

Overview  
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,  
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)

DATE: Monday 20th January, 2025

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Asembly Hall, Town Hall Bootle

**Member**

**Substitute**

Councillor	Councillor
Councillor Bradshaw (Chair)	Councillor Harrison Kelly
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Carragher
Councillor Brodie - Browne	Councillor Evans
Councillor McNabb	Councillor Porter
Councillor Murphy	Councillor Johnson
Councillor Catie Page	Councillor Myers
Councillor Parker	Councillor Killen
Councillor Shaw	Councillor Evans
Councillor Thomas	Councillor Roche
Councillor Sir Ron Watson	Councillor Morris

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone: 0151 934 2068  
E-mail: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

**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**

**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. Digital Strategy**

(Pages 3 - 50)

Report of the Executive Director Corporate Services and Commercial

**4. Update on Progress of Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy**

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

**5. Annual ICT Update Report**

(Pages 51 - 58)

Report of the Executive Director Corporate Services and Commercial

## Report Title: Digital Strategy

Date of meeting:	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Security Committee – Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services		
Report of:	Executive Director Corporate Services and Commercial		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No. The decision by Overview and Scrutiny is not a Key Decision but subsequent decisions of Cabinet will be	Included in Forward Plan:	No. Not in respect of this report but details of subsequent reports to Cabinet will be
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

### Summary:

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

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

The purpose of this report is to comply with the above decision and to provide details of the Digital Strategy.

### Recommendation(s):

That the Committee considers the Digital Strategy and the submission of views to Cabinet or Council.

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## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Sefton published its first Digital Strategy in 2021. Since its launch the Council has achieved a great deal, with the deployment of Cloud Services, a new Customer Experience Platform, and a redesigned website, as well as supporting back-end automation of routine repetitive tasks by deploying RPA (Robotics). The achievements are outlined in full within pages three to five of the enclosed Digital Strategy document (Appendix A).
- 1.2 The pace of change in relation to digital continues to be significant with many experts indicating that the world has been going through its fourth industrial revolution, a term often used to describe the rapid technological advancements we have seen in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics and the Internet of Things. These changes have not only changed customer expectations but have also provided opportunities for Sefton to transform the way that services are delivered and in turn how residents are supported.
- 1.3 The revised Digital Strategy for Sefton over the next three years is intended to be an overarching plan which articulates the council's ambitions and is based on key priorities identified within the Corporate Plan.
- 1.4 This high-level strategic document is split into five themes
  - Developing Sefton as a Digital Place
  - Create Strong Digital Foundations
  - Supporting an enhanced Customer Journey
  - To develop our Data and Intelligence
  - Support the Workforce of the Future
- 1.5 These themes each have priorities within them which seek to
  - Ensure that residents and businesses are enabled to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by digital technologies.
  - Ensure Sefton has the core infrastructure and associated services in place to maximise the opportunities afforded by digital, including capitalising on existing investments to ensure value for money.
  - Make sure that all residents can access services via a method most convenient for their needs.
  - Empower our staff to transform data into intelligence by equipping them with the digital tools, skills, and training that they need to make better use of the information and data we collect to inform the delivery of core services and the ambitions within our Corporate Strategy.
  - Support staff to achieve their full potential and deliver great outcomes for the residents of the Sefton.

## 2. Process of Development

- 2.1 Engagement activity has been undertaken with Executive Directors to ensure alignment of the key priorities within the strategy to core business deliverables and the priorities within the Corporate Plan, Further consultation on the key themes and priorities for delivery has also taken place with officers via our network of ICT Champions.

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- 2.2 To ensure alignment to regional and national strategies work has been undertaken to make sure that the ambitions within Sefton's Digital Strategy align to the regional strategy and projects underway across the Liverpool City Region, including work being undertaken by Integrated Care Board. Links have also been made to national strategies and guidance where these exist for example: NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) Cyber Guidance, the NHS Digital Strategy and national guidance and strategies from the Local Government Association and the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM). The document is deliberately a three-year strategy due to the rapid pace of change in this area.
- 2.3 Over Summer 2024 public consultation took place on the proposed Strategy, with most respondents agreeing with the core themes and issues identified. A summary of the consultation feedback along with the Council's responses to issues raised can be found within Appendix C of this document.
- 2.4 Over the next three years the delivery of the Strategy will be reflected in the development of key programmes of work and associated governance structures. The progress and impact of the strategy will be driven through a programme boards, which will be accountable for the delivery of the key priorities and projects documented with the strategy. Regular updates on delivery will be provided directly to the Executive Leadership Team. An annual report on the delivery will also be provided to Overview and Scrutiny alongside the Annual ICT report, with regular updates also provided to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Commercial Services, with reports to wider Members as required.

## 3. Financial Implications

There are no direct cost implications due to the delivery of the strategic documentation, where costs are to be incurred for the delivery of specific projects the appropriate decision-making process will be followed to obtain approval for any associated spend.

## 4. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

## 5. Risk Implications

There are no direct risk implications due to the delivery of the strategic documentation, risk in relation to programme delivery will be managed in line with the Council's Risk Management procedure.

## 6 Staffing HR Implications

There are no direct staffing implications due to the delivery of the strategic documentation, should specific projects have an implication on staffing then the appropriate process will be followed for that specific project.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 As highlighted within this report, digital supports many projects within Sefton's Corporate Plan, given the many interdependencies and priorities it is essential for the Council to have a clear strategy, to ensure the delivery of both

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the technology and cultural changes needed. Thereby ensuring that services can be delivered more efficiently, residents are enabled to take advantage of the potential digital brings both at home and in work and that local businesses are empowered to take advantage of new markets to grow and thrive.

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

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

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

### Equality Implications:

An equalities impact assessment was completed prior to the formal consultation, this was reported to the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in May 2024.

It is expected that each programme and project will have its own equalities impact assessment to ensure that each project takes account of protected characteristics as necessary, completion of these will be picked up via the appropriate governance board.

### Impact on Children and Young People:

An equalities impact assessment was completed prior to the formal consultation, this was reported to the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in May 2024.

It is expected that each programme and project will have its own equalities impact assessment to ensure that each project takes account of protected characteristics as necessary, completion of these will be picked up via the appropriate governance board.

### Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a positive impact. The last iteration of the strategy included core deliverables such as cloud migration, which reduced local emissions associated with the operation of a local data centre. This new strategy includes a specific section to reduce where possible the carbon associated with the delivery of the ICT Service.

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

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD7884/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5984/24.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

As detailed within section 2.3 of this report public consultation took place over the summer of 2024, the results of which can be found within Appendix C.

**Implementation Date for the Decision :**

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

Contact Officer:	Helen Spreadbury
Telephone Number:	07583 057822
Email Address:	Helen.Spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk

**Appendices:**

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A Sefton's Digital Strategy

Appendix B Sefton's Digital Strategy Easy Read Version

Appendix C Digital Strategy, Consultation Comments and Council Responses from the Questionnaire

**Background Papers:**

Digital Strategy 2021 – 2023, which can be found within the following location

[Sefton Council Digital Strategy 2020-2023](#)

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## Sefton's Digital Strategy 2024 - 2027 - Consultation

### Comments and Council Responses from the Questionnaire

The activity ran from 15/07/2024 to 18/08/2024 and there were 55 responses to this survey

#### Who responded - Summary

90.91% of respondents were Sefton residents

5.45% of respondents were from businesses located in Sefton

Just over 50% of respondents were aged between 50 and 70 years of age, with the next two largest cohorts being aged between 70 and 79 (16.36%) and then between the ages of 30 to 39 (12.73%). The gender split between male and female respondents was equal and just over 18% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability.

#### Summary of Responses to closed questions in relation to the proposed themes

Proposed Themes	Response
Developing Sefton as a Digital Place. This means making sure that all residents and businesses are able to take advantage of technology	80% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Create strong Digital Foundations. We want to build strong digital tools. This means Sefton will have the right technology to help people use online services.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Supporting an enhanced Customer Journey. We aim to improve the customer experience. This means making it easy for everyone to use Council Services	89.09% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
To develop our Data and Intelligence. We will use our data smartly. This means using information to make our services better for the community.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme
Support the workforce of the future. We support our workers in the digital future. This means helping staff do their best and provide great services for Sefton residents.	87.27% of respondents agreed that this was an important theme

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There were several comments received on the proposed themes, all of which were operational in nature and did not require any changes to the strategy documentation. Responses to each will be provided via the Sefton Your Say Consultation Website.

## Summary of Responses to closed questions in relation to key issues

Key Issues	Response
More access to digital resources in our libraries and public spaces.	74.54% of respondents agreed that this was important
Provision of free public Wi-Fi.	76.36% of respondents agreed that this was important
Supporting our young people to be ready for the jobs of the future.	90.01% of respondents agreed that this was important
Access to Digital Skills Training for those seeking work.	89.09% of respondents agreed that this was important
Be able to complete transactions (like payments or reporting) online with Sefton Council.	74.54% of respondents agreed that this was important
Access to council meetings and events online.	65.45% of respondents agreed that this was important, however 18.18% of respondents felt it was neither important nor important.
How important it is to provide digital support for local businesses.	61.82% of respondents felt that this was important with over 14.5 % neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the importance and just over 9% stating that they did not know, this may be reflective of the profile of respondents.
Use new technology to make communities safe and healthier.	78.18% of respondents agreed that this was important
Use of technology such as Air Quality sensors. These sensors will help reduce pollution and make the air cleaner	78.18% of respondents agreed that this was important
Working with partners to improve internet and mobile networks. This will help everyone stay connected and access services easily.	83.64% of respondents agreed that this was important
That the Council makes sure that all its digital services are safe and follow national rules.	92.72% of respondents agreed that this was important
For Sefton to use new technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). This will help	This was an incredibly mixed response with just less than 40% of the respondents

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Appendix C

<p>improve customer services and make things easier for everyone.</p>	<p>thinking this was important with 25% saying they didn't think it was important, and over 36% stating they didn't know or that it was neither important nor not important.</p> <p><b><i>This highlights the important of clear communications and engagement around any use of AI to ensure that residents are informed about its use, the benefits transparency arrangements in place, this will be address via any projects in this space during the life of the strategy</i></b></p>
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There were a number of comments received in response to the question “Do you think there are other important issues that should be part of Sefton’s Digital Strategy over the next three years?” all of which were operational in nature and did not require changes to the strategic documentation. Responses to each will be provided via the Sefton Your Say Consultation Website.

## Feedback Received outside of Formal Consultation

In advanced of formal consultation, the following communication was received via an email to Your Sefton your Say.



Chairman Mr. Brian Stein CBE,

EM Radiation Research Trust, Chetwode House, Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray,  
Leicestershire LE13 1GA

For the attention of Sefton Council Councillors

Further to previous emails regarding concerns against the threat of Sefton Council rollout of 5G and the IoT Digital Strategy 2024 -2027 Consultation.

Please find enclosed a new study published on 5G case studies and note that some of the symptoms experienced were so severe causing people to abandon their homes for good.

How will Sefton Councillors deal with claims for compensation if residents are forced to abandon their homes for good due to 5G wireless pole outside their homes?

Please include this information within the consultation.

### **Press release June 20, 2024**

The first study in the world on 5G health risks published

'5G has been rolled out since 2019/2020. A Swedish research team has published the first study to date on how human health is affected by radiation from 5G base stations. The results show that 5G greatly increases radiofrequency radiation exposure and that ill health occurs fairly immediately after 5G is switched on near people's homes. The study also included three children aged four to eight years. In several cases, the symptoms were so severe that people had to abandon their homes for good.

The new study is a compilation of seven previously separate case studies published in 2023 and 2024. All case studies and the new compilation were conducted by physician and researcher Dr Lennart Hardell from the Swedish Environment and Cancer Research Foundation in collaboration with Mona Nilsson from the Swedish Radiation Protection Foundation. During the years 2021-2023, they have studied a total of 16 people's self-assessed health after 5G base stations or masts were established near their homes. Measurements of radiation from 5G have also been carried out in the homes.

The measurements show that 5G gives rise to extremely high exposure to pulsed radio frequency (RF) radiation, significantly higher than from previous generations of mobile telephony. In several cases radiation reached several million microwatts per square meter ( $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$ ) peak levels in the studied homes, which are levels more than 100 000 times higher than the levels recommended as appropriate maximum exposure by other researchers.

These high levels caused symptoms of ill health in several of the people studied within 24 hours after 5G was switched on. The most common and severe symptoms were sleep disturbance, fatigue, headache, irritability, concentration problems, impaired short-term memory and skin problems. These symptoms correspond to the symptoms described more than 50 years ago as an effect of exposure to radiofrequency or microwave radiation, known as microwave syndrome or radiofrequency sickness.

This first and unique study of the health effects of 5G clearly shows that 5G causes ill health in people living within a distance of 3 to 538 meters from 5G base stations/masts, even though the levels of measured RF radiation are significantly lower than the limits adopted by most countries. These limits allow exposure to 10 000 000  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$  measured as RMS (root mean square) averaged over 6 minutes, that only protects against instantaneous heating (thermal effects) and does not protect against the effects found in the new study. In an apartment only 20 meters from a 5G base station, the maximum measured RF radiation was just over 135 000  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$  (RMS average over 2 minutes) for the case with by far the highest radiation exposure. This level caused very severe symptoms within a week and the occupant had to leave the apartment for good.

The study also shows that when people moved to another home where the radiation was significantly lower and with no 5G base stations nearby, the symptoms subsided and disappeared completely in most cases after a short period. This reinforces that it was 5G that caused the reported symptoms.

The study confirms the warning of serious potential human health consequences due to the 5G roll out submitted by scientists and doctors in the 5G appeal to the EU ([5gappeal.eu](http://5gappeal.eu)) and that the current limits for maximum allowed exposure do not protect against adverse health effects. 259 scientists have called for the limits to be improved ([emfscientist.org](http://emfscientist.org)).

- "5G is a gigantic experiment with public health that is being carried out and is accepted by the authorities and politicians....5G has been rolled out without any research showing that this new technology is not harmful to human health", says Lennart Hardell.

- "These results make it clear that 5G poses health risks to those living near base stations or cell towers because the radiation increases so massively. So far, there is no study of long-term health effects and the consequences could be very serious if people continue to be chronically exposed to these high levels of radiation from 5G", says Mona Nilsson.

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Facts about the new 5G study:

Study published in: Reviews on Environmental Health with open access. Hardell, Lennart and Nilsson, Mona. "Summary of seven Swedish case reports on the microwave syndrome associated with 5G radiofrequency radiation" Reviews on Environmental Health, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1515/reveh-2024-0017>.

Number of people included: 16

Number of case studies on which the study is based: 7

Year the case studies were conducted: 2021-2023

Age of studied persons: 4 - 83 years

Distance to 5G base stations or mobile towers: 3 - 538 m

Highest measured radiation (max peak): >3 180 000  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$  (microwatts per square meter)

Maximum measured radiation (RMS average over 2 minutes): 135 000  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Most common and severe symptoms during 5G exposure: Difficulty sleeping, fatigue, headaches, irritation, difficulty concentrating, impaired short-term memory, skin problems

Recommended maximum value (Europa EM EMF guidelines): 0.1-100  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Thermal limits (ICNIRP/FCC) adopted by most countries: 10 000 000  $\mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$

Thermal limits based on: Heating effects observed within 1 hour

EuropaEM EMF guidelines maximum value is based on: demonstrated effects of prolonged whole body exposure'

Download here: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/reveh-2024-0017/html>

Regards

Eileen O'Connor

Charity Director for the EM Radiation Research Trust

Website address: <https://www.radiationresearch.org/>

Email: [eileen@radiationresearch.org](mailto:eileen@radiationresearch.org)

## **Response from Sefton Council**

Sefton Council public health team have consulted with colleagues in the UK Health Security Agency who provide expert guidance on health protection matters, including advice regarding non-ionising radiation impacts on health.

The UK Health Security Agency have reviewed the evidence and provided the information below in relation to the safety and health impacts of radio waves, including 5G.

## **Review of current evidence**

The health effects of exposure to radio waves have been researched extensively over several decades, and very many publications can be found in scientific journals and elsewhere.

Guidelines set by International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) on limiting exposures to electromagnetic fields (EMF) have been developed based on careful analyses of the accumulated evidence. ICNIRP published updated guidelines on exposure to radio waves in 2020.

UKHSA is aware that different groups have concerns about EMFs and where they have proposed alternative limits, these do not appear to have a scientific rationale based on health effects in the same way as the ICNIRP guidelines. In formulating its advice, UKHSA aims to draw out a consensus position based on the totality of the scientific evidence through a process of systematic, critical and impartial review of the published literature.

UKHSA bases its opinion on evidence reviews from authoritative bodies that consider the whole-range of evidence available, taking account of the scientific quality and relevance of individual studies to human health, in developing their conclusions. The typical types of evidence reviewed are the human laboratory and epidemiological studies, animal studies and cellular studies. This is the approach adopted by officially mandated authoritative organisations such as, ICNIRP and the World Health Organization (WHO). UKHSA is not aware, therefore, that these initiatives are driven by any scientific evidence that has been overlooked in its own advice.

## **Summary of evidence and public health impacts**

Many exposure measurements have been made at publicly accessible locations near to base stations and these have consistently been well within the ICNIRP guidelines.

It is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area. However, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health.

## **Further information**

Please see the following webpages containing UKHSA's published advice on 5G and mobile phone base stations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>



# Sefton Council's Digital Strategy

## Introduction.

Since the release of Sefton’s Digital Strategy in 2021 technology has continued to advance at pace, bringing new opportunities to residents and businesses across Sefton.

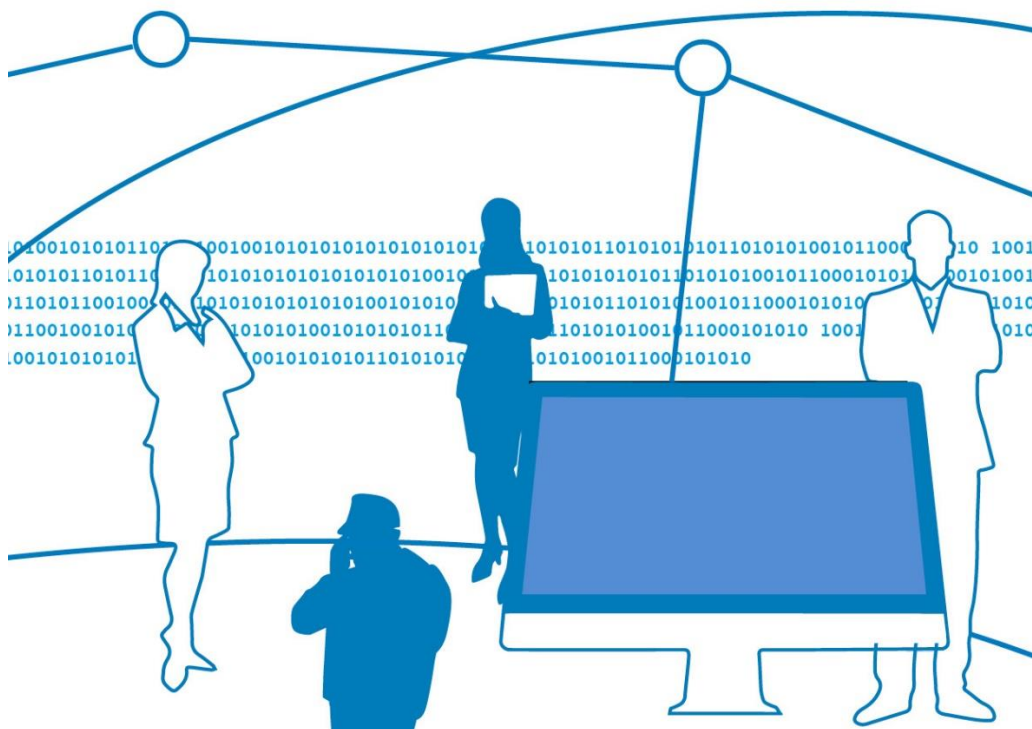
This updated strategy reflects on the progress we have made so far, sets out revised priorities and aims to ensure that Sefton develops as a digital place, with all communities, residents empowered to take advantages of the opportunities afforded by Digital.

Key to our ambitions are strong **digital foundations**, providing secure and robust connectivity across Sefton which reflects and supports our climate pledge as well as enabling and supporting business growth.

As a **Digital Council** we are continuing to develop our digital services, including how we work as a local authority, our information and advice delivered via our council website, and how residents can self-serve online to access services. As well as exploring how as an authority we can work more efficiently across partners to deliver joined up services that reflect the needs of our communities.

Key to developing Sefton as a **Digital Place** is our work around inclusion, that brings together all key partners to ensure that all residents, local partners, and businesses have access to digital skills, devices, and data.

In addition, the management of our **data and intelligence** is essential to proactively plan and deliver responsive services in line with demand, and transforming data into intelligence which is fundamental to service redesign ensuring we meet the requirements of all communities across Sefton.



## What have we delivered since 2021?

### Theme 1- Connected Council.

- All council staff have access to agile working KIT including, laptops and mobile phones as required, this access includes the provision of touch down spaces in office accommodation as well as support to work from home in line with service delivery requirements.
- Since 2021 the Council's New Ways of working programme has allow the authority to reduce its office footprint by 29%, with further opportunities being explored.
- Sefton has developed its Data and Intelligence tools, moving forwards with the development of a Data Warehouse, bringing together data to inform decision making service design and manage demand. This work has initially focused on supporting Children's Services with further plans in development across the Council.
- The Authority has migrated it's on-premises data centre to the Cloud, upgrading and improving this infrastructure as well as improving operational performance and resilience.
- A training and skills programme has been developed for internal staff to support the deployment digital tools across the Council.
- Gov - Roam has been deployed across office locations, facilitating the co-location of staff across Health and Social Care in line with the development of Integrated Care Teams
- A Cloud Telephony solution has been implemented which has significantly upgraded the Council's voice system as well as supporting agile and mobile working.
- The authority has developed a proactive approach to Cyber Security and participated in several external reviews to provide assurance in terms of the security of the Council's network and the personal data we process.

## Theme 2 - Empowered Residents.

- Sefton has redesigned and relaunched its Corporate Website ensuring that it is easy to use and is in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- The new Customer Experience Platform has been launched, providing improved self-service options for residents across the Sefton.
- A Digital Inclusion Partnership for Sefton is now established with an ambitious Digital Inclusion Strategy for residents launched in in 2022.
- Public devices across Sefton Libraries have been refreshed, and an enhanced offer is also provided in the form of a tablet loan scheme and a targeted databank service in some locations. Public Wi-Fi is also available across all libraries in the Borough.
- The TECS Strategy for Sefton (Technology Enabled Care Strategy) has been launched with a significant number of schemes in development or underway across Sefton, including partners.
- A digital skill and learning forum has been established bringing together representation from Schools, Colleges, the Council, and the wider Liverpool City region to ensure that digital training and education resources are developed and made available across Sefton.
- Sefton is working in partnership with the wider City Region to explore the opportunities afforded by the Internet of Things to develop a Smart Cities approach, discrete programmes are also underway across the borough including Air Quality Sensor deployment.

## Theme 3 - Business Growth.

- Sefton has worked in partnership with Liverpool City Region colleagues (LCR Connect) during the build phase of the region's full fibre, ultrafast gigabit capable network.
- The authority is committed to working in partnership with the LCR Connect Team to expand mobile network coverage, including 5G across the Sefton.
- Free public Wi-Fi has been delivered within Bootle Strand
- Sefton has established a Digital Infrastructure Board to ensure alignment of all key digital programmes including Growth with the digital strategy.
- The authority has launched a dedicated Networking Group (Sefton Huddle) for all Digital, Creative and Tech industries located in the Sefton.

- A Digital skills survey developed and planned for release to all businesses, with appropriate follow up support in place.
- Sefton's Economic Forum in June 2023 included Digital innovation as a key theme and the Invest Sefton team has delivered workshops on digital sales & marketing and cyber resilience to Sefton businesses.
- Sefton Economic Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, Digital is a key strand under the Social Inclusion and Access for all strategic objective.

## Five Future Themes.

Throughout our work over the last two years the themes and priorities around digital have evolved, following consultation at both a regional and local level the revised five themes for Sefton are:

- Developing Sefton as Digital Place.
- Create strong Digital Foundations.
- Supporting an enhanced Customer Journey.
- To develop our Data and Intelligence.
- Support the Workforce of the Future.

## Developing Sefton as a digital place.

Sefton Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and businesses are enabled to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by digital technologies.

## Digital Inclusion and Digital Skills.

- We will work with key partners and agencies to deliver the [Sefton Residents Digital Inclusion strategy](#) to develop Sefton as a place where residents and organisations understand the benefits of digital, feel safe and confident online and are supported to develop their skills and thrive in an increasingly digital world.
- Over the last 12 month we have refreshed our publicly accessible machines across libraries, we plan to extend this further with virtual meeting pods, tablet loan schemes and the provision of a databank and device bank service, delivered in partnership with Good Things Foundation.
- We will continue to develop our approach to free access to public Wi-Fi in communal spaces as well as developing our network of Digital Champions to support people to get online.

- We aim to measure and gain greater understanding of who is accessing digital and where. So that we can obtain greater understanding of the barriers to digital participation across the Sefton place.
- To support our young people to be ready for the jobs of the future and create a local pipeline of skilled young people to meet the requirements of businesses across the Region.
- To support those seeking work to develop their digital skills and literacy in line with business demands.
- To ensure that online services provided by Sefton are meeting the needs of residents across the Sefton.

## **Digital Democracy.**

- To explore options for digital democracy, including the ability to join a meeting virtually, to boost participation and as well as enhancing transparency.
- Provide training and guidance to elected members on Cyber Security so that they feel confident in communicating with residents via digital methods.

## **Business Growth.**

The team in Sefton are committed to developing a strong economy that connects Sefton to the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Ensuring that all businesses across Sefton can benefit from high-speed internet connectivity and are empowered to leverage the opportunities afforded by digital technologies are a key foundation to this ambition. We will do this by:

- Support the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Full Fibre network and maximise the benefit of the regional investment for local businesses and residents.
- Continuing to develop and support our Creative, Digital and Tech Sector with the expansion of the popular Sefton Huddle business networking group, bringing together support and advice for these businesses along with the opportunity to develop local networks and peer support.
- Providing opportunities for any Sefton business to attend digital themed events and workshops, in venues across the Sefton. Where appropriate these sessions will be delivered in partnership with specialist agencies including the Northwest Cyber Resilience Operations Centre.

- Engage and support all Sefton businesses to develop their digital skills, firstly by understanding the requirements via a survey and using intelligence from this to connect business to local and national opportunities to ensure they can take advantage of the power of digital.
- Establishing a Digital Incubator Space within Southport, the Enterprise Arcade development will deliver a co-working space and community for our existing and future talent in this sector.
- Supporting the development of Bootle Strand into a community venue, providing free public Wi-Fi as well as access to digital learning resources onsite via the Sefton@work team.
- Supporting the delivery of access to digital learning resources in Southport with the provision of a permanent location for the Sefton at Work Team with the area.

## **Smart Cities.**

Sefton continues to work in partnership with regional colleagues to explore opportunities to deploy smart technology across the place as appropriate, over the next few years we will:

- Learn from our adoption of Air Quality sensors and how such technologies can be linked to traffic flow management to reduce pollution across key areas of the Sefton.
- Embed Cyber resilience guidance for Smart Cities within our local governance.
- Consider the use of new technology to support safer communities, including a review of our existing CCTV infrastructure.
- Continue to explore opportunities at a regional level which meet the strategic aspirations for Sefton.

## **Developing Strong Digital Foundations.**

Ensuring that Sefton has the core infrastructure and associated services in place to maximise the opportunities afforded by digital, including capitalising on existing investments to ensure value for money, the deliverables in this theme include:

### **Connectivity.**

We will:

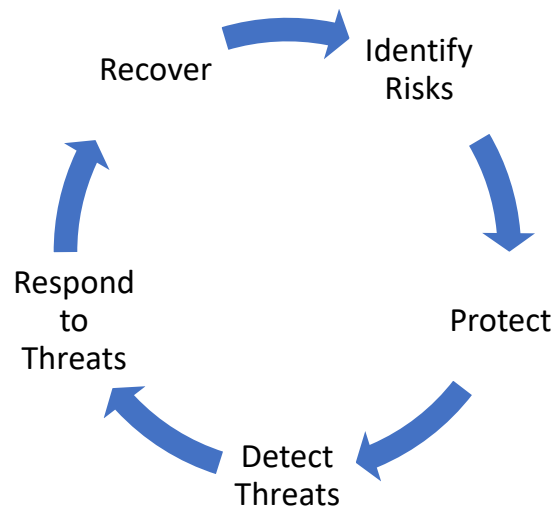
- To build upon the investment made in superfast full fibre across the Liverpool City Region and maximise the use of this network for the benefit of residents, local businesses and to improve connectivity across our public buildings.
- Continue to work in partnership with the wider Liverpool City Region on the deployment of next generation wireless technology to support the Smart Cities Programme including the deployment of 5G networks.

- Explore opportunities to utilise new services such as Gov Wi-Fi to further enhance solutions for integrated working.
- Establish a rolling upgrade programme of the Councils Wi-Fi Services to improve coverage across all Council buildings, including the provision of public access.
- Explore new solutions for Corporate Connectivity such as SDWAN. (Software Defined Wide Area Network)

## Cyber Security.

To ensure that all digital services delivered are secure and in line with industry standards and best practice. Making sure that residents and business are confident that the information they share with us is safe, we pledge to:

- Continue to work in partnership with key agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre, and regional partnerships to ensure we continually develop our cyber security standards in line with emerging threats.
- Continue to develop our cyber security approach and work in line with the following lifecycle.



## Governance.

We pledge to be:

- Transparent around the way that the personal data of all residents is used and shared.
- We are committed to the safeguarding of privacy and will therefore ensure that robust information sharing agreements are in place with partners. There will be clear and accessible documentation around the way data is used, shared, and processed is available for all service areas.



## **Climate Emergency.**

In 2019 Sefton declared a Climate Emergency and subsequently published its Climate Emergency Strategy, this Digital Strategy supports the ambitions by setting out the following objectives.

- To procure sustainable carbon neutral equipment where possible and include carbon reduction requirements within all ICT procurement documents.
- To explore innovative approaches to carbon reduction to achieve net zero.
- To explore options to support tracking and reporting of the carbon footprint to measure improvements.
- To be a cloud first authority with all new procurements being based on either SAAS (Software as a Service) services or provision within the Sefton Azure cloud architecture.

## **Technical Design.**

- To have resilient, scalable, and sustainable systems hosted in an appropriate environment, adopting a Cloud First approach to the provisioning of applications, deploying multi cloud as appropriate.
- For all services and systems to be secure by design and in line with Zero Trust principles.
- The authority will adopt Government Digital Standards to ensure that all systems can speak to others as required, fulfilling the requirements of interoperability and integration as appropriate.
- All solutions will be device and internet browser agnostic, meaning that they should work on any Internet browser technology.
- The authority will seek to ensure best value, making use of government procurement frameworks where possible.

## **Supply chain management.**

The authority is committed to ensuring that all suppliers to the council adhere to cyber security standards during the lifetime of their contracts, and to make sure this happens we will:

- Provide appropriate training and support for corporate procurement teams around Cyber Resilience across supply chains.
- Adopt national guidance around supply chain management.
- Set and implement minimum security standards for suppliers.
- Where appropriate the authority will implement continuous reviews of suppliers to identify and close out any vulnerabilities.

## Supporting an Enhanced Customer Journey.

Sefton Council is committed to making sure that all residents can access services via a method most convenient for their needs (both on and offline), to support this we will:

- Continue to develop our information and advice services available on the Council Website, ensuring that it is easy to read, understand and meets all accessibility standards.
- Provide more options for residents to complete transactions at a time convenient to them, online 24 hours a day.
- Explore new technologies such as AI to enhance the customer experience both online, in person and via telephone.
- Ensure that new services are developed with the customer at the very centre of the experience to reduce unnecessary contact.

## Data and Intelligence.

Data is one of our most valuable assets as a council and is helping to inform how we best design, deliver and transform our services to meet the needs of our communities, to improve outcomes for people in Sefton, and to drive efficiencies within current financial constraints.

Over the next three years we want empower our staff to transform data into intelligence by equipping them with the digital tools, skills, and training that they need to make better use of the information and data we collect to inform the delivery of core services and the ambitions within our Corporate Strategy.

Whilst changes are already happening across the council, with the implementation of a new enterprise data warehouse and the roll-out of the MS Power BI platform to ensure that we have the right technology and infrastructure for the future. So far the focus has been on ensuring continued service reporting, including compliance with national statutory performance reporting requirements, and developing new strategic and operational performance management reporting for Children's Services using interactive Power BI dashboards.

The next steps are to bring our BI and performance resources together; to bring our relevant data together into one place and then to combine and join this data together for data science purposes.

- Develop a culture that recognizes the importance of data science and data quality.
- Expand our data sharing arrangements with other organisations ensuring appropriate two way sharing to support service delivery.
- Build upon our established information governance framework and ethical standards for data processing.
- Develop our organisational data skills and knowledge.

To do this we will:

- Ensure that good quality relevant and timely data and business intelligence is embedded in everything that we do, is at the core of our decision-making and to inform and improve the services we provide to our residents.
- Enhance our reporting, analysis, and forecasting capability by bring together council resources into a single team and investing in business intelligence and data science to increase our data analysis and analytics capability.
- Maximise the opportunities presented by new technologies and infrastructure to enhance automation of operational reporting and focus increasingly on Business intelligence, making increased use of advanced data analysis techniques such as machine learning and data mining to derive greater insight and value from big data.
- Provide data in easy to use, accessible reports and dashboards by establishing a cloud-based data warehouse and adopting a common reporting platform (Power BI).
- Empower staff and develop the knowledge and data skills of our workforce.
- Democratise our data, making it accessible to all those that need it wherever practicable and appropriate, to aid better collaboration across the council and so we can all work more effectively and efficiently.
- Promote the provenance of our data, adopting the principle of using master data sets rather than duplication.
- Take pride in the quality of our data, and take responsibility to ensure it is accurate, complete, consistent, valid, unique, and relevant –particularly when entering data into systems.
- Make use of quality data from external sources, and work with our public sector partners to share data when it is appropriate to do so, to plan and shape the services that we provide and ultimately to enable us to deliver better outcomes.
- Build upon the established data governance arrangement to manage, utilise and care for our data throughout its lifecycle, including for its disposal and archiving where appropriate.
- Justify the collection, use and impact of data, ensuring that we use it ethically and respect people’s privacy, making sure our data are secure and access to sensitive information is controlled via user permissions and appropriate governance.
- Procure interoperable systems which allow data to be linked, allowing deeper insights to be derived from our data.

- Provide open access to data wherever this is both possible and appropriate, allowing our communities to use this for furthering community resilience and outcomes.

## **Supporting the Workforce of the Future.**

The staff within Sefton are our greatest asset and we are committed to supporting them to achieve their full potential and deliver great outcomes for the residents of the Sefton.


To do this we will:

- Equip our staff with appropriate devices and systems which will allow them to work effectively.
- Support hybrid/agile working where appropriate, to ensure colleagues achieve a healthy work life balance.
- Provide opportunities for training and development in both existing and new digital technologies.
- Develop the ICT Champions network to empower staff to take advantage of digital tools.
- Explore the use of new technologies such as robotics and AI to reduce the administrative burden and any duplication of effort across the workforce, thereby ensuring colleagues can focus on key service deliverables.
- Deploy digital technologies at scale to deliver the ambitions of Integrated Care ensuring that Adults, Children and Families within the Borough are informed, empowered, and supported to live safe and independent lives and fulfil their potential.
- Proactively support and develop IT systems and digital services to achieve the outcomes set out within our Children's Services Improvement Plan, improving outcomes for children and their families. Including.
- Delivery of ICT solutions to support SEND services.
- Review and redesign of the Case Management system supporting both Early Intervention, Statutory Children's Social Care and transition to Adult Services.
- Exploring the development and implementation of children's services online portals to allow parental engagement and further information transparency.
- To further develop financial systems to support service delivery.
- To ensure that all systems are supporting the statutory obligations of the Council as these develop nationally.

- Work in partnership with Health and Community care colleagues to deliver the Cheshire and Merseyside strategy for Digital Services across Integrated Care, including the delivery of a Shared Care Record.
- Support the delivery of the Adult Social Care strategy including the implementation of the [Technology Enabled Care Strategy](#)
- To support a review and redesign of Case Management Systems in line with Service redesign including support for Early Intervention Services.
- To further develop financial systems to support service delivery, including the provision of online financial assessments and financial management functionality for citizens.
- To develop online services for Adult Social Care, including launching a citizen self-assessment tool via the online portal.

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# Sefton Council. Digital Strategy.



This is the easy read version  
made using easy words and  
pictures.

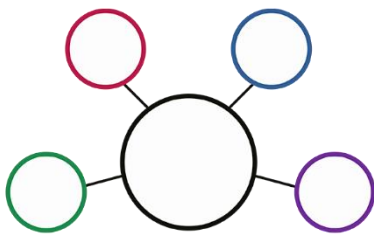
## Introduction.



Since 2021, Sefton's Digital Strategy has helped bring new technology to people and businesses in Sefton.

The updated plan for 2024 - 2027 looks at what we have done so far and sets new goals.

We want Sefton to be a digital place where everyone can use new technology.



We need strong digital infrastructure to achieve our climate goals and boost business growth.

Digital infrastructure it is the mix of computers, programs, networks, and buildings that help organisations run its online services.



As a Digital Council, we are improving our online services and making it easier for people to use them.

We also want to work better with other groups to provide services that meet community needs.

Inclusion is important. We want everyone to have access to digital skills, devices, and data.



Managing our information well helps us plan and provide services that people need.

Turning data into useful information helps us redesign services to meet everyone's needs in Sefton.



## What have we delivered since 2021?

### Theme 1- Connected Council.



- All council staff now have laptops and mobile phones. They can work from home, office or in our communities.
- We have reduced our office space by 29%. We are looking for more ways to save space.



- We are using new tools to help us understand data better. This helps us make good decisions, especially for Children's Services.
- We moved our data to cloud storage. This makes our systems work better and keeps them safe.



- We have a new training programme for our staff. This helps them use digital tools better.
- We have set up Gov-Roam in our offices. This is a system that helps Health and Social Care staff work together.



- We have a new phone system. It helps staff work from anywhere.
- We are very careful about Cyber Security. We have had checks to make sure our data is safe.
- These changes help us work better and keep your information safe.

## Theme 2 - Empowered Residents.



- Sefton has made its website easier to use. It now follows rules to help everyone, including people with disabilities. These rules are called the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- A new system is now available. It helps people in Sefton do things online by themselves.
- Sefton has a plan to help people use the internet. This plan started in 2022. Sefton wants everyone to have the skills to use the internet and technology.
- Libraries in Sefton have new computers and free access to the internet over Wi-Fi. Some places also lend tablets and offer internet data.
- Sefton has a plan to use technology in care. Many new projects are starting.
- A group has been made to teach digital skills. This group includes schools, colleges, and the council.
- Sefton is working with nearby areas to start to use the Internet of Things. This uses sensors and information sharing to make the information about our area smarter.



- One project in Sefton is to use sensors to check air quality. This helps keep the air clean.
- The new website and systems make it easier for people to get help and services.

## Theme 3 - Business

### Growth.



- Sefton has worked with Liverpool City Region colleagues (LCR Connect) to build a fast internet network.
- They want to make mobile networks better, including 5G, in Sefton.



- Free public Wi-Fi is now available in Bootle Strand.
- Sefton has made a Digital Infrastructure Board to manage important digital projects.
- Sefton has also started a Networking Group called Sefton Huddle for Digital, Creative, and Tech industries.



- A survey about digital skills will be sent to all businesses, with information about help that is available.
- In June 2023, Sefton's Economic Forum talked about Digital innovation.

- The Invest Sefton team gave workshops on digital sales, marketing, and cyber safety.
- Sefton's Economic Strategy was approved on 3rd November 2022. Digital is important for Social Inclusion and Access for all in Sefton.



## 5 Future Themes.



Over the last two years, we have looked at how digital can help Sefton. We talked to people in different areas to find out what is important. We now have 5 main themes for Sefton.



**1<sup>st</sup>** We want to make Sefton a Digital Place. This means using technology to make life better for everyone. We will work on making sure everyone can use digital tools.



**2<sup>nd</sup>** We need strong Digital Foundations. This means having good internet and technology that works well. We will make sure our digital systems are strong and reliable.



**3<sup>rd</sup>** We want to improve the Customer Journey. This means making it easier for people to get help and services online. We will make sure our online services are easy to use.



**4<sup>th</sup>** We will develop our Data and Intelligence. This means using information to make better decisions. We will collect and use data to help improve services.



**5<sup>th</sup>** We will support the Workforce of the Future. This means helping workers learn new digital skills. We will make sure our staff are ready for the future.

## Developing Sefton as a digital place.



Sefton Council wants to make Sefton a digital place. They want everyone to use the technology that is available. This includes people and businesses.

They believe digital tools can help everyone. They want to make sure no one is left out.

Sefton Council will work hard to make this happen. They want everyone to have the same chances.

## Digital Inclusion and Digital Skills.



- We want to help people in Sefton use the internet and feel safe online. We will work with others to make this happen.
- In the past year, we have updated computers in libraries. We plan to add more things like tablets and virtual meeting spaces.
- We will keep giving free Wi-Fi in public places. We will also train Digital Champions to help people get online.
- We want to know who is using the internet and where. This will help us understand why some people are not online.
- We want to help young people get ready for future jobs. We will teach them the skills they need for work.
- We will help people looking for jobs to learn digital skills. This will help them find work.





- We will make sure Sefton's online services are good for everyone. We want all residents to use them easily.
- We will work with Good Things Foundation to provide tablets and internet data. This will help more people get online.
- We will create a databank and device bank service. This will give people the tools they need to use the internet.
- We want Sefton to be a place where everyone can use the internet. We will support people to learn and feel safe online.

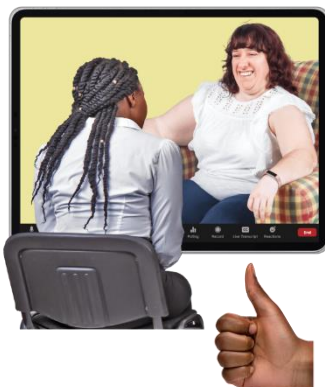


## Digital Democracy.



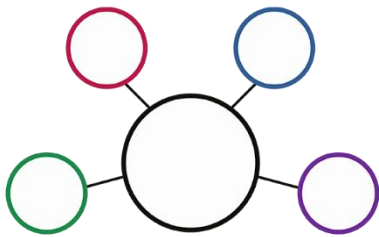
Digital Democracy means using computers and the internet to help people join meetings from home. This can help more people take part and see what is happening.

We want to make it easier for everyone to join in and know what is going on. This way, more people can have their say.



We will teach elected members how to stay safe online. This will help them feel sure when talking to people using computers.

By learning about Cyber Security, elected members can talk to residents safely and easily. This will make it better for everyone to share ideas and information.



## Business Growth.

The team in Sefton wants to help the local economy grow. They want to connect Sefton to Liverpool and other places. They believe fast internet is very important for all businesses in Sefton.



They will help build a strong internet network in the Liverpool City Region. This will help local businesses and people in Sefton. They want everyone to benefit from this new internet.



They will support the Creative, Digital, and Technology Sector. They will expand the Sefton Huddle group. This group helps businesses get advice and support from each other.

They will offer events and workshops about digital skills. These will be held in different places in Sefton. Sometimes, experts from other groups will help with these events.



They will ask businesses what digital skills they need. They will use this information to help businesses find local and national opportunities. This will help businesses use digital tools better.

They will create a Digital Incubator Space in Southport. This is a space that will help people in the digital sector work together. It will be a place for new and existing talent.



They will help develop Bootle Strand into a community space. It will have free Wi-Fi and digital learning resources.

The Sefton@work team will help people use these resources in Bootle and Southport.





## Smart Cities.

Sefton is working together with other areas to use smart technology in the area.

Over the next few years, they will:



- Learn from using Air Quality sensors. These sensors can help manage traffic and reduce pollution in key areas.



- Include Guidance about Cyber Resilience for Smart Cities in local rules. This will help keep the city area safe from cyber threats.



- Look at new technology to make communities safer. They will also review their current CCTV systems.



- Keep looking for new chances to use smart technology that fits Sefton's goals. This will help improve the area and benefit everyone living in Sefton.



- Work with regional partners to find the best ways to use smart technology. This teamwork is important for success.



## **Building Strong Digital Foundations and Connectivity.**

We want to make sure Sefton has good digital services. This will help us use our money well and make the most of what we already have.

### **Better Connections.**

We will use the super-fast fibre network in Liverpool City Region. This will help people, businesses, and public buildings connect better.

### **Working Together.**

We will work with Liverpool City Region to use new wireless technology. This includes supporting the Smart Cities programme including 5G networks.



### **New Services.**

We will look at using services like Gov Wi-Fi. This will help us work better together.

### **Wi-Fi Upgrades.**

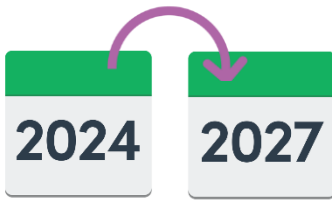
We will keep improving the Council's Wi-Fi. This will make sure all Council buildings have good coverage and public access.

### **Corporate Connectivity.**

We will look at new ways to connect our offices. One option is SDWAN (Software Defined Wide Area Network), which can help us connect better.



## Smart Cities and Better Future



All these steps will help Sefton become a smart city. This means better services and connections for everyone. With strong digital foundations, Sefton will be ready for the future. This will help everyone live and work better.

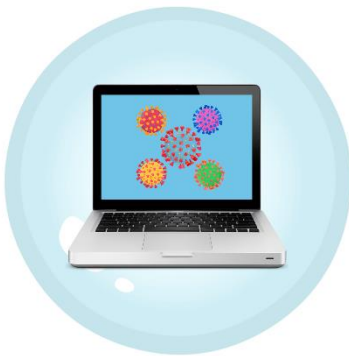


## Cyber Security.

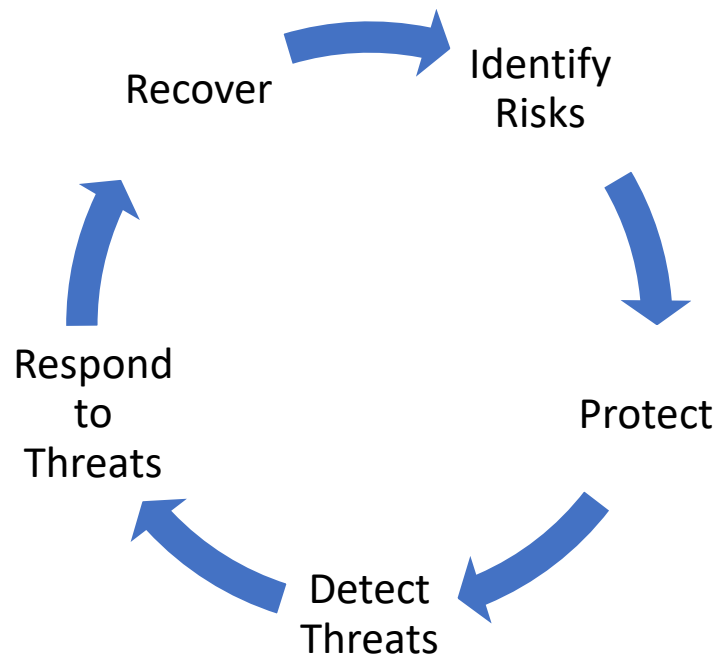
Cyber security means keeping online services safe. We want people to trust that their information is protected.

We promise to:

- Work with important groups like the National Cyber Security Centre. This helps us stay updated on new threats.
- Work with local partnerships to keep up to date with new cyber threats.



We use this way of working to check for cyber threats:



## Governance.



We promise to be clear about how we use and share your personal data.

We will make sure we have strong information sharing agreements with our partners.

There will be clear and easy to understand information about the way information is used, shared and available.

## Climate Emergency.



In 2019, Sefton Council said there is a Climate Emergency. They planned to help the environment in a document called the Climate Emergency Strategy.

This Digital Strategy helps with the Climate Emergency actions.



We want to buy equipment that does not harm the environment. We will include rules about carbon reduction in all our buying rules.

We will look for new ways to reduce carbon to reach net zero. This means we want to balance the carbon we use with the carbon we save.



We will find ways to track and report their carbon footprint. This helps them see how much they improve.

We want to use cloud services first. This means using online software and storage instead of physical equipment.



## Technical Design.

We want our systems to be strong, able to grow, and good for the future. We will use cloud technology to help with this.

All our services and systems will be safe from the start. We will follow our Zero Trust rules.

We will use Government Digital Standards. This means our systems can talk to each other securely when needed.

Our computer systems will work on any device or internet browser. This means you can use them on any computer or phone.

We will make sure we get the best value for money. We will use government buying rules to help with this.

Our goal is to have systems that are strong, safe, and easy to use. We will follow the best rules and use the best tools.



## Supply chain management.

We will make sure that all suppliers of digital services to the council follow cyber security standards during the contracts. To make sure this happens we will:

- We will teach our teams who buy services about cyber safety in supply chains.
- We will follow national rules for managing supply chains.
- We will set basic safety rules for suppliers.
- We will check suppliers often to find and fix any problems.

This will help keep everyone safe and secure.





## Supporting an Enhanced Customer Journey.

Sefton Council wants to help all people use their services easily. They will do this in multiple ways that work for people. To do this we will:



We will make the information services on Council websites easy to read and understand. It will meet all accessibility rules.

We will let people do things online any time of the day or night. This means 24 hours a day.



We will also look at new technology like AI. Artificial Intelligence is used to help answer questions or give advice. This will help make things better for people online, in person, and on the phone.

The Council will make sure new services are made with the customer in mind. This will help people get what they need easily.

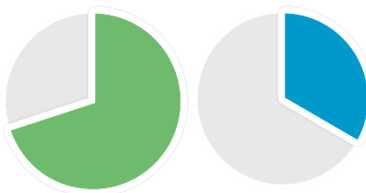
## Data and Intelligence.



Data is very important for the council. It helps us plan and improve services for people in Sefton.

We want to help our staff use data better. We will give them tools, skills, and training.

This will help us deliver better services and meet our goals in the Corporate Strategy.



We are already making changes. We have a new way to store data and use Microsoft Power BI (Business Intelligence) to analyse data.

This technology helps us keep up with service reporting and national requirements.



We are also using Power BI dashboards for Children's Services to manage performance. Next, we will bring our BI and performance resources together in one place.

We want to create a culture that values data science and data quality. We will share more data with other organisations.

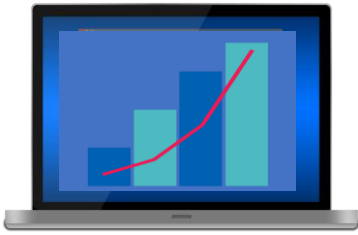
We will build on our information governance and ethical standards for using data.

### To do this we will:



- We will use good data to make better choices and improve our services for everyone.
- We will bring our team together to get better at understanding and using data.
- We will make data available to everyone who needs it to work better together.
- We will use new technology to make our work easier and smarter with data.
- We will make reports and dashboards that are easy to use and understand.
- We will use the best data sets to avoid having the same data in many places.
- We will make sure our data is always correct, complete, and useful.
- We will take care of our data from start to finish, including when we no longer need it.
- We will use data in a fair way, respect privacy, and keep data safe.
- We will buy systems that let us link data for better insights.





- We will give open access to data when it is right to do so, helping our communities.
- We will make sure our data is used in a way that helps everyone.
- We will always look for ways to improve how we use data to serve our residents better.

## Supporting the Workforce of the Future.



The staff in Sefton are very important to us. We want to help them do their best and help the people in Sefton.

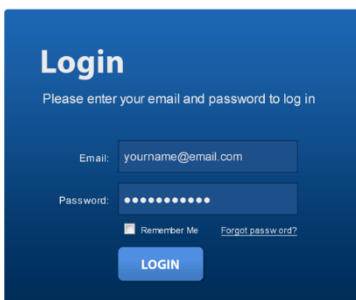
### To do this we will:



- We will give our staff the right tools and systems to work well.
- We will support flexible working so staff can have a good balance between work and home life.
- We will offer training in new and existing digital technologies to help staff learn and grow.
- We will build a network of ICT Champions to help staff use digital tools better.
- We will look into new technologies like robots and AI to make work easier and reduce extra tasks.
- We will use digital tools to help Adults, Children, and Families live safe and independent lives.







- We will improve IT systems to help children and their families get better services.
- We will provide ICT solutions to support services for children with special needs.
- We will review and redesign the system that helps children move to adult services.
- We will create online portals for children's services to help parents get more information.
- We will improve financial systems to help with services.
- We will make sure all systems meet the Council's legal duties as they change.
- We will work with Health and Community care to deliver digital services, including a Shared Care Record.
- We will support the Adult Social Care strategy and use technology to help care.
- We will review and redesign Case Management Systems to support Early Intervention Services.
- We will improve financial systems to help citizens manage their money online.
- We will develop online services for Adult Social Care, including a self-assessment tool.



## More Information about Sefton's Digital Strategy.

This is the easy read version of the Digital Strategy.

There is a more detailed and technical version for those who would like to see it.

It is available on Sefton Council's website.



[IT and Digital \(sefton.gov.uk\)](http://sefton.gov.uk)



If you want to get in touch about the digital strategy or need an alternative format please contact:

0345 140 0845



Or email: [contact@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:contact@sefton.gov.uk)

## Annual ICT Update Report

Date of meeting:	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2025		
Report to:	Overview and Security Committee – Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services		
Report of:	Executive Director Corporate and Commercial Services		
Portfolio:	Corporate Services		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

### Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the performance of the Managed Services ICT Contract over the last 12 months, currently provided by Agilisys. The report will cover the following areas: Agilisys Contract Performance against key performance indicators, Project Delivery and Security and the wider work of the ICT Client team in relation to ICT and Digital.

The report will also confirm the arrangements for the Managed Services ICT Contract from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025, following a procurement exercise completed in 2024.

### Recommendation(s):

(1) That members note the content of the report and the performance of the ICT Service over the last 12 months.

## 1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

### 1.1 Introduction/Background

The Agilisys Contract delivers the following services to Sefton Council

- The Core Operational Services
  1. Helpdesk Services
  2. Infrastructure and Hardware
  3. Network Services including Cyber Security
  4. Council User Services

# Agenda Item 5

5. Telephony
  6. Application Support including Cloud Services
  7. Data Collection & ICT Services Report
  8. Installation Services
  9. Active Directory Services
- Ad Hoc Services
    10. Project Management Services
    11. Major Upgrade Support
    12. Commissioning and Decommissioning support
    13. Ad Hoc Reporting
    14. Data Security Services
  - Schools ICT Services (Schools opt in for these bought back services)
    15. Support for Management Information Systems (MIS)
    16. ICT Support (Connectivity)
    17. Fully Managed Services

## 1.2 Contract Performance

- 1.2.1 During the contract period to date Agilisys have performed well. Performance against key performance indicators as reported monthly to Operational Board, over the last 12 months, can be found in Appendix A. It will be noted that between August and October 2024 the supplier did fail to meet targets for resolution of priority 4 (low priority) incidents and closing priority 2 requests. These failures were due to the departure of two field engineers from the team and delays in the resulting appointment of new candidates. It must be noted that although service credits have been raised and credited by Agilisys the team have acted as swiftly as possible to complete recruitment and have been impacted by the general shortage of staff in this space which has affected multiple authorities in the Liverpool City Region. Further failures were recorded in relation to the communication of priority 1 tickets, a service improvement plan has been put in place and this is regularly monitored, with improvements already seen.
- 1.2.2 Customer satisfaction has remained high during the last 12 months, any scores falling below expected standards are followed up on a case-by-case basis.

## 1.3 Project Delivery

As well as the provision of core business as usual ICT services as set out in section 1.1 Agilisys provide a significant volume of ad hoc projects to Sefton, in line with the provisions of the Contract. These range from system upgrades to major infrastructure programmes. Over the last year Agilisys has worked in partnership with the ICT Client team to deliver key programmes of work including (but not limited to)

- The implementation of a new Customer Experience Platform
- The website improvement programme, including a major system upgrade
- Power Platform implementation
- Upgrades to the corporate network
- Systems developments to support Children's and Adults Services
- The relocation of Sefton's Data Centre
- Cyber Security improvements

- 1.3.1 The key projects for 2024 were the Data Centre move, the website improvement programme and Cyber Security. These pieces of work supported the Councils Framework for Change Programme and the ~~Sefton 2030~~ vision, as well as delivering key priorities

# Agenda Item 5

within the Council's Digital Strategy approved at Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. These projects were completed with minimal disruption to operational service delivery.

## 1.4 Cyber Security

- 1.4.1 The risk associated with a Cyber continues to be significant issue for local authorities across the Country, the risk of an Information Security Breach due to a cyber-attack features on the Corporate Risk Register and although Sefton has made significant investment in its security tools, polices, and licenses the threat to our network is still significant. Over the last 12 months we have seen both private and public sector organisations targeted, with the NHS, Transport for London, and Ticketmaster amongst the highest profile.
- 1.4.2 Fifty percent of businesses recall breaches or attacks in the last 12 months (a significant increase from 32% in the previous year) rising to 70% for medium businesses and 74% for large. The most common type of attack is phishing with 84% of businesses identifying these types of attacks. (source Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2024, DCMS).
- 1.4.2 The Sefton ICT Client team have worked in partnership with Agilisys colleagues throughout the year to strengthen the Councils security profile, in addition the team have worked closely with internal training colleagues to strengthen our local training offer. One of the key benefits of the current ICT contract with Agilisys is the access to a team of security experts. In addition, this year the Sefton Client team has secured Cyber Insurance cover for the Council.

## 1.5 ICT Client Team

Further to the work completed in partnership with Agilisys as outlined within this paper the ICT client team have also delivered services and support for ICT across the Council, including specialist ICT Procurement and Contract Management for approximately 250 ICT Contracts. The team provide a dedicated System development support for both Children's and Adults Social Care, as well as Education functions, supporting both the Children's Improvement Programme, and the SEND improvement programme.

The team also support the wider Digital Strategy of the Council, and this year have worked with officers both internally and externally to draft the next iteration of a strategy for Sefton which went out for external consultation in the summer of 2024, this new strategy is due to a launched early 2025 and will support both the corporate plan and the transformation priorities of Sefton over the next three years.

Finally, as the current contract with Agilisys ends on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September over the last twelve months the team completed a procurement exercise for an ICT Managed Services Contract which will come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025 for a contract term of four plus one options year. The award recommendation was taken to Cabinet for decision on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December and the author is pleased to confirm that Agilisys will continue to deliver services for an additional four plus one optional year contract term.

## 2. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

## 3. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

## 4. Corporate Risk Implications

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There are no risk implications

## 5 Staffing HR Implications

There are no staffing/HR implications

## 6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The current contract with Agilisys performs well and has delivered significant savings for the authority compared to the previous contractual arrangement.
- 6.2 The relationship between the partners is good, with robust challenge where needed but a shared vision and approach to service improvement and risk, which has provided significant benefits to the authority, particularly around cyber security challenges

## Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications.
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b> Not applicable
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b> The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral Impact

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

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7883/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5983/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Not applicable

## Implementation Date for the Decision:

Immediately following the meeting.

Contact Officer:	Helen Spreadbury
Telephone Number:	07583 057822

Email Address:	Helen.Spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk
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**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Key Performance Indicators

**Background Papers:**

There are no background paper to this report

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# KPI Dashboard: October 2024

**Agilisys**

		Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	June-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Target Performance Level	Pass/Fail	Current Month Failure Type	Points
KPI 1(a)	KPI1 (a) System Availability [excepting cloud]	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98.50%	Pass		
KPI 1(b)	KPI1 (b) System Availability cloud services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 4 (a)	KPI 4 (a) - Answering telephone calls made to the Service Desk within an average of 60 seconds of the telephone call first being made	29s	27s	18s	29s	30s	43s	29s	29s	29s	32s	32s	43s	36s	<60s	Pass		
KPI 4 (b)	KPI 4(b) FTF resolve 80% resolved within 15 minutes of being made to the Service Desk	93.7%	92.9%	96.5%	86.1%	93.4%	91.97%	99.66%	93.60%	94.30%	90.4%	93.03%	90.63%	90.37%	80%	Pass		
KPI 5 (a)	Resolving Priority 1 incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<1	Pass		
KPI 5(b)	Resolving Priority 2 incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<1	Pass		
KPI 5 (c)	Resolving Priority 3 incidents	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Pass		
KPI 5(d)	Resolving Priority 4 incidents	99.53%	99.66%	99.74%	99.81%	99.46%	99.26%	99.57%	99.34%	99.24%	99.81%	99.05%	97.48%	97.6%	99%	Fail	Minor	2
KPI 6 (b)	Closing Priority 2 Requests	99.5%	99.10%	99.29%	99.45%	99.27%	99.17%	99.16%	99.1%	99.21%	100%	98.77%	97.68%	96.99%	99%	Fail	Minor	2
KPI 10(a)	Availability of critical applications	99.51%	99.94%	99.95%	99.57%	99.95%	99.85%	100%	99.98%	99.81%	99.97%	99.73%	99.94%	100%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 10(b)	Availability of noncritical applications	99.94%	99.96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.50%	Pass		
KPI 15	Maintain a Customer Satisfaction Score above 70%	87%	93%	91%	91%	92%	92%	93%	89%	93%	93%	92%	88%	88%	70%	Pass		
KPI 14	Communication of Incident status										1	1	0	0	0	Pass		

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