



COUNCIL SUMMONS

To Members of the Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Councillor

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

be held on **Thursday 22nd September, 2016 at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall, Bootle** to

transact the business set out on the agenda overleaf.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Carney".

Chief Executive

Town Hall,
Southport

Wednesday 14 September 2016

Please contact Steve Pearce, Democratic Services Manager
on 0151 934 2046 or e-mail steve.pearce@sefton.gov.uk

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

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A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary interest, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, before leaving the meeting room during the discussion on that particular item.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

(Pages 7 - 16)

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016

4. Mayor's Communications

Public Session

5. Matters Raised by the Public

To deal with matters raised by members of the public resident within the Borough, of which notice has been given in accordance with the procedures relating to public questions, motions or petitions set out in Paragraph 36 to 46 of the Council and Committee Procedure Rules in Chapter 4 of the Council Constitution.

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

Council Business Session

6. Questions Raised by Members of the Council

To receive and consider questions to Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Spokespersons for any of the Joint Authorities upon any matter within their portfolio/area of responsibility, of which notice has been given by Members of the Council in accordance with Paragraph 48 to 50 of the Council and Committee Procedure Rules, set out in Chapter 4 of the Council Constitution.

7. Membership of Committees 2016/17

To consider any changes to the Membership of any committees etc.

- 8. Four Year Financial Settlement** (Pages 17 - 24)
Report of the Head of Corporate Resources
- 9. Local Government Act 1972 - Section 85 - Attendance at Meetings** (Pages 25 - 28)
Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance
- 10. Motion Submitted by Councillor David Barton**
To consider the following Motion submitted by Councillor David Barton:
- “This Council:
- Notes that there are a range of options that provide heritage- related funding provided by Central Government and various National Bodies applicable to heritage sites owned by both the public and private sectors within and across the Sefton Metropolitan Borough as a whole;
 - Notes that these funding bodies: "The Heritage Lottery Fund" (HLF); "Funds for Historic Buildings" (FFHB), "The Heritage Alliance" and "The Big Lottery Fund" may support with the cost of restoration across Sefton as a whole, with special regard to its multiple proud Conservation areas from Southport to Bootle. Various grant programmes that support projects to give historic buildings and heritage assets a new lease of life and for which local authorities are eligible to apply;
 - Recognises that potential funding organisations are presently available for an assortment of heritage buildings across Sefton Metropolitan Borough to support our local and regional economy, and that in order to truly deliver the best future for “Imagine Sefton 2030” these same potential funding organisations must be accessed as soon as possible;
 - Applauds the work of all those Council Officers involved across the multiple Sefton Departments that have already demonstrated vast prowess in getting the best value for the Sefton pound and their continued commitment to improving our communities, particularly with regards to local heritage;
 - Commends the work of those within both the Local Sefton Authority Departments and the individual land owners

from Southport to Bootle that have already engaged in the exciting process of Community Conservation;

- Believes that is in the interests of the residents of Sefton Metropolitan Borough, the North West of England and Britain as one nation that this Local Authority pursues these additional funding organisations and bodies in earnest; and
- Calls upon Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to make stronger use of its website and media communications to provide a gateway for these funding organisations to both the public and private sectors with the objective of truly delivering for the residents and visitors of Sefton MBC.”

11. Motion submitted by Councillor McKinley

To consider the following Motion submitted by Councillor McKinley:

“Developing a Merseyside-wide strategic and operational plan to meet the functional literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of the adults of the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

The devolution deal for the LCR includes planning and delivering the learning and skills agenda. This is a great opportunity to develop a comprehensive wide ranging skills strategy that will meet the future needs of business and offer employment opportunities to our residents. It is recognised that we are making great progress in some areas with the allocation of £20 million plus which the local authorities have the lead on and will help to drive the learning and skills agenda. However, these opportunities will not be maximised for all residents unless we address the adult literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of all residents in a systematic and planned way.

Poor standards of English, maths and ICT is a significant factor in trapping individuals in the downward cycle of poverty and deprivation. Confidence in mathematics, written and spoken English are transformational skills that can make a huge difference to the lives and employment prospects of LCR residents. In Sefton and North Liverpool we have one of the highest concentrations of deprived lower super output areas in the country and amongst the highest level of need for adult literacy, numeracy and ICT in the UK.

Some good work is already in place, unfortunately, in spite of some excellent work done by local colleges and others, many areas across the City Region continue to be blighted by intergenerational unemployment and poor skills. A more

strategic approach to adult literacy, numeracy and ICT will help to underpin any strategy to develop wider skills.

The LCR Employment and Skills Board is working to address the skills gap and a clearly focused strategic and operational plan for literacy, numeracy and ICT will help to drive this.

Sefton Council actively supports and endorses the development of a holistic Merseyside-wide plan to meet the adult literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of the LCR. Such a plan to be based on clear demographic profiling of areas of greatest need and work with all appropriate stakeholders to prioritise and target these areas to address residents' functional literacy, numeracy and ICT needs.”

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

COUNCIL

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 14TH JULY, 2016

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Brodie - Browne) in the Chair
The Deputy Chair (Councillor Kevin Cluskey) Vice
Chair

Councillors Ashton, Atkinson, David Barton,
Jo Barton, Bennett, Bliss, Booth, Brennan, Burns,
Byrom, Carr, Carragher, Linda Cluskey, Dams,
Dawson, Dodd, Dutton, Fairclough, Friel, Gannon,
Grace, Hands, Hardy, Jamieson, Jones, Keith,
John Kelly, John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Daniel Lewis,
Dan T. Lewis, Maher, McGinnity, McGuire,
McKinley, Moncur, Murphy, Brenda O'Brien,
Michael O'Brien, O'Hanlon, Page, Preece, Pullin,
Robinson, Roche, Roscoe, Sayers, Shaw, Spencer,
Thomas, Lynne Thompson, Tweed, Veidman,
Weavers, Webster, Bill Welsh and Marianne Welsh

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ball, Bradshaw, Cummins, McCann, Owens, Pitt and Anne Thompson.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interest were made and the Members concerned left the Council Chamber during the consideration of the item:

Member	Minute No	Nature of Interest
Councillors Dodd, Dutton, Hands, John Kelly, Dan T. Lewis, Brenda O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, O'Hanlon, Preece,	32 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Maher	Members of the Planning Committee

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Roscoe,
Spencer,
Thomas,
Tweed,
Veidman and
Marianne
Welsh

25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2016, the Adjourned Annual Council Meeting held on 19 May 2016 and the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

26. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Battle of the Somme Commemorations

The Mayor reported that he was very honoured to attend the Battle of the Somme Commemoration Event at Southport on 1 July 2016 and to read the poem and lay a wreath. The two events held at Bootle and Southport were very well attended and well organised by the officers.

Ernest Jones - Legion of Honour Medal

The Mayor reported that he was privileged to present Mr Ernest Jones with the Legion of Honour Medal at Southport Hospital on 21 June 2016. Unfortunately Mr Jones was extremely ill at that time and sadly passed away on 25 June 2016.

27. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor reported that no matters had been raised by Members of the Council.

28. QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

- Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson);

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- Councillor Booth to the Cabinet Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson);
- Councillor Hands to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough);
- Councillor Lynne Thompson to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough);
- Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care (Councillor Cummins);
- Councillor McGuire to the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care (Councillor Cummins);
- Councillor McGuire to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher);
- Councillor McGuire to the Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing (Councillor Hardy)

together with the responses given. Supplementary question were responded to by the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Skills, and Locality Services.

29. CAPITAL PROGRAMME CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS 2016/17

Further to Minute No. 15 of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 June 2016, the Council considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources which provided details of the 2016/17 Capital Allocations received to date and their proposed use in the development of a new starts programme for 2016/2017. The report indicated that £5.245m of new investments from the Single Capital Pot were aimed to improve the facilities and services to residents throughout Sefton.

It was moved by Councillor Maher, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED: That

- (1) approval be given to the inclusion within the Capital Investment Plan of the capital schemes to be funded from the 2016/17 Single Capital Pot, as outlined in Appendix A of the report;
- (2) approval be given to the inclusion within the Capital Investment Plan of the capital scheme to be funded from Prudential Borrowing as outlined in Appendix B of the report; and
- (3) approval be given to the inclusion within the Capital Investment Plan of the self-funded capital schemes as outlined in Appendix C of the report.

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30. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Council considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2015/16 and Councillors John Kelly, Murphy, Page and Robinson highlighted the key areas of work undertaken by the respective Committees and thanked Members and Officers for their support and assistance during 2015/16.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16 be noted.

31. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2016/17

Councillor Grace proposed that Councillor Thomas should replace Councillor Burns as one of the Council's representatives on the Merseyside Police and Crime Panel and the Sefton Safer Communities Partnership.

RESOLVED:

That the change in representation on the Merseyside Police and Crime Panel and the Sefton Safer Communities Partnership be approved.

32. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAHER

It was moved by Councillor Maher, seconded by Councillor Lappin:

"Sefton believes that the effects of climate change are clearly apparent on the environment we all share.

Fracking (hydraulic fracturing for shale gas) as an energy source negatively adds to global climate change and locally could:

- Potentially pollute or affect water resources in the area due to the chemical process of extraction or any improperly managed storage of 'flowback' water;
- Impact on water resources due to the impact of the high volume water consumption used in the process; and
- Increase the risk of any seismic activity from hydraulic fracturing which may impact on areas of population.

This Council recognises the complexity of recent decisions by Lancashire County Council to refuse planning applications (to drill, fracture and flow

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test up to four wells at both Roseacre Wood and Preston New Road). These decisions highlight the continuing reservations and commonly held concerns regarding the impact of such operations, particularly in these locations relating to amenity, noise, transport and landscape grounds.

This Council agrees to confirm its opposition to unconventional gas extraction (including underground coal gasification, coal bed methane and fracking under Sefton and neighbouring local authority areas) until such time as the Council is satisfied as to the safety and regulation of the processes and the robustness of mechanisms to mitigate short and long term impacts.

The Council would expect that any adverse risks relating to community, environmental, transport and health impacts would be fully addressed should any proposals be submitted for planning consent and that any tangible economic and community benefits will be evidenced fully to the Council's satisfaction.

This Council also calls on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the other Liverpool City Region local authorities to pass a similar motion."

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Weavers, seconded by Councillor Booth that the Motion be amended by the addition of the words at the end of the first paragraph:

"We are fortunate that we have on our local coast a tidal and wind resource which could enable us to provide local consumers with clean and sustainable energy."

Following debate, on a show of hands, the Mayor declared the amendment was **lost** by 29 votes to 11.

A further **amendment** was moved by Councillor Gannon, seconded by Councillor Bennett that the Motion be amended by the addition of the following new paragraph at the end of the third paragraph:

"This Council notes that there are possible significant adverse impacts from shale gas exploration and exploitation, including water contamination and air pollution and this Council calls on her Majesty's Government to impose a moratorium on shale gas in the UK."

Following debate, on a show of hands, the Mayor declared the amendment was **lost** by 29 votes to 11.

Following debate and in accordance with Paragraph 93 of Chapter 4 in the Constitution, the voting on the Motion was recorded and the Members of the Council present at the time, voted as follows:

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FOR THE MOTION:

Councillors Ashton, Atkinson, David Barton, Jo Barton, Bennett, Bliss, Booth, Brennan, Burns, Byrom, Carr, Carragher, Kevin Cluskey, Linda Cluskey, Dams, Fairclough, Friel, Gannon, Grace, Hardy, Jamieson, Jones, Keith, John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Maher, McGinnity, McGuire, McKinley, Moncur, Murphy, Page, Pullin, Robinson, Roche, Sayers, Lynne Thompson, Weavers and Webster.

AGAINST THE MOTION:

None

ABSTENTIONS:

Councillors Dawson, Shaw, Bill Welsh and The Mayor.

The Mayor declared that the Motion was carried by 39 votes to none with 4 abstentions and it was

RESOLVED:

Sefton believes that the effects of climate change are clearly apparent on the environment we all share.

Fracking (hydraulic fracturing for shale gas) as an energy source negatively adds to global climate change and locally could:

- Potentially pollute or affect water resources in the area due to the chemical process of extraction or any improperly managed storage of 'flowback' water;
- Impact on water resources due to the impact of the high volume water consumption used in the process; and
- Increase the risk of any seismic activity from hydraulic fracturing which may impact on areas of population.

This Council recognises the complexity of recent decisions by Lancashire County Council to refuse planning applications (to drill, fracture and flow test up to four wells at both Roseacre Wood and Preston New Road). These decisions highlight the continuing reservations and commonly held concerns regarding the impact of such operations, particularly in these locations relating to amenity, noise, transport and landscape grounds.

This Council agrees to confirm its opposition to unconventional gas extraction (including underground coal gasification, coal bed methane and fracking under Sefton and neighbouring local authority areas) until such time as the Council is satisfied as to the safety and regulation of the processes and the robustness of mechanisms to mitigate short and long term impacts.

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The Council would expect that any adverse risks relating to community, environmental, transport and health impacts would be fully addressed should any proposals be submitted for planning consent and that any tangible economic and community benefits will be evidenced fully to the Council's satisfaction.

This Council also calls on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the other Liverpool City Region local authorities to pass a similar motion.

33. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MCGUIRE

It was moved by Councillor McGuire, seconded by Councillor Maher and unanimously

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that:

- Honorary Consuls ("Consuls") aim to promote and strengthen mutual understanding between themselves and local governmental, commercial and business bodies whilst assisting when necessary, residents of Merseyside who come from the countries the Consuls represent;
- the role of the Consuls is to promote at a local and national level, a mutual understanding between citizens in the Boroughs of Merseyside and the countries the Consuls represent;
- such cooperation is useful in reducing racism as well as promoting jobs and/or commerce within the Merseyside region;
- Consuls work with local councils, mainly through Mayors, in order to foster good international relations;
- a number of Embassies and High Commissions have not appointed Honorary consuls who are resident in the Merseyside region to represent the citizens of those countries, locally.

This Council resolves to request the Mayor of Sefton to work in conjunction with the Liverpool and Sefton Chamber of Commerce and the Honorary Consulate of Finland for the Merseyside region, in order to write to the Embassies and High Commissions who have not appointed Honorary Consuls who reside within the Merseyside region. This would be with a view to asking those Embassies and High Commissions to consider appointing Honorary Consuls who would reside within the Sefton and the Merseyside region and work with local councils in order to further international understanding and mutual cooperation at a local level.

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34. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HARDY

It was moved by Councillor Hardy, seconded by Councillor McGuire and unanimously

RESOLVED:

We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country. We in Sefton Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Sefton Council will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have support needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia.

We will reassure all people living in Sefton that they are valued members of our community.

35. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HARDY

It was moved by Councillor Hardy, seconded by Councillor Lappin and unanimously

RESOLVED:

This Council:

- Notes that 2016 is the twenty-first anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which saw over 8,000 Muslim men and boys killed by Serbian nationalist forces;
- Notes that in 2009 the European Parliament passed a resolution that 11 July should be recognised as the day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide all over the EU; and in 2015 urged the development of educational and cultural programmes that promote an understanding of the causes of such atrocities and raise awareness about the need to nurture peace and to promote human rights and interreligious tolerance;
- Applauds the work of those involved in the pursuit of justice for the victims and their surviving relatives, including the International Commission of Missing People (ICMP) and the Mothers of Srebrenica, whose courage and humility in the face of unthinkable horror is an inspiration to us all; and
- Commends the work of the charity, Remembering Srebrenica, in raising awareness of this tragic and preventable genocide and working in communities across Britain to help them learn the lessons of Srebrenica.

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The Council resolves to:

- Support Srebrenica memorial events in July each year throughout Sefton as part of the UK-wide Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week; and
- Support the work of Remembering Srebrenica in communities across Sefton to learn the lessons from Srebrenica to tackle hatred and intolerance to help build a better, safer and more cohesive society for everyone.

36. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAWSON

It was moved by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor McGuire:

“This Council:

1. Recognises and respects the national majority viewpoint expressed in the recent national referendum on EU membership;
2. Notes that the voters resident within the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton expressed by majority a collective wish that Britain should remain in the EU;
3. Expresses concern at the lack of clarity in content and timetable as to what measures are going to be taken in respect of several key issues identified in the Referendum the coming months;
4. Recognising that EU funding is currently available for a range of projects, training and investments to support our local and regional economy, and recognising the present uncertainty as to how these funding streams might be replaced, believes that arrangements must be made to secure equivalent replacement funding;
5. Calls on the Government to clarify the funding situation in respect of all EU-funded projects, offer certainty to our region, and to continue programmes as previously-envisaged;
6. Seeks assurances from the UK Government and any successor government that it will match, pound for pound, any funding streams that appear to be now at risk;
7. Believes that it is in the interests of the residents of Sefton Metropolitan Borough, the North West of England and Britain as a whole that the United Kingdom should remain within the Single European Market; and
8. Requests the Leader of the Council inform the Government and the Local Government Association of the Council's views on this matter

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with the intention that Sefton MBC should work with other Local Authorities towards ensuring that the negotiating position of the United Kingdom with the EU has the single market at its core.”

Following debate, on a show of hands, the Mayor declared that the Motion was carried by 51 votes to none with 4 abstentions and it was

RESOLVED:

This Council:

1. Recognises and respects the national majority viewpoint expressed in the recent national referendum on EU membership;
2. Notes that the voters resident within the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton expressed by majority a collective wish that Britain should remain in the EU;
3. Expresses concern at the lack of clarity in content and timetable as to what measures are going to be taken in respect of several key issues identified in the Referendum the coming months;
4. Recognising that EU funding is currently available for a range of projects, training and investments to support our local and regional economy, and recognising the present uncertainty as to how these funding streams might be replaced, believes that arrangements must be made to secure equivalent replacement funding;
5. Calls on the Government to clarify the funding situation in respect of all EU-funded projects, offer certainty to our region, and to continue programmes as previously-envisaged;
6. Seeks assurances from the UK Government and any successor government that it will match, pound for pound, any funding streams that appear to be now at risk;
7. Believes that it is in the interests of the residents of Sefton Metropolitan Borough, the North West of England and Britain as a whole that the United Kingdom should remain within the Single European Market; and
8. Requests the Leader of the Council inform the Government and the Local Government Association of the Council's views on this matter with the intention that Sefton MBC should work with other Local Authorities towards ensuring that the negotiating position of the United Kingdom with the EU has the single market at its core.

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6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		✓	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To ensure Cabinet is informed of the four year financial settlement offer and to consider whether it wishes to recommend acceptance of the offer to Council.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no revenue costs. Acceptance of the Government's offer will provide greater clarity of financial resources that are to be provided by the Government for the next three financial years. It will also assist in the determination of the overall budget gap up to 2019/20.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal	
Human Resources	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

The certainty of future resources from Government would assist in the planning of the budget up to 2019/20 and would enable part achievement of the existing budget gap.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD4262/16) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD3545/16) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

The offer of a four year settlement could be rejected. However, this would create a significant amount of financial uncertainty as to the available resources that the Council would have to balance the budget for the period from 2017/18 – 2019/20.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet and the subsequent approval by Council.

Contact Officer: Stephan Van Arendsen
Tel: 0151 934 4081
Email: stephan.vanarendsen@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the approach to Local Government Finance is currently the subject of review. At present this is focussed on 2 primary areas, the offer of 4 year funding certainty (2016/17 to 2019/20) and the development of a system for 100% Business Rates Retention that will be piloted from 2017/18 and introduced nationally before the end of this parliament in 2020.
- 1.2 Through the Liverpool City Region (LCR), the Council has agreed to engage and take the opportunity to work with Central Government Departments on developing the pilot for the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme.
- 1.3 Whilst this work continues a decision is required as to whether the Council wishes to accept the offer of a 4 year funding settlement for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20.

2.0 Current position with regard to 100% Business Rates Retention

- 2.1 As previously reported to Members, Central Government policy is to introduce a national 100% business rates retention scheme before the end of this parliament in 2020, which will result in a fundamental change in the way that local government is financed. This introduction will coincide with the termination of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) once the new 100% business rates retention system is introduced.
- 2.2 In the 2016 Budget, it was announced that Government would pilot approaches to 100% business rates retention in the LCR and Greater Manchester. By engaging in this process, it was considered that Councils and the City Region would have the opportunity to have a more direct involvement in the development of both the pilot scheme that is proposed from April 2017 and ultimately the national scheme.
- 2.3 Work and engagement with representatives of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is continuing at this time and this engagement is based upon the following principles:-
 - The pilot should be used to establish how a stable funding mechanism could be established, including an appropriate re-distribution mechanism that is focussed on need;
 - Those Councils that are engaged in a pilot should not be placed in an adverse financial position to that which would have been experienced had they not participated;
 - The new system must ensure genuine localism, i.e. genuine local responsibility and control across the whole of local government funding with risks retained at the appropriate level;
 - Any transfer of responsibilities to local government should not simply be a transfer of risk or of administrative savings or burdens;
 - Any transfer of grants must be fully reflected in the revised baseline funding for individual authorities, and without any pre-conditions for use or spending;
 - The new system must deal with the risk arising from the appeals system and determine at what level appeals should be administered; and
 - What additional incentives could be provided to stimulate growth

- 2.4 With the current austerity programme, the largest contribution to the Government's national deficit reduction plan has already come from local government. The impact of these cuts across local authorities has varied, however the disproportionate impact that they have had makes it crucial that as part of the engagement local authorities seek to have adequate and appropriate powers devolved to them so that they are able to mitigate the impact as far as possible.
- 2.5 With regard to the current timetable for the development of the pilot scheme the following is anticipated:

September 2016	DCLG to agree with HM Treasury funding arrangements for pilot options
December 2016	Pilot funding proposals published as part of the consultation on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
January 2016	Liverpool City Region responds to proposals in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
February 2017	Final Local Government Finance Settlement approved by Parliament

- 2.6 Whilst this timetable provides an indicative framework, it currently lacks the specific detail that will determine when local decisions will be required to be made. It is likely however that this will come through between September and November and appropriate reports will be developed for Members at that point in time.

3.0 Consideration of the Government's four year revenue funding offer to local authorities

- 3.1 Alongside proposals for the development of a 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme, on 10 March 2016, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to Councils to confirm his offer of a 4 year settlement (2016/17 to 2019/20) in order to help Councils strengthen financial management and assist in planning service reform.
- 3.2 In order to be eligible for this security and flexibility, Councils have been invited to accept the 4 year settlement by 5pm on 14 October 2016 and must provide a link to their published efficiency plan.

Efficiency Plan

- 3.3 The requirement to publish an efficiency plan is intended to be simple and straightforward and can be linked to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. However, the Secretary of State has said that the plan should show how this greater certainty can bring opportunities for further savings. The plan should cover the full 4 year period and be open and transparent about the benefits that greater funding certainty will bring to both the Council and its community. Councils should collaborate with local neighbours and public sector partners and link into devolution deals where appropriate.

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Potential Impact of the 4 year settlement

3.4 As discussed, Sefton is engaged with DCLG on the development of the Business rates retention pilot, and in the event that it agrees to participate, this will supersede the requirement to accept the 4 year settlement. This reflects the principle that participating authorities cannot be in an adverse position as a result of engagement in the pilot process. At this stage however, the timelines for considering the impact of the pilot scheme and accepting the 4 year offer are not yet aligned, therefore it is considered prudent to make a decision on the 4 year offer pending final details being available in regards of the pilot.

3.5 The indicative figures for the 4 year settlement have been built into the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The impact of this together with other pressures has resulted in the estimate that the Council faces a funding gap of £64m from 2017/18 to 2019/20.

3.6 The Offer includes Revenue Support Grant, Transitional Grant, and Rural Services Delivery Grant allocations and is shown in the Table below:

Sefton Council	Actual	Multi-Year Settlement		
	2016/17 £000	2017/8 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000
Revenue Support Grant	-38.577	-27.059	-19.440	-11.762
Transition Grant	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Deliver Grant	0	0	0	0

3.7 In addition, tariffs and top-ups in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 will not be altered for reasons related to the relative needs of local authorities, and in the final year may be subject to the implementation of 100% business rates retention.

Sefton Council	Actual	Multi-Year Settlement		
	2016/17 £000	2017/8 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000
Tariff	0	0	0	0
Top-Up Grant	- 24.464	-24.945	-25.681	-26.502

It should be noted that the 4 year offer does not include a number of significant funding streams including Business Rates Local Share, Public Health Grant, Education Services Grant, Better Care Fund, and New Homes Bonus.

3.8 In determining whether to accept the 4 year settlement the key consideration is therefore does the Council consider that this will be the most advantageous financial option over that period or is there the potential for Central Government to offer more support in future years to those Councils that do not accept this offer.

3.9 The assessment of the 2 options is made inherently difficult due to the absence of any statistical information as to what the impact will be for Councils who do not accept the offer, as such it is more of an assessment of risk. Consideration could therefore be given to the following in order that an informed decision can be made:-

- To what extent would the acceptance of the offer support long term strategic planning for the Council and the development of a sustainable financial plan?;
- Does the flexibility offered re Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept support the Council in meeting its operational and financial objectives?;
- To what extent does the offer remove the uncertainty currently associated with the annual Local Government Finance Settlement?;
- Is it envisaged that current Government policy with regard to the management of the public finances will change over the next 3 years and additional resources could be allocated to Councils?; and
- Is it envisaged that based upon forecast economic performance additional funding will be available at a national level and this could lead to increased funding for local government and individual Councils?

- 3.10 It can be seen from the above that a true financial assessment of the impact of not accepting the offer is not possible as there is insufficient information available. For example, following the recent Brexit vote, it is suggested that national growth will be limited thus placing greater pressure on the national finances, however following the recent Prime Ministerial changes the objective that public finances should be in surplus by the end of the current Parliament appears to have changed.
- 3.11 It should be noted however that despite these developments, there has been no indication that the political policy re the four year offer will be changed or that additional funding will be allocated to public services. Likewise it is currently not anticipated that there will be an emergency budget or significant policy changes with regard to public finances before the deadline for accepting the offer (14 October 2016). Any such developments would likely take place in the autumn statement and inform the Financial Settlement in December although this could be the subject of change.
- 3.12 Sefton is therefore in a similar position to all local authorities in terms of the issues it needs to consider with regard to the offer.
- 3.13 Whilst an assessment of future policy cannot be made, in the event that the offer is accepted, it will provide certainty with regard to future funding which will in turn aid the strategic planning of the Council. Such an approach will therefore remove the pressure that arises and the discretion that can be applied by Central Government to annual settlements.
- 3.14 In addition, this offer will also confirm the flexibility available to the Council through its Council Tax strategy. The approach to Council Tax policy nationally has been the subject of great debate and since 2010 a number of policies have been applied including the introduction of a Council tax cap, incentives around 'freezes' and latterly the opportunity to raise additional income locally to support Adult Social Care. The 4 year offer therefore provides an opportunity to remove this uncertainty and risk of national influence and provide maximum flexibility to local authorities in developing their own approaches that align with their local needs and priorities.
- 3.15 At this stage it is not known how many local authorities will accept the offer available however the initial indications are that a number are welcoming the option as it supports sustainable financial planning, removes uncertainty and

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provides maximum flexibility with regard to future Council Tax strategy. This approach is consistent with the other local authorities in the City Region.

Councils that do not take up the offer

- 3.16 Those councils that choose not to accept the offer, or do not qualify, will be subject to the existing yearly process for determining the local government finance settlement. As a result allocations could be subject to additional reductions dependant on the fiscal climate and the need to make further savings to reduce the deficit. In addition the government do not expect any further multi-year settlements to be offered over the course of this parliament.

Report to: Council **Date of Meeting:** 28 January 2016

Subject: Local Government Act 1972 – Section 85 - Attendance at Meetings

Report of: Head of Regulation and Compliance **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

This report requests authority to approve and authorise the absence of Councillor Ball from attendance at Council and Committee Meetings pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommendation(s)

That the current absence from all Council and Committee Meetings of Councillor Ball due to ill health be authorised and approved for a six month period until 21 March 2017 pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
3	Environmental Sustainability		√	
4	Health and Well-Being		√	
5	Children and Young People		√	
6	Creating Safe Communities		√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		√	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) **Revenue Costs** – Not applicable

(B) **Capital Costs** – Not applicable

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal – The effect of the legislation is contained within the contents of the report.	
Human Resources – Not applicable	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

None.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 4245/16) has been consulted and has no comments on the report.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD 3528/16) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

With immediate effect following the Council meeting

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that if an Elected Member fails to attend any Council or Committee Meeting for a period of six months he or she ceases to be an Elected Member, unless the absence was approved by the Council before the expiry of the six month period.
- 1.2 Unfortunately Councillor Ball is unable to attend any meeting due to ill health. She last attended a Council Meeting on 19 May 2016.
- 1.3 Members are requested to approve her absence from all Council or Committee Meetings for a six months period from the date of this meeting until 21 March 2017.

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