings where Poverty Proofing© has been delivered (where possible), sharing of promising practice, celebrations of impact that is already being seen in the different settings as well as discussions around considerations for the future.

Delivery Partner Model for schools undertaking Poverty Proofing audit and improvement activity

This begins with a **'pilot' stage**, which covers six schools. There are four elements to the schools' delivery partner model:

1. A two-day 'Train the Trainer' workshop for up to 15 staff.
2. Model of the first audit at a secondary school led by CNE staff.
3. The trained team completes five subsequent audits between them at one another's schools with support and quality assurance from CNE.
4. A review from CNE to explore common themes, impact, and future work.

There are two types of school audit, a full and an abridged version. The **abridged version** covers six areas, uses staff survey, focus groups and 1:1s with parents and governors but does not involve speaking to all pupils. One staff member in the role of delivery partner can complete information gathering in 3-5 days. Given, the competing demands on staff time and other resources in schools, our preference is to use the abridged version in this instance.

Once the pilot stage is complete, trained staff can then deliver Poverty Proofing the School Day abridged audits in other schools at a cost of **£350+VAT** per audit per school. This covers the licence fee and remote support from CNE.

5. Anticipated outputs, outcomes, impact

A logic model for the Prospects theme (appendix) has helped to identify that a Poverty Proofed© school day should,

- Reduce barriers to participation in education and curriculum enrichment activity, with greater benefit for more disadvantaged children.
- Ensure greater poverty awareness for staff and settings.
- Produce poverty sensitive policies and procedures that promote systematic change.
- Reduce stigma experienced by parents and carers and help to build trust by delivering more of the right support, earlier, more accessibly, and with greater impact.
- Minimise school costs for families, parents, and carers.
- Give parents and children a more positive experience of school.
- Stimulate cross-sector collaboration centred on the voice and lived experience of children and young people.
- Targeting of funding at school and local authority level

The reality of change can be assessed for the above using quantitative output measures, e.g. change in uptake of opportunities amongst children eligible for free school meals, as well as qualitative information, e.g. changes in school processes and procedures, and changes in beliefs and experiences reported by those directly involved.

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The sum of these changes is anticipated to favour two key outcomes – the first in the near-term (in-year) and one medium-term (across years):

- Reduction in persistent absence.
- Improved educational attainment and reduction in attainment gap.

In turn, these outcomes weaken the negative effects of childhood poverty on more distant impacts, e.g. better future earning potential and long-term health, thus helping to break cycles of persistent disadvantage and deprivation.

Some possible benefits in the wider system have already been identified. For example, the opportunity to strengthen bridging relationships between different types of educational settings, or between schools in affluent and disadvantaged areas. It is also possible that the experience and benefits of this programme can be used to spark interest in other sectors and help to demystify the process of overcoming inequalities by using practical, everyday changes.

6. Poverty Proofing© arts and culture organisations

Development of a new Cultural Strategy for Sefton provides a good opportunity to review opportunities for Poverty Proofing in Arts, Culture, and events services. Alongside Children North East’s work with schools, there are also dedicated programmes for health and care settings⁴ and cultural organisations.⁵ Discussions with CNE and the relevant localities manager in Sefton have been positive, but further work is needed to finalise a setting/s.

7. Procurement, cost, and monitoring

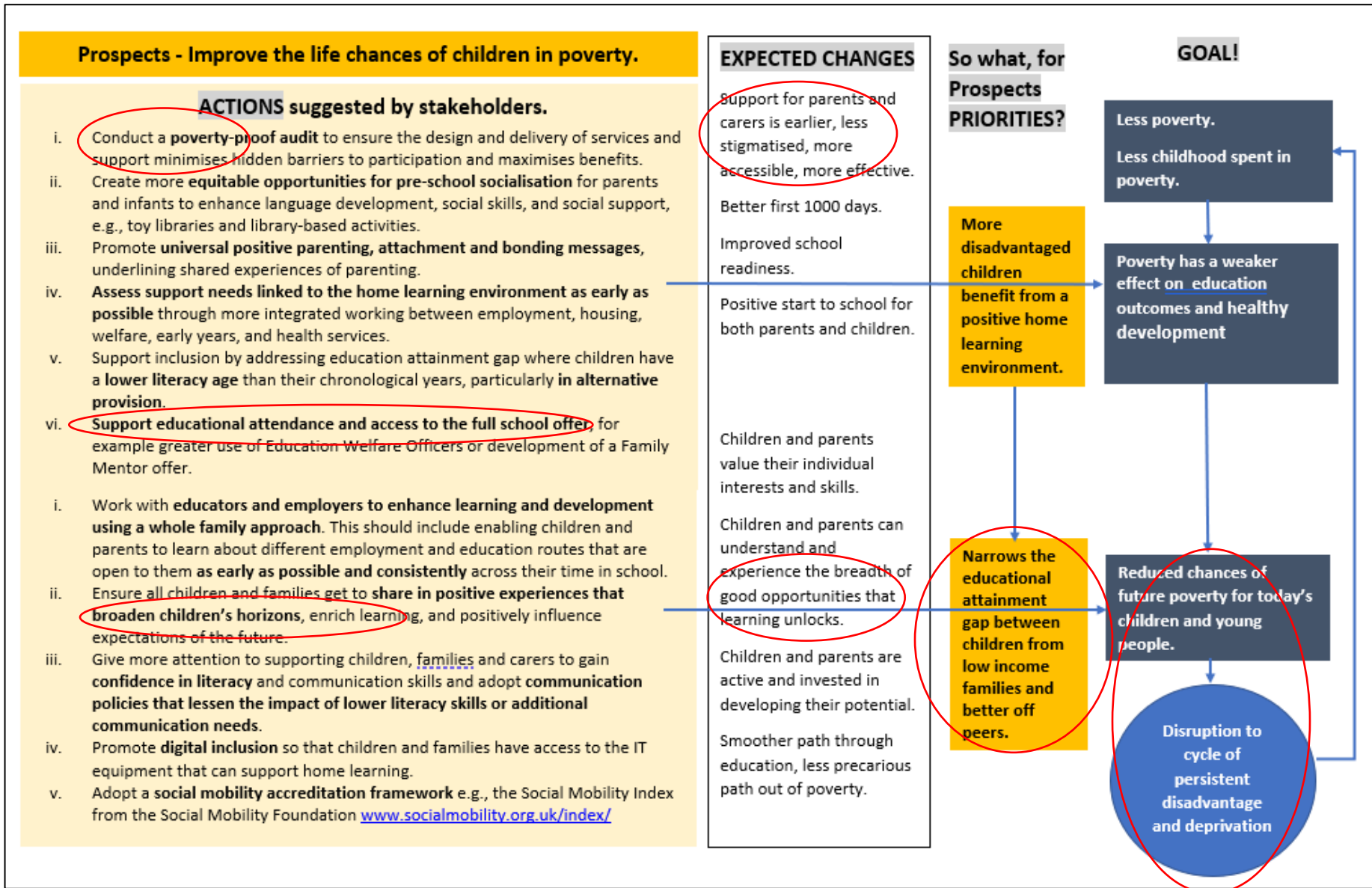
A two-year programme of work in schools and cultural settings has been procured from CNE at a combined cost of £50 000. In line with current Contract Procedure Rules - recognising the value of the contract and status of Children North East as sole provider of this type of service, this has been arranged using a waiver process. Funding for the initial outline programme described in this report will be provided by Public Health. This will enable procurement of expert time and resources from CNE. Costs in kind by way of Council and school staff time are set out or implied by the information in this report

Elected Members and system partners will be updated and informed using Cabinet Member briefings. Formal reporting and scrutiny will be to the Children’s Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.

⁴ [Poverty Proofing© Healthcare - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](http://children-ne.org.uk)

⁵ [Poverty Proofing© Culture - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](http://children-ne.org.uk)

Appendix one: Sefton child poverty model in outline and annotated logic model for the Prospects theme



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INDICATORS Pockets Prospects Places									
Indicator mapped to strategic priorities identified in the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy	Latest statistic (RAG compares to England)	3-Year trend	Baseline date	2018/19 (2018)	2019/20 (2019)	2020/21 (2020) COVID	2021/22 (2021) COVID	2022/23 (2022) CP STRAT LAUNCH	2023/24 (2023) Year One
Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2.5 years (in all five areas of development) 2020	82.70	Stable	2018/19	83.20	87.30	82.70			
Percentage of children(no FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022	65.50	Worse	2018	74.00	72.00			65.50	
Percentage of children(FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022	41.60	Worse	2018	52.00	54.00			41.60	
Average Attainment 8 score (no FSM) 2022	48.20	Stable	2018	47.00	46.3	49.90	52.20	48.20	
Average Attainment 8 score (FSM) 2022	35.00	Stable	2018	32.00	32.20	35.60	36.70	35.00	
Percentage of 16-17 year-olds NEET 2021	3.10	Better	2018	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.10		
Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years) 2022	4.10	Worse	2018	3.00	2.20	2.20	3.40	4.10	
Median pre-tax weekly earnings (£) 2023	513.20	Better	2018	402.70	434.40	435.40	445.40	470.50	513.20
Percentage of employees who are employed on a non-permanent contract 2021	3.60	Stable	2018	5.00	4.70	2.10	3.60		
Percentage of employees earning below real living wage 2022	14.00	Better	2018	32.90	27.50	27.50	20.00	14.00	
Percentage of children in workless households (dependent children) 2021	4.50	Better	2018	13.50	11.20	7.10	4.50		
Percentage of under 16s in relative poverty, before housing costs 2022	21.00	Worse	2020/21				18.20	21.00	
Percentage of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs 2022	3.20	Worse	2018/19	2.00	2.40	2.60	2.90	3.20	
Percentage of population living in the 20% most unhealthy environments (Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards Index) 2022	22.90	Stable	2022					22.90	
Food insecurity (indirect measure) Percentage of population who live in LSOAs scored in the top 20% for risk of food insecurity nationally on the Food Insecurity Risk Index 2021	26.50	Unknown	2021				26.50		
Crude rate per 10 000 of children under 18 in care 2022	114.00	Stable	2018/19	99.00	107.00	116.00	112.00	114.00	
Pupil absence age 5-15 years (%) 2022	7.90	Worse	2010/11	4.9	5.0	5.0	8.0	7.9	
Crude rate per 1000 of households with dependent children owed a duty under homelessness act 2022	7.50	Worse	2019/20		7.4	3.6	4.5	7.5	
Crude rate per 1000 households in temporary accommodation 2022	0.50	Stable	2019/20		0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	
Thriving places index local conditions composite score 2022	4.94	Stable	2018	4.45	4.93	4.68	4.73	4.94	
Thriving places index participation score 2022	6.46	Better	2018	5.03	4.79	4.81	4.96	6.46	

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Cabinet Report

Report Title: Green Waste Composting Contract Extension 2026/27

Date of meeting:	5 th September 2024
Report to:	Cabinet
Report of:	Assistant Director – Operational In-House Services
Portfolio:	Cleansing & Street Scene
Wards affected:	All
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Is this a key decision:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No

Summary:

To seek approval to extend the current Green Waste Composting Service Contract with SED Services Ltd for a further two x 1 year periods in accordance with the specification of the contract provision in place.

The current contract expires on 31 December 2024 and is a joint contract with the Liverpool City Region, Sefton being the procuring and lead authority on the contracted service provided to all participating Authorities – being Sefton, St Helens, Knowsley, Wirral, and Liverpool.

Recommendation(s):

Agree that the two x 1 year extension periods available under current contractual arrangements with SED Services Ltd is approved. This provides the best value and security of continuing service provision until 31 Dec 2027.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

To ensure that fully compliant green (garden) waste composting facilities are available to all the LCR participating authorities until 31st December 2027. Allow time for any new joint LCR procurement options beyond that day to be sourced, procured and implemented.

Agenda Item 6

Background

The Green Waste Composting Service Contract was awarded to SED Services Ltd in 2019. The core contract term was for a 5 year period from 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2025 with an option to extend for an additional two x 1 year periods built in and anticipated at the outset as part of the life of the contract, provided that the quality/price of services delivered under the contract are of a satisfactory standard and exercising the extension is considered to represent best value for the Council and our partner authorities.

The overall estimated value of the 5 year core period contract award was £5.6m. The contract value is based on estimated tonnages from the participating authorities. The 2 year extension period has an estimated value of £2.5m based on 65,000 tonnes being delivered per annum by the participating authorities. Whilst this tonnage is an estimate based upon previous performance, there is no minimum tonnage required.

Whilst the value of the Sefton element of the contract has been agreed by the Cabinet Member – Cleansing & Street Scene, as the host authority on behalf of the LCR the full value of the extension period requires Cabinet approval.

Proposed % Increase Rates for the Extension Period

SED Services Ltd provided 3 proposals for consideration and decision as follows:

OPTION A	12 Month Extension 2025 – Fixed Rate (1yr)	+ 4.5% increase
OPTION B	12 Month Extension 2026 – Fixed Rate (1yr)	+ 4% increase
OPTION C	2 Year Combined Extension – Fixed rate (2yr)	+ 4% increase

The combined 2 year extension at 4% offers a competitive and stable increase providing continued seamless service provision and accurate budget forecasting. Based on an estimated annual tonnage of 20,000 tonnes of green waste delivered by Sefton this equates to an increase in current gate fees of £12,736 per annum.

2. Financial Implications

The approved revenue budget has provision for the annual cost of this contract extension. This equates to an additional cost of £0.64p per tonne of green waste delivered for composting. Based on Sefton delivering an average of 20,000 tonnes of green waste per annum this equates to an overall increase in gate fees for the 2025/2027 Contract Term of £12,736 per annum which can be accommodated within the existing revenue budget.

3. Legal Implications

Input from Legal Team will be required to formalise the Extension with SED Services. Under the Environment Act 2021 all Councils will have a legal obligation to collect/compost garden waste from 2026.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

There are no known risks associated with this contract extension as the contract does not have minimum tonnage requirements, therefore, even if one of the partner local authorities withdraws from the arrangement, there is no detriment to remaining partners.

5. Staffing HR Implications

None

6. Conclusion

Following consultation with the LCR local authorities, all parties are happy to continue with the current arrangements by utilising option C to extend for a further 2 x 1yr extension periods under the Terms of The Contract.

A Liverpool City Region Working Group is now established to look at further joint procurement opportunities in relation to the needs and directions of DEFRA's Environment Act 2021, including separate food waste collections and simpler recycling.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

Equality Implications:
There are no equality implications
Impact on Children and Young People:
There is no impact to children and young people
Climate Emergency Implications:
The recommendations within this report will have a positive impact through the continued collection of green waste from residential premises, contributing to both recycling participation rates within the Borough and in addition, the tonnage collected forms part of the calculation for receiving recycling credits from Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals?

(A) Internal Consultations

- The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD.7741/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5841/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.
- Procurement Team
- Cabinet Member – Cleansing & Street Scene

Agenda Item 6

(B) External Consultations

Consultation with the other participating Authorities via the Senior Officers Working Group of the LCR Waste & Resources Strategic Partnership confirm they are all happy to negotiate a continuation with the existing arrangements subject to respective approvals being obtained. All the participating Authorities remain happy to work together again to secure new contractual arrangements prior to the end of arrangements with SED Services Ltd on 31 Dec 2027.

Implementation Date for the Decision :

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

Contact Officer:	Michelle Williams
Telephone Number:	0151 288 6159
Email Address:	michelle.williams@sefton.go.uk

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

None

Report Title: Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies

Date of meeting:	5 September 2024
Report to:	Cabinet
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member – Corporate Services
Wards affected:	All
Included in Forward Plan:	No
Is this a key decision:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No

Summary:

To consider the appointment of the Council’s representatives to serve on the Outside Bodies named within this report for the remainder of 2024/25.

Recommendation(s):

That the proposed appointments to the Outside Bodies indicated below, for the remainder of 2024/25, be approved:

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Councillor Richards to replace Councillor McGinnity

Sefton New Directions Limited Board

Councillor Neary to be appointed

Agenda Item 8

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Introduction

- 1.1 The Cabinet has delegated powers, as set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 40, of the Council's Constitution to appoint the Council's representatives to serve on Outside Bodies.
- 1.2 Representations have been received from the Council's Labour Group to make appointments to certain Outside Bodies for the remainder of 2024/25.
- 1.3 The proposed appointments to the Outside Bodies indicated, for the remainder of 2024/25, are set out below:

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Councillor Richards to replace Councillor McGinnity

Sefton New Directions Limited Board

Councillor Neary to be appointed

2. Financial Implications

None arising directly from this report. The appointments to the Outside Bodies concerned do not attract any special responsibility allowance. Travel expenses incurred in attending meetings where they are held outside Sefton, may be reimbursed.

3. Legal Implications

The Cabinet has delegated powers, as set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 40, of the Council's Constitution to appoint the Council's representatives to serve on Outside Bodies.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

None directly. Not approving the recommendation could result in the Council not being represented on the Outside Bodies concerned.

5. Staffing HR Implications

None

6. Conclusion

The Cabinet has delegated powers set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 40 of the Constitution to appoint the Council's representatives to serve on Outside Bodies.

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The Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendation in order for the Council to have ongoing representation on the Outside Bodies concerned.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.
Impact on Children and Young People: The Outside Bodies concerned could consider matters that affect children and young people.
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact. There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7736/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5836/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

The Council's Labour Group has been consulted as to which elected Members it wishes to appoint as representatives on the Outside Bodies referred to within this report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

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

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Tender Approval – for the Procurement of the HR and Payroll System

Date of meeting:	5 th September 2024
Report to:	Cabinet
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:

This report seeks approval to undertake procurement activity using the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework to place a direct award for the SaaS HR and Payroll system, iTrent.

The Preferred procurement option would be to place a direct award with the subcontractor Softcat using the CCS Framework under RM6194, this option will provide service continuity, will give continued stability to the service, and will permit existing development work to continue following the corporate plan to increase managers self-sufficiency and drive automation and a self-service model of service delivery.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) It is recommended that procurement is made by direct award with the subcontractor Softcat using the CCS Framework under RM6194.

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The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 In December 2020 a new HR and Payroll system was procured, iTrent, from Midland HR (MHR). The implementation of a new HR and Payroll system is a material undertaking which occurs 'once in a generation' due to the substantial implementation activity required and also the fundamental business re-engineering that takes place across the HR services and the wider business- it typically takes 2-3 years for a system of this size and complexity to bed down within a council.
- 1.2 This system is now embedded within the council and this now enables the HR function to undertake maintenance tasks and develop the system itself, with limited reliance on external support. Therefore, the service is in a strong position going forward if the Council continues to utilise the iTrent system rather than procure a new system.
- 1.3 Alternative routes to market have been considered including a full OJEU compliant procurement exercise. This has been rejected on 2 primary issues, firstly it is considered that the current system is the best product available at this time based on the full procurement process that was recently undertaken. Other providers that have been considered have been identified as being inadequate to meet the council's needs or to provide the necessary tools required to deliver the scope of work required by Sefton delivering over 45 payrolls for Central employees, Schools, commercial payrolls, and Pensioners.
- 1.4 Secondly, the costs for this comparative software are considerably more than those quoted by the incumbent. 2 alternative products have been costed at £3.4m and £6.4m which are both in excess of the sum that the current system would cost for a further 5 years. Thus, based on quality and cost, it is considered that the current product procured as set out represents best value for money and is most appropriate to meet business need.
- 1.5 It should be noted however that the 5-year cost for the current supplier is substantially higher than is currently being paid. This reflects the substantial inflation and cost increases in the sector that has been applied to all ICT contracts over the last 5 years with annual inflation increases in the last 2-3 years typically being over 10% per annum.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As stated the provisional costs to renew the iTrent contract for 5 years has been provided, plus an additional charge of 4% from the contract supplier Softcat will be incurred. (Costs subject to supplier confidentiality)

This cost will be higher than the current contract cost by £0.2m per annum but as set out earlier this remains cheaper than some other products on the market. The cost for this system is funded via the existing Corporate Resources ICT revenue budget, therefore the annual additional £0.2m cost will be required from the MTFP.

3. Legal Implications

The Council's procurement team have supported this route to market and will prepare all required documentation and will support discussions with the supplier. The procurement team have identified a direct award which is available under RM6194 through Crown Commercial Services which is fully compliant with the public contract

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regulations and CCS call-off contracts are being utilized to ensure the council is legally fully protected.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

There will be minimal risk implications if approval is to procure.

5 Staffing HR Implications

None

6 Conclusion

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.

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 (FD7763/24).

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5863/24) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

In addition, the Senior Manager ICT & Digital and colleagues from Procurement have been consulted when writing this report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

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

Contact Officer:	Karen Skelton
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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers to this report.

Corporate Cloud Telephony Contract

Date of meeting:	Thursday 5 September 2024
Report to:	Cabinet
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial
Portfolio:	Corporate Services
Wards affected:	All Wards
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Is this a key decision:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No

Summary:

This report sets out the background to the Council's Cloud Telephony Service and associated contracts. These contracts supply telephony services to the Council which are used by staff to conduct their duties and includes the Council's Contact Centre for both inbound and outbound telephone calls. The report also details the associated procurement route available to the authority to renew the current contracts which are due to expire on 18 February 2025

Recommendation(s):

- (1) That members approve the use of Crown Commercial Services Framework RM6116 Network Services 3 - Lot 4b Digital Communication Services to award a contract for the provision of the Councils cloud telephony service to 8x8 UK Limited. The proposed term would be for an initial period of 2-years, followed by up to two optional 12-month extension periods.
- (2) That the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services be granted delegated authority to award the Contract under this framework and any subsequent contract extensions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To explore the market for a new telephony solution; rejected.
The current solution provided by 8x8 UK Ltd has been a very reliable

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solution since the Councils conversation away from analogue telephony at the start of this current but expiring contract. It is recognised that a contract of this nature would usually have been awarded for a much longer period, as the cost of change is significant (training, hardware and porting just some examples). However, at the time of contract initiation for cloud telephony there was an urgent need for a solution due to the COVID pandemic and for speed the contract was awarded via G-Cloud, the disadvantage of which is a shorter contract term.

8x8 have established themselves as a market leader in this space for local government with many of our neighbouring authorities also recently completing procurement exercises, with 8x8 winning on quality and price, including Liverpool and St Helens Council.

Officers within the within the ICT Client Unit recently conducted a proof of concept looking at further developments in cloud telephony including the potential use of integrated telephony with Microsoft Teams, thereby making better use of our existing investments in M365, it was concluded that these alternatives would potentially meet the Councils requirements but further work is needed to ensure that any business case would be viable in terms of licencing costs and call charges. Consideration would also need to be given to the time needed to switch away from 8x8 for generic telephony and then how Teams would integrate with a contact centre telephony solution as a specialist solution would still be required in this space.

It is therefore recommended to complete a direct award for a period of 2 years with the option of two further 12-month extension periods to allow time for further work to be completed on the Teams proposal.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The Council, under current contracts with 8x8 UK Ltd, currently utilises their cloud telephony solution for all of its landline-based telephony which also includes the customer contact centre.
- 1.2 The current provision is provided across three different contracts; main, contact centre and Homes for Ukraine (formerly Test and Trace)
- 1.3 The 'main' contract, which is due to expire on 18-Feb-25, is the largest contract by both value and use and provides landline-based cloud telephony to Council officers and sites. Much of this provision is made up of basic 'X1' licences.
- 1.4 The 'contact centre' contract, also has an expiry date of 18-Feb-25 due to a previous procurement exercise to align this contract and 'main' to co-terminate (Chief Officer Report dated 18/01/2023). This contract provides telephony to agents working within the Councils main customer contact centre. Whilst there are far fewer licences within this contract, this contract is built against a number of more elevated level licences (known as X8) which offer agents additional

functionality over lower graded licences.

- 1.5 The final contract, which is a much smaller contract was originally procured for 'Test and Trace' during Covid19. When Test and Trace ceased, it was reused by the Council for the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. This contract is made up of a small number of licences contained within the other two contracts. This contract has multiple contract exit options which can align with the expiry dates of the other two contracts above.
- 1.6 One of the aims of this procurement, in addition to ensuring the Council continues to have a corporate telephony solution, is to amalgamate the three current telephony contracts into a single contract from 19-Feb-25 which will also reduce administration for staff who manage these contracts
- 1.7 When the authority initially reviewed its options for voice (telephony) communication the most obvious option was to consider MS teams for external calling. However, at the time the solution did not meet the Councils requirements for the following reasons;
 - Call queuing functionality with MS Teams was poor
 - The authority still operated faxes which Teams would not accommodate
 - The licencing model was not clear nor were call charges
- 1.8 Since that time both the Council and the MS Teams product have matured and the use of MS Teams for core telephony is now potentially possible. As mentioned earlier in the report the ICT Client has completed a small POC which was positive, further work is needed to ensure the business case is viable but the strategic proposal is to work on this over the next 6-12 months with a view to moving all core voice to MS teams (internal and external calling) for the majority of staff. The 8x8 contract award will ensure business continuity whilst this work is completed. If we took the opportunity to the wider market we could end up with the scenario where Sefton migrates to a new solution and then MS Teams which would cause unnecessary cost and disruption.
- 1.9 Proposed contract and procurement route**
- 1.10 A suitable Public Contract Regulation 2015 compliant Framework has been identified; Crown Commercial Services - Network Services 3 (RM6116) - Lot 4b Digital Communication Services.
- 1.11 This framework offers a Direct Award facility with solutions listed on Crown Commercial Services eMarketplace.
- 1.12 As a direct award, Sefton MBC is utilising the facility provided under its Contract Procedure Rules (2.4.1) Direct call off from a Framework, to ensure a best value contract in line with the requirement.

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- 1.13 Indicative pricing of the incumbent provider is suggestive of value for money being gained over current costs by way of a circa 5% reduction in price. This would equate to a circa £50k saving over a 3-year period in comparison to current costs. Any savings are also prior to a pre-contract licence review which could also present an additional small saving if any licences can be given up from non-use or put on to a lower tier licence.
- 1.14 By going out for competition at this point would add additional costs to the Council through migration, implementation and training of staff when moving to a new platform and additional further costs from the Councils ICT Managed Service provider, as swapping telephony platforms or vendors would be classed as a chargeable project under the terms of that contract. In awarding a new contract as suggested, and as already mentioned, this will allow the Teams product to mature further and for the Council to also organise its telephony contracts into one contract.

2. Financial Implications

Costs will be contained within existing revenue streams

3. Legal Implications

The Council has a statutory duty under Public Contract Regulations 2015. Whilst this will soon be the Procurement Act 2023, as this procurement will be under an already in-play framework, PCR2015 will apply.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

None directly. Not approving the recommendation would result in the Council being without a known and core communication channel for its constituents, stakeholders and service users.

5 Staffing HR Implications

The award of a new contract will not have any staffing implications for the Council

6 Conclusion

If the recommendation of this report is accepted and approved, the next steps will be to complete a direct award under Crown Commercial Services Framework RM6116 Network Services 3 - Lot 4b Digital Communication Services.

As mentioned previously in the report, the proposed term would be for an initial period of 2-years, followed by up to two optional 12-month extension periods.

Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.
Impact on Children and Young People: No
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a Positive impact. If the current service is renewed, there will be no requirement for new hardware to be purchased as existing telephony hardware across the Council is still suitable and useable and should have a life span of at least the next 3 or 4 years. Otherwise, this proposal does not change the existing arrangements in terms of software and hardware provision and associated energy consumption.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD 7725/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5825/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

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

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers to this report

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