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Sefton Council 

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

DATE: 12th June 2018

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Birkdale Room, Town Hall, Southport

Member

Councillor

Cllr. Susan Bradshaw (Chair)

Cllr. Leslie Byrom C.B.E. (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. Iain Brodie - Browne

Cllr. Mhairi Doyle, M.B.E.

Cllr. Janet Grace

Cllr. Simon Jamieson

Cllr. Nina Killen

Cllr. Daniel Lewis

Cllr. Patrick McKinley

Cllr. Samantha Marshall

Substitute

Councillor

Cllr. Carla Thomas

Cllr. Paula Murphy

Cllr. Dr. John Pugh

Cllr. Steve McGinnity

Cllr. Michael Roche

Cllr. Denise Dutton

Cllr. John Sayers

Cllr. Simon Shaw

Cllr. Diane Roscoe

Cllr. Janis Blackburne

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Telephone: 0151 934 2068
Fax:
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** (Pages 3 - 4)
Members are requested to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary or personal interest

An advice note on declaration of interests is attached
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)
Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2018
- 4. The arvato Contract**
Presentation by the Head of Corporate Resources
- 5. Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final Report – June 2018** (Pages 11 - 22)
Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance
- 6. Locally Administered Business Rates Relief Scheme** (Pages 23 - 40)
Report of the Head of Corporate Resources
- 7. Work Programme 2018/19, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 41 - 62)
Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance
- 8. Cabinet Member Report – March 2018 to June 2018** (Pages 63 - 80)
Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance

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.

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

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL,
SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 6TH MARCH, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Bradshaw (in the Chair)
Councillor Byrom (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Booth, Linda Cluskey, Grace,
Daniel Lewis and McKinley

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Paulette Lappin

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jamieson, McCann and Owens.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

53. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

54. THE ARVATO CONTRACT

The Committee received a presentation from Stephan Van Arendsen, Head of Corporate Resources on the arvato contract.

Mr. Van Arendsen:-

- Set out the context and that the current 10 year contract expired on 30 September 2018 and had an annual value £15.4m; that services included transactional finance, HR and ICT; that the Council decision was to bring 5 of the 6 services back in house; and that a new ICT provider would be procured
- Updated on the governance exit plan arrangements that included a Steering Board established for with arvato
- Updated on the exit plan associated with the following workstreams Legal, Financial & Commercial; HR & Payroll; ICT; Operational Services; and Schools
- The Council aims and objectives that included that Service delivery was maintained between now and exit and that the Council could meet the requirements operationally and financially from PSR9 - ICT and Digital

Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 6TH MARCH, 2018

- Current key issues associated with the exit plan relating to contracts; engagement; timing and quality of information provision; understanding how these services work; adherence to the exit plan; Key Performance Indicators; risk management, and the current status of arvato
- The ICT procurement exercise undertaken and that this was different to anything the Council had done before, namely utilising an invitation to participate in dialogue; that 6 submissions were received by the deadline date and that it was considered that 2 could progress to the next stage; and that the contract would commence on 1 October 2018
- Concluded that this was a major project that was highly complex, was taking a vast amount of resources and was very sensitive; that the risks associated with the project reflected this and required careful management as did the current provider; that the largest amount of information would be received during April – July 2018; that the external provider market for ICT had changed significantly in recent years; that procurement was ongoing and any successful bidder would need to meet the Council's needs; that Cabinet and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services would continue to be engaged; and suggested that a further update be provided to this Committee at the next meeting

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:-

- The consultations and communication undertaken with staff regarding the contract
- The numbers of staff at risk

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Stephan Van Arendsen be thanked for his informative presentation; and
- (2) it be noted that the Head of Corporate Resources will submit a further update to the next meeting of the Committee.

55. EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources on the ongoing review of the Council's emergency planning arrangements; and which highlighted the key strands of work, expected outcomes and progress made.

The report indicated that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 delivered a single framework for civil protection in the UK; that Part 1 of the Act established a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level; that Local

Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 6TH
MARCH, 2018

Authorities were identified as Category 1 responders, at the core of the response to most emergencies; that the Council maintained a small, dedicated Emergency Planning team in order to meet these requirements; and that the team was an intrinsic part of the Merseyside Resilience Forum (MRF), working with external partners who would also be involved in the response to local emergencies.

The report also indicated that following terror attacks in Manchester on 22 May 2017 and the Grenfell Tower fire on 15 September 2017 these factors had brought emergency preparedness into sharp focus, and the profile of emergency planning and the need to have robust plans in place had never been higher. This had led to a comprehensive review of the arrangements in place in Sefton.

The report detailed the seven areas of focus of the review and the progress made relating to command and control; training; human aspects and community resilience; logistics; communications; emergency plans; and business continuity; and concluded by advising that regular updates on the progress of the project were being provided to senior management and to the Audit and Governance Committee; that it was anticipated that the project would conclude by summer 2018; and that the revised arrangements would be monitored on an ongoing basis so as to ensure continued effectiveness.

Attached as an appendix to the report was the Emergency Planning Review Project Plan.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:-

- The implications and lessons to be learned by Sefton and other local authorities arising from the findings of the Kerslake Arena Review into the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack and the Hackitt Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety following the Grenfell fire
- The potential for the Liverpool City Region Mayor to take the lead role for emergency planning on a Merseyside/Halton basis
- How an incident in Sefton would be responded to and the individual responsibilities of key staff such as Gold Command, Emergency Duty rota staff and volunteers
- The lessons learned by the emergency services, especially the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, following the Liverpool Echo Arena car park fire

RESOLVED:

That the report on the ongoing review of Sefton's emergency planning arrangements be noted.

Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 6TH MARCH, 2018

56. AREA COMMITTEES WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 34 of the meeting held on 21 November 2017 the Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance setting out progress made in respect of the recommendations formulated by the Area Committees Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

The Committee also considered an action plan produced by the Head of Communities.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:-

- The contradiction between the information in the appendix to the report and the Action Plan regarding the venues for Forum meetings. Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services indicated that it would be at the discretion of each Forum whether the meeting was held in a Council or non-Council venue
- Who had been consulted on the contents of the Action Plan
- The “market place” layout of the proposed meetings
- The potential for Cabinet Members and senior officers to attend Forum meetings
- How Ward funds would be managed by the Forum meetings
- A concern that the management of Ward Funds would not be in the public domain
- After the Year of the Volunteer theme the selection of other themes for consideration at Forum meetings

RESOLVED:

That the report setting out progress made against the recommendations formulated by the Area Committees Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

57. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN – MARCH 2018

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that updated on the Work Programme for 2017/18; topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by Working Group appointed by the Committee; and seeking the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 1 to the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY,
COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) - TUESDAY 6TH
MARCH, 2018

report be approved.

**58. CABINET MEMBER REPORT – JANUARY 2018 TO FEBRUARY
2018**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that included the most recent report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services was in attendance to answer any questions regarding her report.

A Member of the Committee asked commented on the following issue:-

- The progress made regarding work across the Council for the development of the World War 1 Commemoration (1918- 2018) activity plan

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update report from the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be noted; and
- (2) Councillor Lappin be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

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Agenda Item 5

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) **Date of Meeting:** 12 June 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) 10 July 2018

Subject: Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final Report – June 2018 **Wards Affected:** (All Wards);

Report of: Head of Regulation and Compliance

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

Purpose/Summary

To provide a monitoring report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation:

That the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with a decision of Cabinet to submit monitoring reports on a six monthly basis setting out progress made against each of the recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. Cabinet has requested the submission of monitoring reports.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

Agenda Item 5

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

Implications:

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

Financial		
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"/>

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable:

The terms of reference and objectives of the Working Group were selected to:-

- review the Council's legal and safeguarding position in relation to the issue of any licence following allegations of child sexual exploitation;
- consider whether all relevant pathways, methods of referral are sound with respect to escalation of CSE referrals;
- ensure that key sectors are informed, aware of how to raise concerns concerning CSE; and
- liaise with the Home Office and lobby for legislative change should the need arise.

The Working Group's recommendations have been formulated with the aim of strengthening the existing Regulations regarding personal licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003; to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body; and to make parents/guardians in Sefton aware of an online learning tool that amongst other things, provides them with a valuable source of information to learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited. It is anticipated that the recommendations will help to protect the most vulnerable in Sefton.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

The Working Group's recommendation to make parents/guardians in Sefton aware of

an online learning tool to learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited will create the capacity and motivation for parents/guardians to get involved and create an environment in which they are less reliant on public sector support.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 5141/18) has been consulted and has no comments on the report.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD 4365/18) is the author of this report

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Contact Officer: Paul Fraser

Tel: 0151 934 2068

Email: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

Introduction/Background

At its meeting held on 21 June 2016 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of a Joint Working Group to review the topic of Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation with the following objectives:-

To review the Council's legal and safeguarding position in relation to the issue of any licence following allegations of child sexual exploitation;

To consider whether all relevant pathways, methods of referral are sound with respect to escalation of CSE referrals;

To ensure that key sectors are informed, aware of how to raise concerns concerning

Agenda Item 5

CSE; and

To liaise with the Home Office and lobby for legislative change should the need arise

Accordingly, the Working Group met on numerous occasions to gather evidence and produced its [Final Report](#) with associated recommendations; and which Cabinet approved at its meeting held on 5 October 2017. The approved recommendations are as follows:-

- (1) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Regulations regarding personal licences to Include:-
 - a) A national data base of personal licences
 - b) A fit and proper persons test
 - c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of a personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations;
- (2) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body;
- (3) in order to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues with Sefton parents, the Head of Schools and Families promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool; and
- (4) the Head of Regulation and Compliance and the Head of Children's Social Care submit a joint monitoring report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Resources) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) to be held on 16 and 30 January 2018 respectively, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report and that thereafter, monitoring reports be submitted to the Committees on a six monthly basis.

In accordance with recommendation (4) above the table attached to the report sets out progress made against each of the recommendations.

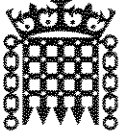
PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE LICENSING/CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION WORKIN GROUP

Recommendation	Progress Made
<p>Sefton’s Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Regulations regarding personal licences to Include:-</p> <p>a) A national data base of personal licences</p> <p>b) A fit and proper persons test</p> <p>c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of a personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations</p>	<p>Vicky Buchanan, Head of Children’s Social Care sent a letter to Sefton’s three Members of Parliament on 7 December 2017. A response from Mr. Dowd was received dated 6 February 2018 and which enclosed a letter from Nadhim Zahawi MP Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families (a copy is attached).</p> <p>The Head of Regulation and Compliance has the following comments in connection with the response from Mr. Zahawi.</p> <p>The Government consider that it would be disproportionately complex, resource intensive and expensive for the Government, local authorities, and magistrates' courts to create and administer a database of all personal licences.</p> <p>Unfortunately the letter from Mr. Zahawi does not make reference to a fit and proper person test</p> <p>The Council is well aware of the provisions that came into force on 6 April 2017 which allows the Council to revoke personal licences. One Licensing Sub-Committee hearing has taken place at which Members revoked a personal licence although the revocation did not involve CSE offences.</p>
<p>Sefton’s Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body</p>	<p>Vicky Buchanan, Head of Children’s Social Care sent a letter to Sefton’s three Members of Parliament on 7 December 2017. A response from Mr. Dowd was received dated 6 February 2018 and which enclosed a letter from Nadhim Zahawi MP Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families</p>

	<p>(a copy is attached).</p> <p>The Government believes that it is better to maintain the flexibility of the current arrangements, while ensuring local authorities are closely held to account for the quality of the accommodation they provide. Ofsted inspections under the Single Inspection Framework cover the quality of accommodation for care leavers, and they challenge poor practice where found. The Government will continue to monitor local authorities' performance in this area, and tackle poor practice where it is highlighted.</p>
<p>in order to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues with Sefton parents, the Head of Schools and Families promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool</p>	<p>Mike McSorley, Head of Schools and Families sent an email to all schools (including academies and independent schools) Heads and Chairs in early December 2017 in accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group.</p> <p>Following contact with schools the Head of Schools and Families can confirm that the following schools have actioned the request as indicated:-</p> <p>Hudson Primary – newsletter St. Luke's Halsall CE Primary - website Sand Dunes Nursery - website St Philip's CE Primary - Website under Parents / local training events Impact - website St Johns Crossens Primary – the link was included as a one-off item on a newsletter Christ the King High School - website Shoreside Primary - website Lander Road Primary - website Summerhill Primary - website St Philips Primary Southport - website The Grange Primary - website</p>

	<p>Woodlands Primary - website under 'Keep Them Safe: Protecting Children from CSE'</p> <p>Range High School - website</p> <p>St Nicholas Primary - newsletter and website</p> <p>St Lukes' Formby Primary - website</p> <p>Hatton Hill Primary - website</p> <p>Melling Primary - website</p> <p>Forefield Community Infant & Nursery School - website</p> <p>Greenbank High School - website</p> <p>Formby High School - website</p> <p>St Oswald's Church of England Primary - website</p> <p>Bedford Primary School - website</p>
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Peter Dowd MP

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

Vicky Buchanan
Head of Childrens Social Care
Sefton Council
9th Floor Merton House
Bootle, L20 3JA

6th February 2018

Dear Vicky,

Following your letter sent to Peter Dowd MP on the 7th December 2017, from the Licensing/child sexual exploitation working group. One of the working group's recommendations was requesting Peter to lobby the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education on bullet points A, B and C in your letter.

Subsequently, Peter wrote a letter to both the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education which I shared a copy with yourself. I've attached the response received from the parliamentary under-secretary of State for Children and Families for your attention.

Please be advised, Peter hasn't seen the response yet and will see it on his return from parliament. If you have any comments or want to speak to Peter about the response letter, let me know.

Kind Regards

Anthony Lavelle

Senior Administrative officer

Bootle Constituency

Representing the communities of

Bootle, Crosby, Ford, Litherland, Netherton, Old Roan, Orrell, Seaforth and Waterloo

Agenda Item 5



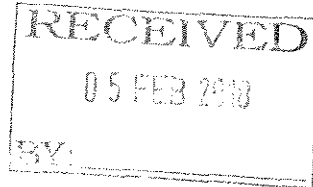
2017-0060455NZPO

Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Peter Dowd MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



29th January 2018

Thank you for your recent letters addressed to the previous Secretary of State and the Home Secretary, enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Ms Vicky Buchanan, Head of Children's Social Care, Sefton Council, 9 Floor Merton House, Stanley Road, Bootle, L20 3JA, about the establishment of the council's joint working group to review the topic of licensing and child sexual exploitation (CSE). I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

The letter raises two issues: personal licences for the sale of alcohol, and accommodation for young people over 16 years of age. I will address each of these below.

Firstly, the government is committed to ensuring that all children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17 are provided with suitable accommodation. Suitable accommodation is described in regulations as accommodation which: so far as reasonably practicable, is suitable for the child in light of his or her needs, including his or her health needs; where the responsible authority is satisfied with the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider; which complies with health and safety requirements related to rented accommodation; and where the responsible authority has, so far as reasonably practicable, taken into account the child's wishes and feelings, and education, training or employment needs.

Recent changes to statutory guidance make it clear that 'bed and breakfast' accommodation is not considered suitable, other than in exceptional circumstances, and that placements in such accommodation should be limited to no more than two working days.

It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that the range of accommodation they commission for 16 and 17 year olds meet the criteria set out above. The government is not persuaded that more regulation in this area would result in better accommodation and support. It would also be very costly to introduce a regulated framework, both for the government and for providers.

Agenda Item 5

We believe it is better to maintain the flexibility of the current arrangements, while ensuring local authorities are closely held to account for the quality of the accommodation they provide. Ofsted inspections under the Single Inspection Framework cover the quality of accommodation for care leavers, and they challenge poor practice where found. The government will continue to monitor local authorities' performance in this area, and tackle poor practice where it is highlighted.

Secondly, the council's letter recommended the introduction of a new power to allow councils to defer the determination of a personal licence, where the applicant is under police investigation for CSE, and where licensed premises are central to the investigation. I understand that the former Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime wrote to the Chief Executive of Sefton Council on 18 March 2016 to inform the council that she had asked officials to consult police and licensing authority representatives about this matter. I am sorry to hear that you did not receive a follow up letter regarding the outcome of this work.

Home Office officials advise that they met national representatives of licensing authorities and the police in March and April 2016 to consider whether they felt this power was required. Participants at these meetings were not convinced that this problem was sufficiently common to necessitate such a reform. They noted that anyone under investigation who was granted a personal licence and later convicted of a relevant offence could then have their licence revoked. They also felt that a personal licence is limited in what it permits people to do, and the police can deal with any specific risk posed by suspects through the use of bail conditions or, in cases where the risk is higher, a custodial remand. Licensing authorities are under a general public law duty to take administrative action promptly. In such a scenario a council may choose to delay the granting of a licence and contact the applicant to explain their reasons where appropriate. The general view was that, even if such a case resulted in the council being taken to court, they would have a strong case. Councils would of course need to seek their own legal advice in each case.

It was also suggested that giving licensing authorities the power to revoke personal licences would solve the problem and that, if the licensing authority knew an applicant was about to appear in court for a relevant offence, it could apply to the court for a memorandum of conviction. Since this work was carried out, the government has given licensing authorities the power to revoke personal licences through the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This power has been in force since 6 April 2017. You may also have seen that, in its recent response to a House of Lords Select Committee review of the Licensing Act 2003, the government said it sees merit in the creation of a central register limited to records of refused, suspended and revoked personal licences, to facilitate more effective enforcement of the Act.

The Local Government Association, the Institute of Licensing, and the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) recently announced a project aimed at developing a national register of taxi and privately hired vehicles, and licence refusals and revocations. This particular register will be maintained and hosted by the NAFN on behalf of all local authorities and will be accessible to 86 per cent of English and

Agenda Item 5

Welsh councils at no extra cost. The government has committed to working with these partners to examine the prospects of adding records of refused, suspended, and revoked personal licences to the national register of taxi and privately hired vehicles refusals and revocations in order to address the problem of individuals making applications in different licensing authority areas following a refusal or revocation elsewhere. We consider it would be disproportionately complex, resource intensive and expensive for the government, local authorities, and magistrates' courts to create and administer a database of all personal licences.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a large loop at the end of the signature.

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Agenda Item 6

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 12 June 2018
Subject:	Locally administered Business Rates Relief Scheme		
Report of:	Head of Corporate Resources	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Service)

To comply with the Committee's Work Programme to receive a report on the Discretionary Relief for Business Rates following the Revaluation of 2017. This report will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 21st June 2018 and Council 19th July 2018.

Cabinet summary:

The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider and recommend to Council the basis for the Locally Administered Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme for 2018/19 and beyond for businesses in Sefton that have had a significant

Agenda Item 6

increase in their Business rate liability as a result of the Government's 2017 revaluation.

Recommendation(s):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)

That the report be noted.

Cabinet

1. Agree the parameters of the discretionary revaluation relief scheme set out in Annex A for consultation with the Council's major preceptors and the Combined Authority.
2. Note the outcome of the review of the 2017/18 Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme set out in Section 2 of this report.

Cabinet is asked to recommend Council to:

3. Agree the parameters of the discretionary revaluation relief scheme for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 as set out in Annex A of this report subject to consideration of any consultation responses received from major preceptors and the combined authority.
4. Delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Resources to determine the detailed application and administration of the local discretionary revaluation relief for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 subject to the parameters set out in Annex A.
5. Agree that a review of the discretionary rate relief scheme for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 be reported to Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services following the end of each year.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Council is required to approve a local business rates revaluation relief scheme for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 in order to distribute the available Government grant to local businesses.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The alternative options would be: -

- Not to make available discretionary support in 2018/19 and beyond to businesses affected by the Business Rates Revaluation of 2017. Such course of action would fail to support our local businesses or utilise the extra funding made available to the Council by the Government for this purpose.
- To replicate the 2017/18 principles and award relief to all eligible businesses with a rateable value of up to £200,000. However, this would not address the reduction in funding in 2018/19 and the fact that many of the large businesses rejected the awards in 2017/18 due to state aid rules. This in turn could lead to a second billing exercise and additional administration costs for the Council.
- To require Council to approve the detailed scheme parameters on an annual basis. This would delay the distribution of the available funding to eligible businesses.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The implementation of the Business Rates Locally Administered Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme will be cost neutral provided the level of relief given does not exceed the Government's grant allocation. If relief exceeds the funding provided by the Government it will have to be met from Council resources. However, it is not expected that the authority will make awards in excess of the relevant grant.

The Government has confirmed that Sefton's Section 31 grant allocation for this purpose in 2018/19 is £267,987.

The Government has indicated that future years' maximum funding allocations to Sefton Council is as follows:

Agenda Item 6

2019/20	£110,348
2020/21	£15,764

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

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

There are no human resource implications; all required work will be delivered within existing resources.

Legal Implications:

The Council is only obliged to give assistance up to the amount of monies allocated to it for that purpose but is obliged to follow any guidance issued by the Government in respect of the relief scheme and failure to do so would result in some or all of the Council's allocation of funds not being received.

Any challenges to the scheme would have to be made through the Council's internal complaints process initially with the ultimate recourse being to judicial review.

Equality Implications:

This report relates to businesses and no equality implications have been identified.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Not applicable

Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable

Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable

Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: The local scheme of discretionary support to properties affected by the Business Rates revaluation of 2017 supports the Council's vision for

“Open for Business” - working together with businesses to create conditions for improved economic growth and to support local businesses.

The measures sit in the context of the Council’s wider economic growth priorities for the Borough. The scheme is designed to support economic growth ensuring businesses thrive and develop. Growth is key to realising the ambitions of the Vision 2030 where Sefton Council aims to lay the foundations for long-term self-sustaining economic prosperity.

The distribution of this additional financial support by Sefton Council will provide real, measurable and practical benefits to those businesses targeted to receive help under the scheme.

Greater income for social investment: Not applicable

Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 5165/18) notes that the report indicates the Business Rates Locally Administered Discretionary Revaluation relief scheme for 2018/19 and beyond should be cost neutral for the Council. The Council will need to ensure that the total relief awarded to local businesses does not exceed the grant allocations set out by Government. However, based on the experience to date, it is more likely that in-year changes to business eligibility will mean that there is unallocated funding left at the end of each year. The risk that total awards will exceed the grant allocation available is therefore thought to be low. Close financial monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that the financial objectives of the scheme are met within the funding available.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD 4389/18) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into this report.

Agenda Item 6

(B) External Consultations

As this is a Government measure, consultation has been undertaken nationally. The Government announced a consultation on the scheme for discretionary support, which closed on 7 April 2017. On 21 April 2017 the Government confirmed that final funding allocations to local authorities would be made according to the draft allocations published as part of the consultation.

Prior to approval on 13 September 2017, the initial scheme design for 2017/18 was shared with the Council's Major Precepting Authorities - Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner; and the Combined Authority, as required by the Government grant conditions. Details of the scheme for 2018/19 and beyond will also be shared with the Major Precepting Authorities prior to implementation.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Appendix: Annex A, Business Rates Locally Administered Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme Guidance for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 (draft)

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction / Background

1.1 Under business rates regulations the Valuation Office Agency is required to review and revise the rateable value of all business properties recorded on the local rating lists in England on a regular basis (usually every

Agenda Item 6

five years). The latest revaluation was implemented from the 1 April 2017 (7 years after the previous revaluation) based on 2015 rental values. The purpose of the revaluation is not to raise additional business rates income but to ensure that rateable values reflect the most up to date rental information available. However, a number of businesses inevitably see their business rates increase as a result of revaluation.

- 1.2 To protect these businesses from the full impact of the rates increases in the earlier years of the list the Government approves a national transitional relief scheme that tapers the amount of relief available over the life of the list. Businesses receive more protection in the earlier years and this reduces towards the final year of the list (usually year 5). A summary of the maximum percentage increase in rate bills (upward cap) allowed by the national transitional relief scheme is set out in the table below:

Upward Cap	Property Size		
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>
2017/18	5.0%	12.5%	42.0%
2018/19	7.5%	17.5%	32.0%
2019/20	10.0%	20.0%	49.0%
2020/21	15.0%	25.0%	16.0%
2021/22	15.0%	25.0%	6.0%

Note: A small business has a rateable value of £20,000 or less, a medium sized business has a rateable value of more than £20,000 and up to £100,000, and a large business has a rateable value of more than £100,000.

- 1.3 Despite the application of transitional relief, the 2017 revaluation resulted in negative publicity for the Government due to the size of the rates increases that a number of businesses faced. In the Chancellor's spring budget speech in March 2017, he stated that he had listened to concerns raised by colleagues and businesses about the effects of the 2017 business rates revaluation and he announced a number of new business rate measures. This included providing local authorities with a £300 million fund to deliver discretionary relief

Agenda Item 6

targeted at businesses most affected by the revaluation in their local areas.

1.4 Following this announcement the Government undertook a consultation on the distribution of this funding. The consultation paper suggested a distribution based on the total increase in bills on properties with a rateable value of less than £200,000 and facing an increase of more than 12.5% in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.

1.5 Sefton's total funding allocation was £945,838 over a four year period as shown in the table below:

2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
£551,739	£267,987	£110,348	£15,764

1.6 The funding allocations shown are the maximum amount that will be made available to fund the discretionary revaluation relief. Any unspent resources will have to be repaid to the Government and any additional amount of relief provided would need to be funded by local resources.

1.7 This assistance is provided under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988; this means that existing legal powers are used instead of introducing new legislation.

1.8 The Government stated that local billing authorities are best placed to determine how this funding should be targeted and administered to support those businesses and locations within their area that have been affected by the impact of revaluation. Councils are required to design their own local relief scheme, subject to consultation with their major preceptors and the combined authority.

2. **2017/18 Scheme review**

2.1 On 1 April 2017, Sefton had 8,051 hereditaments on its rating list. The majority of these (7,907 / 98.2%) had a rateable value of less than £200,000. Approximately 1,800 of those accounts had seen an increase in their net

Agenda Item 6

rates bill of more than inflation (2%) between 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a result of revaluation. The increase in net rates charges above inflation on these accounts was around £1.4 million.

2.2 At its meeting on 13 September 2017, the Council approved the local discretionary revaluation relief scheme for 2017/18. The key scheme parameters were:

- Assistance will only be provided to ratepayers who face an increase in their bills following revaluation.
- The assistance will be targeted at those facing significant increases in rates in lower value properties. Normally this would be properties with a rateable value of less than £200,000 with an increase of 12.5% or more.
- Any remaining funds will be considered for distribution to other businesses in Sefton experiencing an increase in business rates as a result of revaluation and whose circumstances are such that the authority wishes to provide more assistance.
- The assistance will only be provided in relation to business rates liability net of other business rates reliefs which may apply.
- It is not expected that the authority will make awards in excess of the relevant grant and decisions will take account of available funding.

2.3 An initial calculation was undertaken applying a cap on business rate increases of 12.5% to all properties with a rateable value of less than £200,000. This indicated that only 67% of the Government funding would be distributed in 2017/18 on this basis.

2.4 A second calculation was undertaken that lowered the cap on medium and lower valued properties (those with a rateable value of £100,000 or less) until the majority of the available funding was distributed. This resulted in a cap of 5.5% for those properties. This formed the basis for the first relief award in 2017/18.

Agenda Item 6

- 2.5 The discretionary relief awards were applied automatically to individual business rates accounts rather than requiring a formal application process. This meant that the administration costs were minimised and the time taken to distribute the relief was reduced. Businesses were required to inform the Council if receipt of the relief would breach State Aid limits.
- 2.6 A number of larger national businesses rejected the relief as this would breach state aid limits, so a second relief award exercise was undertaken to redistribute the returned relief to smaller and medium sized businesses. This was achieved by lowering the cap on increases for these properties to 3.1%.
- 2.7 As at 27 April 2018, the Council had awarded discretionary revaluation relief to 1,147 accounts. The total amount of relief awarded was £543,877 in 2017/18, approximately 98.6% of the total available funding. The final amount of relief awarded is expected to change over time as the valuation of business properties changes as a result of appeals and other factors.
- 3.0 **Scheme Proposals for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21**
- 3.1 When the initial proposal for a local scheme was reported to Cabinet on 27 July 2017 it was anticipated that the scheme design would be reviewed and agreed for each financial year. However, the experience of the scheme to date suggests that it would be more efficient to agree a set of parameters to be applied to distribute the relief over the next three years so that the available relief can be distributed to rate payers earlier in the year.
- 3.2 The funding allocation to Sefton Council for 2018/19 is £267,987 and indicative allocations for the remaining two years are £110,348 in 2019/20 and £15,764 in 2020/21
- 3.3 The proposed scheme parameters for 2018/19 and the following two years are set out in Annex A of this report.
- 3.4 The proposals take account of the following factors:

Agenda Item 6

- The amount of grant funding available has been reduced by £283,752 (51.4%) in 2018/19 and is set to reduce by a further £157,639 in 2019/20 and £94,584 in 2020/21. So there is a need to rationalise the relief in 2018/19 and future years in order to maximise the impact of the relief in assisting businesses most adversely affected by the 2017 revaluation.
- A higher level of support is already provided to small businesses (with a rateable value of £20,000 or less) by the national transitional relief scheme, so it is proposed to exclude these businesses from the local discretionary revaluation relief scheme in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. This will reduce the cost of administering the scheme and concentrate the relief on those businesses that are not as generously supported by the national transitional relief scheme.
- The businesses that have previously rejected the discretionary relief in 2017/18 as a result of state aid rules have been excluded from receipt of the local discretionary revaluation relief scheme in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 in order to reduce the potential requirement for multiple relief awards and so reduce the administrative cost of operating the local scheme.
- Empty properties and those account holders that were not in occupation on 31 March 2017 have been excluded to focus the relief on those bill payers that have suffered an unavoidable increase in business rates as a result of revaluation and who are contributing to the local economy.
- Discretionary relief cannot be given on properties occupied by the Council, maintained schools or its major preceptors under current regulations.
- The distribution of relief in a way that maximises the available Government funding is difficult to calculate in advance of the initial billing run and is influenced by changes in occupation and rateable value during the year and over the life of the rating list. It is

Agenda Item 6

therefore proposed that the decisions on the detailed methodology used to distribute the relief in and between categories of business property (medium and large) be delegated to the Director of Corporate Resources.

- Initial relief allocations will be awarded automatically without the need for an application process. This will reduce administration costs for both the Council and business rate payers. However, business rate payers will still be able to apply for the relief if they believe they should be eligible.
- Under business rate regulations only relief awards made within six months after the year-end can be funded from Government support. For this reason no further relief will be awarded after 30 September in the following financial year (i.e. six months after the relevant year-end).
- Awards under the scheme are limited by rules on State Aid, which allow an undertaking to receive no more than 200,000 Euros over the last three year years. Procedures for awarding relief include safeguards in this regard.

3.5 The decision to authorise or refuse awards of additional discretionary support will be made under delegated powers by the Head of Corporate Resources.

3.6 Should a ratepayer wish to appeal against the refusal of rate relief, an appeals process will be put in place.

3.7 There is a possibility of an underspend of grant due to business relocating during the year. With this in mind it is proposed that any underspend of grant is used to provide additional support to businesses struggling to meet their increased rates liability. This additional support would be considered under delegated powers given to the Cabinet Member – Regulation, Compliance and Corporate Services and the Head of Corporate Resources.

4. Grant award and financial monitoring

- 4.1 It is important that the Local Authority makes full use of the available funds from Government to support businesses in need of this targeted support. However it is not expected that the authority will make awards in excess of the relevant grant. Appropriate financial monitoring systems will need to be implemented in relation to expenditure.
- 4.2 An annual review of the local discretionary revaluation relief scheme and the outcome of this review will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Regulation, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Agenda Item 6

ANNEX A

BUSINESS RATES LOCALLY ADMINISTERED DISCRETIONARY REVALUATION RELIEF SCHEME GUIDANCE FOR 2018/19, 2019/20 AND 2020/21 (DRAFT)

1. Scope

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the parameters of the locally administered discretionary rate relief scheme for Sefton Council in the years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 1.2 This assistance will be provided under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988; this means that it will use existing legal powers.
- 1.3 The scheme will be funded under Section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003; this means that it will be wholly funded by the Government. Funding will only be available to the extent that the local authority has spent its allocation.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 Assistance will only be provided to ratepayers who face an increase in their bills as a result of the 2017 revaluation.
- 2.2 The assistance will be targeted at those facing significant increases in rates in the following valuation bands:

	Rateable Value on the 2017 Rating List
Medium	between £20,001 and £100,000
Larger	between £100,001 and £199,999

- 2.3 Business properties with a rateable value of £200,000 or more will not be eligible for this relief.
- 2.4 Business properties with a rateable value of £20,000 or less will not be eligible for this relief.

Agenda Item 6

- 2.5 All national, statutory reliefs and exemptions will be applied before any calculation for Locally Administered Revaluation Relief.
- 2.6 It is not expected that the authority will make awards in excess of the relevant grant and decisions will take account of available funding.
- 2.7 The businesses that have previously rejected the discretionary relief in 2017/18 and subsequent years as a result of state aid rules will not be eligible for this relief.
- 2.8 Empty properties will not be eligible for this relief.
- 2.9 Accounts starting on or after 1 April 2017 will not be eligible for this relief.
- 2.10 Properties occupied by the Sefton Council, Sefton maintained schools or its major preceptors will not be eligible for this relief.
- 2.11 Initial relief allocations will be awarded automatically without the need for an application process.
- 2.12 Awards under the scheme are limited by rules on State Aid, which allow an undertaking to receive no more than 200,000 Euros over the last three year years. Businesses receiving an automatic award of discretionary revaluation relief will be required to inform the Council of any breach of these rules. Businesses applying for an award will be required to confirm that receipt of this relief will not breach state aid rules.
- 2.13 Business rate payers will be able to apply for the relief if they believe they should be eligible.
- 2.14 Relief awards of less than £10 will not be made in order to reduce administration costs.
- 2.15 Relief awards in each year are made for a single year only. Subsequent awards will be dependent on the criteria applied in that year.
- 2.16 No relief will be awarded more than six months after the end of the financial year to which the relief applies.

Agenda Item 6

- 2.17 Decisions on the detailed methodology used to distribute the relief in and between categories of business property (medium and large) will be delegated to the Head of Corporate Resources.

3. How an Application Should be Made

- 3.1 Initial relief allocations will be awarded automatically without the need for an application process.
- 3.2 However, business rate payers will still be able to apply for the relief if they believe they should be eligible. The Council will make available a form for this purpose via the authority's website.

4. Decision Making and Review

- 4.1 Decisions on the award or refusal of additional discretionary support will in the first instance be made by the Head of Corporate Resources under delegated powers.
- 4.2 Under business rate regulations only relief awards made within six months after the year-end can be funded from Government support. For this reason no further relief will be awarded after 30 September in the following financial year (i.e. six months after the relevant year-end).
- 4.3 Where an award is made the applicant will be notified of:
- I. The amount of relief granted and the date from which it has been granted.
 - II. If relief has been granted for a specified period, the date on which it will end.
 - III. The new chargeable amount.
 - IV. A requirement that the applicant should notify the authority of any change in circumstances that may affect entitlement to relief.
- 4.4 Awards under the scheme are limited by rules on State Aid, which allow an undertaking to receive no more than 200,000 Euros over the last three year years.

Agenda Item 6

Procedures for awarding relief include safeguards in this regard.

- 4.5 Applicants will be notified of the decision on the application. Where refusal applies details of the reason for refusal will be provided. Applicants will also be advised of the process of review, should they wish to appeal against the decision.
- 4.6 In the event that a decision has been made to refuse additional support any request for a review of that decision must set out the grounds for a review including why the applicant believes the decision should be reconsidered.
- 4.7 Should a ratepayer wish to appeal against the refusal of rate relief, an appeals process will be put in place after which, there will be no further right of review.

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Agenda Item 7

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	12 June 2018
Subject:	Work Programme 2018/19, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for 2018/19, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee and identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan.

Recommendation:

That:-

- (1) the Work Programme for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the Committee considers whether it wishes to continue with the review of the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices following the completion of the Digital Inclusion Working Group; approve any further potential scrutiny review topics, including those detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; prioritise the order in which they start; establish the Working Group(s) for each topic; and appoint at least 3 Members of the Committee to each Working; and
- (3) the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2018/19 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

Agenda Item 7

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
Legal Implications: None
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of recommendations contained in the Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final Report will help to protect vulnerable members of Sefton's communities.</p> <p>The report makes reference to the Digital inclusion Working Group. Digital inclusion is a principal and approach that aims to ensure that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them on a day to day basis - whether they be individuals, businesses or other entities e.g. the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Likewise digital inclusion aims to reduce digital exclusion and the digital divide that can exist within society for a variety of reasons</p> <p>The government's Information Economy Strategy called for greater focus on digital inclusion in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help businesses make smart use of information technology and data;• ensure citizens benefit from the digital age; and• underpin economic growth <p>Digital inclusion will be one of the areas that the Council will seek to contribute to and enable within the Borough of Sefton and as such this Working Group can help to</p>
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develop a series of recommendations and principles for consideration as part of this work.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of a recommendation contained in the Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final report to make parents/guardians in Sefton aware of an online learning tool to learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited will create the capacity and motivation for parents/guardians to get involved and create an environment in which they are less reliant on public sector support. See also reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the presentation on the update on the Commissioning and the Procurement Policy will raise awareness of associated issues with Members. See also reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of recommendations contained in the Accommodation Strategy/Agile Working Working Group Final Report will help the Council develop a commercial nature regarding its Asset and Property Maximisation option that the Council identified, via a Budget Planning Assumption, that £3.3m revenue costs would be saved within the medium term financial plan period 2017/18 to 2019/20.
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the submission of the report on Air Quality Monitoring will raise awareness of associated issues with Members.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Work Programme Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 7

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2018/19
- Overview And Scrutiny – Potential Scrutiny Review Topics 2018/19
- Criteria Checklist For Selecting Topics For Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

- 1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2018/19 is set out in **Appendix 1** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.2 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2018/19 and updated, as appropriate.
- 1.3 **The Committee is requested to comment on the Work Programme for 2018/19 and note that additional items may be submitted to the Programme at future meetings of the Committee during this Municipal Year.**

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2018/19

- 2.1 It is usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year and details of potential scrutiny review topics which have been identified by officers are set out in **Appendix 2** to the report. The Heads of Service will be in attendance at the meeting to provide information on the topics set out in the Appendix.
- 2.2 At its meeting held on 13 June 2017 the Committee established (Minute No. 8 (2)) a Working Group to review the topic of Digital Inclusion. This Working Group is still undertaking its review and it is anticipated that the review will be completed in September/October 2018.
- 2.3 As part of the resolution (Minute No. 8 (3)) the Committee also agreed that following the conclusion of the Digital Inclusion Working Group a Working Group

be established to review the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices. The Committee's views are sought on whether it wishes to continue with the review of the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices following the completion of the Digital Inclusion Working Group.

2.4 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix 3**, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

2.5 **The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to continue with the review of the topic of the Council's Ethical Business Practices following the completion of the Digital Inclusion Working Group; approve any further potential scrutiny review topics, including those detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; prioritise the order in which they start; establish the Working Group(s) for each topic; and appoint at least 3 Members of the Committee to each Working Group.**

3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four month period.

3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.

3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at **Appendix 4** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.

3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

3.6 **The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.**

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APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

	12 JUNE 18	11 SEPTEMBER 18	30 OCTOBER 18	15 JANUARY 19	12 FEBRUARY 19 (BUDGET MEETING)	5 MARCH 19
Cabinet Member Update Report	X	X	X	X		X
Work Programme Update	X	X	X	X		X
Service Operational Reports:						
Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme				X		
Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land						X
Scrutiny Review Progress Reports:						
Universal Credit and Full Service Sefton Council				X		
Air Quality Monitoring				X		
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring			X			
Area Committees Working Group – Update on Implementation of Recommendations		X				X
Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group – Update on Implementation of Recommendations	X			X		

APPENDIX 1

Discretionary Relief for Business Rates following the Revaluation of 2017	x					
Financial Scrutiny:						
Budget Savings Options Proposals					x	
Update On Listed Budget Savings Performance and Forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates Collection		x	x		x	
Presentations						
The arvato Contract (the meeting on 15/01/19 to update on arvato transition post October 2018)	x			x		
Update on Commissioning and the Procurement Policy			x			
Asset Management and the Accommodation Strategy		x				
Social Media Use and Effectiveness			x			

APPENDIX 2

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – POTENTIAL SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2018/19

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

Topic	Lead Officer(s)
Council's and Councillors use of social media and media campaigns – best practice/opportunities and optimisation	Jan McMahon/Nicky Speed, Corporate Communications Manager
Organisational Development - How should organisational development align with the continual transformation of the Council and how will the profile of our workforce support this?	Stephan Van Arendsen

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APPENDIX 3

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

Criteria for Selecting Items
▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints)
▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)
▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels)
▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints)
▪ Public interest issue covered in local media
▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends
▪ Council corporate priority area
▪ Central government priority area
▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports
▪ New government guidance or legislation
▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue
▪ Others

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items
▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet
▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent
▪ Issue being examined by another internal body
▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year
▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year
▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues.

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

DO
◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process◆ Is not opposition
◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction
◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture
◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities
◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions
◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information
◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies
◆ Be persistent and inquisitive
◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental
◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services
◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these
◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority
◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders
◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party
◆ Take time to review your own performance

◆ DON'T
◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment
◆ Be party political/partisan
◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity
◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on
◆ Get bogged down in detail
◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions
◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth
◆ Start without a clear brief and remit
◆ Underestimate the task
◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny
◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders
◆ Succumb to organisational inertia
◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development
◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview,

APPENDIX 3

and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help.

KEY QUESTIONS

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-

Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want?
Are users' needs central to the service?
Why are we doing this?
What are we trying to achieve?
How well are we doing?
How do we compare with others?
Are we delivering value for money?
How do we know?
What can we improve?

INVESTIGATIONS:-

To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met?
To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended?
To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets?
Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy?
Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating?
Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it?
Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified?
How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence?
How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences?
Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed.
Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users?

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 JULY 2018 - 31 OCTOBER 2018

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Officers expect to take during the next four month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public at least 28 days before the beginning of each month.

A Key Decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

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

As a matter of local choice, the Forward Plan also includes the details of any significant issues to be initially considered by the Executive Cabinet and submitted to the Full Council for approval.

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each Key Decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision may not be taken, unless:

- it is published in the Forward Plan;
- 5 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- if the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, 5 clear days notice of the meeting has been given.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 26 (General Exception) and Rule 28 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE or accessed from the Council's website: www.sefton.gov.uk

- Council Constitution
- Forward Plan
- Reports on the Key Decisions to be taken
- Other documents relating to the proposed decision may be submitted to the decision making meeting and these too will be made available by the contact officer named in the Plan
- The minutes for each Key Decision, which will normally be published within 5 working days after having been made

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 4

Some reports to be considered by the Cabinet/Council may contain exempt information and will not be made available to the public. The specific reasons (Paragraph No(s)) why such reports are exempt are detailed in the Plan and the Paragraph No(s) and descriptions are set out below:-

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
8. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under—
 - (a) the Companies Act 1985;
 - (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
 - (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
 - (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
 - (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
 - (f) the Charities Act 1993.
9. Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992
10. Information which—
 - (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Council which are held at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle or the Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.sefton.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Section on telephone number 0151 934 2068.

NOTE:

For ease of identification, items listed within the document for the first time will appear shaded.

Margaret Carney
Chief Executive

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Utility Procurement Plan	Rebecca Johnstone Rebecca.Johnstone@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4138
Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services - July 2018	Christine Finnigan christine.finnigan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4161
Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 - July 2018	Jeff Kenah jeff.kenah@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4104
Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2018/19 – 2019/2020 - September 2018	Jeff Kenah jeff.kenah@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4104
Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services - October 2018	Christine Finnigan christine.finnigan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4161

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Utility Procurement Plan To seek approval for the appointment of the electricity and gas supplier commencing 1st April 2019.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	26 Jul 2018			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Not applicable			
Method(s) of Consultation	Not applicable			
List of Background Documents	Utility Procurement Plan			

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 4

to be Considered by Decision-maker	
Contact Officer(s) details	Rebecca Johnstone Rebecca.Johnstone@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4138

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services - July 2018 To consider any matters related to the Arvato transition for Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services.			
Decision Maker	Council Cabinet			
Decision Expected	19 Jul 2018 26 Jul 2018			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services; Head of Corporate Resources; and Head of Regulation and Compliance			
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefing documents; Meetings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services			
Contact Officer(s) details	Christine Finnigan christine.finnigan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4161			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

APPENDIX 4

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 - July 2018</p> <p>To consider any issues required for the preparation, monitoring, reporting and amendment of the revenue and capital financial plans 2017/18 – 2019/20, including Government grants, financial pressures and service changes.</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	26 Jul 2018			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to appropriate consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20			
Contact Officer(s) details	Jeff Kenah jeff.kenah@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4104			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2018/19 – 2019/2020 - September 2018</p> <p>To consider any issues required for the preparation, monitoring, reporting and amendment of the revenue and capital financial plans 2018/19 – 2019/20, including Government grants, financial pressures and service changes.</p>			
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Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 4

Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	6 Sep 2018			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet, Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Board, Trade Unions, Staff and relevant organisations as appropriate.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Individual budget saving options / amendments to the budget will be subject to appropriate consultation – internal and external to the Council (as appropriate).			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2018/19 – 2019/20			
Contact Officer(s) details	Jeff Kenah jeff.kenah@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4104			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services - October 2018 To consider any matters related to the Arvato transition for Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	4 Oct 2018			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			

APPENDIX 4

Scrutiny Committee Area	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services; Head of Corporate Resources; and Head of Regulation and Compliance
Method(s) of Consultation	Briefing documents; Meetings
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Transactional Finance, HR / Payroll and ICT Services
Contact Officer(s) details	Christine Finnigan christine.finnigan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4161

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Agenda Item 8

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	12 June 2018
Subject:	Cabinet Member Report – March 2018 to June 2018		
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report for the period March 2018 to June 2018 relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services report relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered because the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Any financial implications associated with the Cabinet Member report that are referred to in this update are contained within the respective reports.

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Agenda Item 8

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Lappin's portfolio during a previous two/three month period. Any reports relevant to her portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above
Place – leadership and influencer: As above
Drivers of change and reform: As above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above
Greater income for social investment: As above
Cleaner Greener: As above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Cabinet Member Update Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the attached Cabinet Member update report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2068
Email Address:	paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

Cabinet Member - (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) update report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, is the most recent Cabinet Member report for the Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services portfolio.

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CABINET MEMBER REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) - 12 June 2018

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	May 2018

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

Strategic Support

Strategic Support main priority continues to be the support and project management of the Public Sector Reform projects. All the 10 projects and 25 sub-projects are being supported and developed.

Progress continues to be made with the team working with colleagues from across the Council development of WW1 Commemoration (1918 – 2018) activity plan.

As part of the Public Sector Reform work the team continues to work with colleagues to improve the information and advice available to residents and during March a short video a guide to understanding your Council Tax was shared on the website <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/council-tax.aspx> and via social media. The video has been viewed by over 10,500 people. The impact of this alongside close partnership working, promotion of e-billing, improvements to the website information and changes to policy, both the Contact Centre and One Stop shops have seen a considerable reduction in the number of contacts about Council Tax bills compared with last year.

As part of the drive to improve the information and advice available to residents the team has been working with colleagues in the Elections team to update the information available on our website <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/councillors,-meetings,-decisions/elections/register-to-vote.aspx>

The Communications team continue to work in partnership with colleagues from CVS to promote and celebrate the Year of the Volunteer. More information is available <http://mysefton.co.uk/category/year-of-the-volunteer/>

MerseyNow sign-ups continue to grow with over 600 people now signed up to receive a regular e-mail that keeps residents informed and to encourage them to take part in the great things going on across Sefton.

Commissioning Support and Business Intelligence Service

The Commissioning Support Team:

Continues to lead and support a number of key commissioning projects/activity, PSR projects:- Personalisation, Acute Wrap around, Family Centres, also providing children's placements, Quality Assurance activity, ASC payments and billing, financial assessments, Care Arranging and Direct Payments, including some specific examples:-

- *Pre-Paid Cards* – the numbers of recipients accessing Pre-paid Cards continues to increase in line with target for March 2018. Support to increase numbers, recover unused funds and reconcile accounts with outstanding reconciliation is being supported by ASC Social Work staff.
- *Adult Social Care Domiciliary Care Services* – Procurement processes are near completion for the services being developed as part of the tripartite approach with Liverpool and Knowsley. New contracts are to be in place for May 2018.
- *Supported Living* – The current phase of the Supported Living Project (review of service users and review/revision of provision) is nearing completion. The next phase will be to recommission services based on the new model and work done to date.

In January 2018 the Council launched its Internal Commissioning Academy. Based on a successful national programme originally introduced by the Cabinet Office, the Sefton Commissioning Academy is a key element of organisational development as part of the PSR10 project within the Council's Framework for Change. Over the next six months the Academy provides the opportunity for approximately 40 officers from across the Council to develop a better understanding and skills relating to commissioning. This will in turn lead to improved commissioning across the Council, better value for money.

Agenda Item 8

The Performance and Intelligence Service continues to:

- Support a number of PSR projects and the day-to-day performance management of key services across the Council by analysing and providing data, producing detailed reports which generate valuable insight and supports better business decision making. Examples, includes performance reports to the LSCB, CSIB and Merseyside Safeguarding Board; analysis of DTOC, LCR Adult Social Care market shaping; Statutory return for the Troubled Families Programme and analysis of 2017 Educational, 2017 Winter Mortality, Suicides and National Child Measurements.
- Support the proposed Merton House to Magdalen House accommodation move, providing information, advice and guidance on the process for reviewing, categorising and processing existing paper records across the Council, with a view to achieving a future paperless environment. This has included establishing purchasing framework agreements for the secure disposal of confidential waste, document storage and document image processing.
- Plan for the digitisation and transfer of legacy Children's and Adult Social Care paper records into secure storage facilities, mitigating the risk to information preservation and of information loss.
- Manage the provision of the Council's Welfare Rights and ELAS services, monitoring the impact of the local Universal Credit full service roll-out and ensuring that those resident affected by welfare reform, low or irregular income and potential poverty receive appropriate support.
- Manage the implementation of the 'Manage My Requests' (iCaseWork) system for capturing, managing and reporting all customer complaints, representations and feedback across the Council, with a 'go-live' date now scheduled for the February 2018.
- Manage the reconfiguration of the Assessment, Plan and Review forms and workflow in the 'LCS' (Children's Social Care) system, to improve the system in accordance with the recommendation of the Ofsted improvement plan.
- Plan for the major upgrade and reconfiguration of the Council's 'LAS' (Adult Social Care), 'LCS' (Children's Social Care) and 'EHM' (Early Help & Intervention) systems to introduce new functionality, reporting and improve system performance.
- Support the implementation of the automated payment routines for Adult Social Care provisions, transitioning to the 'ContrOCC' system for all scheduled and non-scheduled systems.
- Managed the upgraded to Capita ONE education system.
- Support the implementation of the Council Agile Working Strategy by leading on the testing of proposed mobile devices for social workers.
- Continue to support the Council to respond to comments, compliments complaints, FOI, Subject Access and others representations.
- Continue to provide comprehensive support across the Council relating to information management and data protection, in particular assessment of proposed information sharing arrangement and the investigation of potential data breaches.
- Plan for the implementation of the General data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Procurement Team:

Continues to assist and advise on procurement activity across the whole Council and has 95 procurement exercises at differing stages on the current work plan. Many of these are complex procurement exercises that exceed the OJEU procurement thresholds, examples of which include:

- Domiciliary Care Collaborative contract
- Collaborative Electoral Print requirement
- Supported living contract for 5 clients with learning difficulties and autism
- Housing Agency contract
- Holy Family Catholic High School - Building Cleaning
- Regional Adoption Agency
- Electronic Case Management System – Domiciliary Care
- High Ropes Course at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre
- ICT provision (replace Arvato contract)
- Extra Care Collaborative contract
- IAG Carers information and guidance contract
- Park and Ride contract
- Sexual Violence Support Services (Collaborative)

The Review of Procurement Processes, Rules and Guidance, and associated Action Plan, has now been completed. Updated Contract Procedure Rules were agreed by Audit and Governance in June and approved by Council in July 2017 and roll-out of the CPR e-learning programme to all relevant staff is progressing well. We are now in phase 3 of the training roll out, 208 officers have been invited to complete the training and 183 have so far successfully completed the online course. Once the remaining officers have successfully completed the training it will be rolled out to other officers nominated by their Heads of Service.

The Central Procurement team continue to be involved in working closely with the other Liverpool City Region Procurement teams. Current collaborative procurement processes under way include Domiciliary Care and Personal Protective Equipment & Corporate Clothing. Amongst other things, over the coming months the Central Procurement Team will be collaborating with the other LCR Authorities on the replacement contracts for Office Stationery, Office Furniture, and Cleaning Materials.

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Finance

Budget 2018/19 – 2019/20

Following a significant amount of work by the Finance team and other officers across the Council, the proposed Budget for 2018/19 has been prepared. The Council meeting on 1 March will approve a budget, which will then require Arvato to send out the associated bills for Council Tax and NNDR. The proposed Capital Programme and Fees & Charges for next year will also be considered.

Budget Monitoring - 2017/18 Financial Year

The most recent forecast revenue budget position is at the end of January 2018. The estimated year-end deficit for 2017/18 is £2.25m (a decrease on the previous month's figure of £0.128m).

The **service** budgets, including **Public Sector Reform** schemes, are showing an overall under-achievement of £1.5m. The savings agreed elsewhere within the budget are showing an under-achievement of the saving target of £0.75m.

The Council's **capital budget** in 2017/18 is £28.7m. As at the end of January, expenditure of £12.1m has been incurred and a full year outturn of £22.7m is currently forecast.

Closure of Accounts 2017/18

Work is now underway to close the Accounts for 2017/18. This is the final year of the Government's plan to bring forward the date for completion to the end of May i.e. one month earlier than for 2016/17 (i.e. three months earlier than three years ago). The external auditor (Ernst & Young) is now required to review approve the Statement of Accounts by the end of June. This has meant a complete review of processes for both organisations in order to meet this deadline.

ICT

Strategy

The Council is finalising a new ICT Strategy, and is also defining new policies & standards for the ICT service; this activity will be completed in March 2018.

Transformation

The Council, working with external contractor Agilisys and incumbent ICT provider Arvato, has now commenced its ICT Transformation Programme; there has been some slippage on this programme but is due to complete in August 2018, which will enhance and enable agile working through the deployment of new end user devices, new communications software, new business software and the migration of systems and data to cloud hosting.

Future Provision

The Council has commenced a procurement exercise for a new outsourced ICT provider to operate the Council's ICT service from 1 October 2018; the shortlisted bidders have been identified and the procurement process is now at the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue Stage. The process is due to complete in May 2018, at which point the successful bidder will be appointed.

Infrastructure

ICT continues to support a number of the Framework for Change / Public Sector Reform projects, most notably Asset Maximisation (via agile working) and the Early Intervention & Prevention community base programme.

Agenda Item 8

Agile Working

Indicative costing has been completed for the Council's agile working requirements, with the initial focus being on the Merton to Magdalen relocation, and the Locality Teams programme. New end user devices have been identified to further enable agile working; rollout of these devices will be included in the abovementioned ICT Transformation programme and commence in April 2018.

Customer Service

Self Service Promotion

Customers visiting the One Shop Shops are advised about the digital access options available and encouraged to use the self-serve computers which are located in the One Stop Shops if they don't have internet access at home. The plasma screens continue to promote a number of online initiatives.

Taxi Licensing

Taxi Licensing enquiries continue to increase month by month with potential drivers from across the country choosing Sefton as their preferred location to complete their license application.

With the trade requesting additional Knowledge tests to cope with the increased demand,

3 additional staff are to be recruited to deal exclusively with Taxi Licensing enquiries.

Volumes will continue to be monitored to ensure vulnerable customers do not experience longer waiting periods to see a customer advisor.

Revenues Service

Council Tax collection

The rollout of Universal Credit Full Service in October 2017 has a detrimental impact on collection performance and on current trend a shortfall of approx. 0.2-0.3% is predicted against the annual in year target. The situation is being monitored and customers being advised to pay 16% of the council tax liability payments whilst waiting for universal credit payments.

Benefit Service

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The DWP have confirmed the DHP budget for 2017/18 is £720,214.00 an increase of 6% on previous year. As at 11th March 2018, DHP of £732,112.13 has been paid/committed resulting in an over spend of £11,898.13.

The DWP have stated that the DHP budget for 2018/19 will be £760,510.00 an increase of 5.5%.

The DHP policy is currently being reviewed against the DWP best practice guidance recently published.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit Plan 2017-18 is being finalised, with work having been completed in the period in the following areas:

Audit Title	Audit Opinion	Recommendations		
		High	Medium	Low
Council Tax	Minor	0	1	1
Forefield Junior School	Fair	0	3	3
Ursuline School	Good	0	1	4
Rowan Park School	Good	0	1	4
Thomas Gray Primary	Fair	0	3	1
Libraries	Minor	0	1	4
Northway Community School	Very Good	0	1	2
Public Health Outcomes Framework	Minor	0	3	1
Capital Programme	Negligible	0	0	0
Annual Leave and Clock Cards	Investigation	1	2	5
Sefton CVS	Investigation	0	4	1
Merefield School	Fair	0	3	2
St Lukes CE Primary School	Good	0	1	3
The Atkinson	Moderate	1	3	0
Aintree Davenhill Primary School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented			
Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (Follow Up)	All recommendations implemented			
Maricourt Catholic High School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented			

Larkfield Primary School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented
M58 Junction 1 Q3	Assurance Provided
Liverpool City Region - STEP Grant Q3	Assurance Provided
Disabled Facilities Grant	Assurance Provided
Troubled Families Grant Period 2	Assurance Provided
Troubled Families Grant Period 3	Assurance Provided

Responsible officers have given assurance that the recommendations made in the reports will be implemented within reasonable timescales. Follow up audit work will be undertaken so as to substantiate this.

The Internal Audit service has been the subject of an external inspection, to verify compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Such an inspection is a requirement, once every five years, of the Standards. The final report is awaited, but initial feedback suggests that the outcome will be favourable.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2018-19 was approved by Audit and Governance Committee on 21 March 2018. Particular attention has been paid to ensuring that the Internal Audit Plan is reflective of the changing risk landscape of the Council, and that it provides tangible added value to the Council in maintaining an effective system of internal control and management of risk. The plan has a particular emphasis on the role Internal Audit can play at a strategic level. This has been achieved through consultation with relevant stakeholders, and through incorporation of the principles of industry best practice.

Health and Safety

The team has undertaken statutory compliance visits to a range of Council buildings, so as to provide assurance that there is evidence to support compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation, concerning such matters as gas safety, asbestos, and legionella.

Work is continuing, jointly with Property and Building Services, to review compliance with the legislative Health and Safety requirements for Council buildings. This will assist in supporting Heads of Service in their management and maintenance of the Council's estate.

Insurance

This claims data relates to the period 1st November 2017 to 31st January 2018:

Category	Number of claims received	Total reserve on claims received (£)	Number of insurance claims paid out	Amount paid out in insurance claims (£) (not necessarily related to claims received in this period)
Public Liability	37	118,359	31	111,624
Employer's Liability	2	27,775	2	568
Motor Vehicle	41	23,102	10	14,992

Work has begun on the procurement exercise for the provision of insurance for the period September 2018 – 2021 (with two optional one year extension periods). Delegated authority for the contract award was given to the Cabinet member at the July 2017 Cabinet.

A round of meetings with brokers, insurers, claims handlers and legal advisers has taken place, and an increased focus on management of the respective contractors has been implemented. This will help to inform the planning for the tender exercise, helping to inform our expectations of our providers and to help to shape the performance management arrangements to be employed under the new contract. It is worthy of note that the performance of the incumbents is generally very satisfactory.

Risk and Resilience

The review of Emergency Planning continues, encompassing a number of key strands, including the review of Command and Control structures, training, and recruitment of volunteers. In the period since the last report to this Committee, the project has continued to make positive progress. Quarterly meetings have been arranged with Emergency Duty Co-ordinators, so as to give an opportunity to discuss recent incidents, learn lessons arising from these, and to explore training that can be provided to meet needs. The first of these meetings was held in March, and was well-attended and successful. The next meeting will take place in June.

Agenda Item 8

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Operational Issues

Advice and support continues to be provided to various service areas. Consultation is taking place with staff and the trade unions in respect of a number of staffing issues and weekly meetings are timetabled as necessary.

Various reviews and restructures across the organisation are continuing relative to budget savings/Public Sector Reform projects. These are the subject of trade union consultation. Briefings have also taken place on school budget issues, the Arvato insource and other staffing related budget issues.

The Department continues to have a full programme of work in respect of disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work issues. Support to service areas in respect of staffing reviews/restructures is being provided, together with advice and support in the management of sickness absence cases that are cause for concern and complex staffing matters.

A number of Senior Management posts are currently being recruited to and policy work continues on such matters as workforce reporting.

Pay & Grading Team

Job evaluation continues relative to all Council and School posts for new or revised roles. Job evaluations are also conducted relative to any operational and service reviews to maximise efficiencies as part of restructuring exercises across the Council as a consequence of budgetary pressures. Regrading applications and regrading appeals are processed in line with the Council protocol. The team also undertakes any review of HAY graded positions.

Management of the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of all Agency workers continues. The former contract expired on 31st January 2018 and, following a formal tendering process, Matrix have been selected to continue to provide the service across all Merseyside Authorities under a new framework agreement with a revised charging mechanism. The contract is currently with Legal for approval pending a proposed contract start date of 10th February 2018 which will run for 4 years. The previous charging policy will apply in the interim period.

Team members are involved in service reviews and work to support transformational proposals associated with the budget proposals and potential changes to service delivery. Of the three team members one is involved with the EIP2 project and one on the EIP3 project.

A potential challenge has been submitted relative to the Terms and conditions applied in the Hospitality sector of the CLAC and an analysis of the effects of this equal pay challenge are currently being explored and have been highlighted to the appropriate Heads of Service and the Chief Executive.

Project work continues such as the management of sickness absence, including production of reports, analysis and management data and implementing training courses.

Establishment Control, Pensions, Payroll & HR Transactional Services

Regular Client meetings are continuing with the objective of improving processes and data quality. The Council and Arvato are currently mapping all the recruitment processes to ensure consistency. These processes will be built into the upgraded ResourceLink, so all users can see where each individual record is up to, which should alleviate queries and phone calls.

A working Group has been set up with Arvato to introduce workflow to help recruitment, transactional HR, payroll and pension processes. The first process being reviewed is staff terminations and the voluntary resignation workflow process is now built in ResourceLink and associated guidance available for managers. A pilot of the new process is being undertaken by managers in Hawthorne Road Depot. It is hoped this process will be rolled out for the rest of the Council at the end of April 2018 and for schools later in the year.

The Working Group is now looking at the best way to handle other reasons for leaving e.g. dismissal, redundancy etc. and how these will be managed.

There are 2 other processes which are being looked at, to be put into workflow and they are changes to hours and extensions to temporary arrangements.

The Pensions Officer is continuing to work closely with the Transformation team and Personnel Officers to provide redundancy/pension information when

Agenda Item 8

The Establishment Control Panel is now embedded and occurs every 2 weeks, to consider requests to release vacancies and approve any changes to the Establishment held in ResourceLink. All changes to the Establishment are being mapped by the Council and Arvato to ensure correct procedures are followed.

The Government have proposed and agreed changes to exit payments for public sector staff and further clarification is required as to how this will be implemented. Further guidance is still not available.

The Council had to apply Auto-enrolment legislation on 1st April 2013 and as part of this process applied transition arrangements to a certain group of staff. Transition ended 30th September 2017. The affected staff have been written to and they will not be enrolled into their relevant pension scheme until 1st April 2019, but can opt in at any time.

There are various TUPE transfers in process as follows:

- St Andrews transferring to a Multi Academy Trust, date still to be agreed, but possibly 1st May 2018.
- Holy Trinity transferring to a Multi Academy Trust, 1st February 2018 - complete

Occupational Health

The number of referrals (225) to the HU from Sefton employees between 01/01/18 and 31/03/18 is exactly the same when compared with the same period last year.

The main reasons for referrals within this period are stress and mental health (45.78%) and musculoskeletal problems (22.67%). The majority of referrals are from schools (47.11%), Locality Services - Provision (16.89%) and Adult Social Care (10.22%).

Requests for counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) continue to reflect the amount of support needed for employees. The average waiting time for such services is between 4 to 6 weeks for counselling and 6 to 8 weeks for CBT.

Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)

Training/eLearning

The Corporate Learning Centre continues to design, develop and deliver accredited training courses across the workforce. A total of 22 courses have now been submitted for Badge of Excellence programme approval; this includes four new courses (Baby Programme, Language Champion, playing to Learn and Early Literacy) for Sefton's Early Years' Service.

Apprenticeships

We continue to promote and access the Apprenticeship levy, have established a pool of lead training providers and we continue to raise awareness of the apprenticeship levy with schools. The Corporate Apprenticeship Team continues to attend departmental managers meetings to raise awareness of apprenticeships for existing staff.

As of 31st March 2018 the Corporate Apprenticeship Team has recruited a total of 100 apprentices against a target of 136. This is a fantastic achievement given that we didn't commence recruitment until May 2017 as well as experiencing some resource issues.

A celebrating success event for Apprentices has been provisionally scheduled to take place on Tuesday 15th May.

New Learner Management System

Sefton Corporate Learning Centre has invested in a fresh and innovative training booking system and eLearning platform that is fit for purpose and is able to meet our future training requirements. The new training system contains lots of modern features that include the following:

- Engaging and user friendly
- Deploys learning on mobile friendly platforms to make learning accessible to staff who work remotely or staff who do not have access to a workstation
- To effectively quality assure the training by capturing electronic delegate feedback
- The ability for staff and managers to access their own training history – this includes a personalised dashboard which tells you about the status of a course, upcoming courses and access to the course library which includes recommended cou

Agenda Item 8

- The ability to record your own Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours for external training, events and conferences and for staff who are required to maintain a CPD record for on-going professional qualifications
- An eLearning module to manage the Council's library of internally developed and commissioned eLearning courses.
- And many more exciting features!

We have been working with a provider called 'Me Learning' who are pioneers in online and classroom based learning and passionate about the work that they do. This involved migrating the data from our former booking system and eLearning platform across to the new system.

New log-in details for Me Learning will be circulated to staff on Tuesday 3rd April 2018.

Procurement

We have completed two Cabinet Member papers which include the following:

1. To request an extension of the existing Apprenticeship Training Provider Contracts procured in May 2017 (per the original contract terms and conditions).
2. To complete a separate procurement exercise to identify a number of additional occupational LOTS (Media and Communication, Buildings and Construction, Large Good Vehicle, Hybrid Repair and Maintenance) that are required to meet the business needs of the Council.

Both papers were agreed by the Cabinet Member and a procurement exercise was initiated to identify training providers to deliver the above occupational LOTS. We are expecting to award the contract the w/c Tuesday 3rd April 2018.

Korn Ferry Hay

The Corporate Learning Centre continues to work with Korn Ferry Hay, Strategic Support and SLB to develop the One Council champion's network to support the development and implementation of OD across the organisation. We have now appointed an Organisational Development Coordinator to take forward this work stream. Recent updates include the development of a One Council role description and work is being done to increase the visibility of the One Council Champions across the organisation.

Building and Property Services

Disposals

The Council undertakes a pro-active programme of property disposals to both rationalise the portfolio to remove unproductive assets and realise capital receipts. This process assists in the reduction of revenue costs and raises capital which contributes to the funding of the Council's capital Programme.

Specific Actions to note

- The transfer of the freehold for Phase 1 at the former Beach Road School with Adactus has completed and Phase 2 is with Legal
- Instructions have been sent to Legal to complete the sale of Vine House following Cabinet Member approval
- Valuation and review of Council Assets for end of year Financial Accounting underway.
- Supervision and implementation of initial Accommodation moves as part of Agile Working Strategy.
- Assistance with the acquisition of James Dixon Court and Heads of Terms for the operational Lease with New Directions
- Lettings of Unit 12 Sefton Lane Industrial Estate to the Highways Contractor and the Alt Centre to Hightown Parish Council
- Tenders for Carnegie Library have been received and evaluated
- Letting of Southport Pier – this is currently under review.

Cyclical Compliance and Maintenance Work

- Statutory testing and inspection works continue to be carried out in accordance with the defined cyclical timescales to those buildings under current corporate services
- Day to day responsive maintenance works continue to be undertaken as necessary to those buildings under corporate services
- Concerted efforts are being made to increase the level of planned preventative works in order to try and prolong the lifespan of building elements and reduce the overall building maintenance cost burden
- Consideration is also being given, with a paper recently being put forward to highlight the benefits of a centralised approach to statutory compliance and maintenance
- Major planned work (Corporate Buildings) are however in abeyance pending funding decisions. This has been the case for a number of years and the situation will only continue to deteriorate if sufficient resources are not made available
- Additional proposals for major planned maintenance intervention for 2018/19 have been identified and prioritised although no funding has been allocated at this present time

Major and Minor Adaptations

The Council supports Sefton resident through provision of both major and minor adaptations in their homes. Minor adaptations for grab rails, hand rails and other minor alterations are provided through both an in house service (33%), and external contractors (66%). Major adaptations (funded via Disabled Facilities Grant) are provided to residents through in house services, along with support from external contractors to complete the physical works or install necessary equipment. On an annual basis this results in funding of approximately £1.8m spent on essential improvements and alterations to over 250 homes. Both minor and major adaptation support resident and enable them to remain independently in their homes for as long as it is safe and practical to do so.

Energy and Environmental Management

- EEMS attended a Liverpool City Region LEP workshop on developing a regional Energy Strategy and will be exploring the impact of the UK: 100 affiliation and ensuring that it meets the Sefton 2030 vision.
- Continued work via O&S (Regeneration and Skills) – there was a joint meeting in November with United Utilities and Ofwat to address remaining overall imbalance of charging with other UK areas and seeking partnership funding support to reduce water charges further over next 5 years. Follow up action to meet with Defra in early 2018 to discuss policy relating to charging and options of further support e.g. investment funds to Local Authorities for water, similar to SALIX.
- Salix Funding (Invest to Save) EEMS fully committed the available fund for 2017/18 to replace Magdalen House office lighting (Floors Gnd, 1 & 2) with highly efficient LED as part of agile working, the project will bring energy, carbon and maintenance savings.
- Year to date over £61K has been recovered by EEMS for invalid electricity billing charges to the Council and schools.
- LCR Procurement review (all utilities) – EEMS will bring a further report on options and recommendations for Sefton and/or LCR to be implemented from 2019/20.
- Electricity Price renewal has been completed and all sites advised of tariffs, for 01 April 2018 and final year under current contract.
- The council has been successful in securing £926K in funding from the Warm homes Fund (a project of National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions) to provide funding and aid residents with first time Central heating and connection to the gas grid. Sefton is leading on behalf of Merseyside and Lancashire for a 3 year project.
- The EEMS team is assisting with the transition and development of the Viridis project and associated European bid (worth an estimated £4m).

Agenda Item 8

EEMS have been involved in a review of revenue options at the Eco Centre and will be following up with partners, including renewal of the wind turbine (although the market is under significant stress as many contractors appear to be struggling financially).

- The EEMS education team have delivered phase I of the Air Quality promotion where they are engaging 10 schools in the Air Quality Management Areas to understand the issues and what they can do to mitigate the issues. The scheme will lead to a website and the team are considering expanding the programme to more schools.
- Staff at the Eco Centre will be conducting an information day with local partners to coincide with World Environment day, on the 9th June (as the nearest weekend day).
- Approval for Salix (Invest to Save) for assisting Schools to access up to £500k of interest free loan funding for energy efficiency projects.

Regeneration

The Building and Property Services are supporting the Head of Regeneration and Housing in the identification and development of regeneration initiatives providing input on Valuation, feasibility and cost across a number of potential projects.

REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE

Corporate Legal Services

The Property team are assisting with the following projects:

- The Magdalen House refurbishment – by agreeing the necessary consents with the Landlord of the building for the proposed works
- Supporting Property and Estates to ensure we keep as many Council premises occupied by tenants as possible, thus working to ensure we receive necessary rents.
- Advising on facilitating the council's purchase of James Dixon Court, Care Home in relation to which contracts were exchanged 06/02/18 and completed the purchase later that month.
- Advising on and facilitating the academy conversion of St Andrew's Deyes Lanes and Litherland Moss primary.

We have conducted a large number of education and littering prosecutions.

We have successfully arranged for the sale of a property situate 51 Scarisbrick New Road. A local developer has bought the property which has been a blight on the neighbourhood for over 20 years. He will be redeveloping the land, and improving the local area. The Council will receive from this disposal £19,122.62 relating to charging orders on the property relating to works in default and associated costs of the transaction.

We have successfully resisted 2 appeals by taxi drivers against revocation of licences.

We have advised on 2 licensing sub committees – 1 for the grant of a new licence (objections received) and the 2nd was a review of a licence requested by our environmental (pollution) team.

Following the fire at Acorn Way Industrial estate, Legal Services worked with colleagues Business rates and in Arvato to pursue the owners of the land for the unpaid Business rates which amounted to over £70,000. We have successfully recovered £62,000 and as a result of the threat of further action the land has now been transferred to a new land owner. The Council is now working closely with the new owner to resolve the problem of waste stored on the site and the danger of further fires occurring.

We have been granted permission by the High Court to continue with our Judicial Review of Highways England's decision not to consult on the possibility of a tunnel as opposed to their decision to consult on a new road through Rimrose Valley. We await a hearing date for the final hearing.

We were threatened with Judicial Review proceedings in relation to the advice and assistance offered to a young care leaver but following a robust reply outlining that we consider we have fulfilled our statutory duties we have had no further contact from the young person's solicitors.

We were served with Judicial Review proceedings against the Coroner in relation to the manner in which an inquest was conducted. Following the submission of a robust defence the High Court have refused permission for the claim to proceed and awarded the Council its costs.

The largest team within Corporate Legal Services is the Children and Social Care Team which continues to have the care and conduct of a very high volume of cases before the Family Proceedings Court and the Court of Protection.

Democratic Services

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)** recently held a Special Meeting in order to hear from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups on the future of the Hightown GP Surgery.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)** has established a Special Educational Needs and Disability Process of Assessment Working Group and Councillor Spencer is the Lead Member. Three meetings of the Working Group have been held so far and the Working Group has undertaken site visits to schools to see facilities and meet with parents. The Working Group hopes to meet with the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Head Educational Psychologist; and representatives of the Sefton Parent Carer Forum in the near future.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)** has two outstanding Working Groups as detailed below:-

- Parks and Greenspaces – It is anticipated that the Working Group's Final Report will be considered by Committee and Cabinet at their meetings to be held on 3 and 26 July 2018 respectively.
- Housing Licensing Performance Framework – the Working Group has now completed its review and the Final Report and recommendations were approved by Committee on 13 March 2018. Cabinet will consider the Final Report at its meeting to be held on 24 May 2018.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)** had last year agreed to establish a Working Group to look at the topic of Digital Inclusion. The Working Group has met on two occasions and is in the process of collating information and identifying witnesses as part of its review. It is anticipated that the Working Group will complete its review by reporting to Cabinet in October 2018.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** has met twice this Municipal Year and has considered a publication of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee (CLG) entitled "Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees". The Government has now announced its response to the report and the Management Board at its meeting to be held on 26 June 2018 will consider a further update on this issue.

Admission Appeals

In addition to the provision of administrative support for meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and Committees, the Section has also organised and clerked school admission appeal hearings involving 15 applications for 9 Secondary schools and 29 applications for 23 Primary schools during the period from 1 January to 31 April 2018.

In addition arrangements were made for a further 9 appeals to be heard during this period, which were subsequently withdrawn.

A training event for panel members was also organised for 6 March 2018.

Civic and Mayoral Services

Mayor of Sefton's Christmas Toy Appeal

Once again the Mayor's Toy Appeal was a great success, having increased our pick up/drop off points to include both ASDA Stores in Southport & Bootle as well as the points at the Leisure Centres in Sefton along with Bootle & Southport Town Halls, the appeal was able to provide toys to children and families in Sefton that struggle during that time of the year.

Holocaust Memorial Service

On Sunday 28th January the annual Holocaust Memorial Service was held at Christ Church in Southport, the event was extremely well attended, The Mayor of Sefton, Chief Executive Margaret Carney, Peter Dowd MP and Bill Esterson MP were in attendance, along with Sefton Councillors and members of the Community, the service was poignant, moving and fitting commemoration to not only the lives lost during the Holocaust but also lives lost to other events of genocide.

Agenda Item 8

Mayor of Sefton's Charity Dinner

On Saturday 17th March 2018 at 6.00pm, the Mayor of Sefton will be hosting his annual Charity Dinner, at the Floral Hall in Southport Theatre & Convention Centre, tickets are now available and priced at £35.00 which includes a three course meal with welcome drink and live entertainment, along with the Tombola, Raffle and Auction, for this year we will also be having a silent auction run by AAA Sports Memorabilia which will have some fantastic prizes available signed by various people in the sporting world that we hope will raise a lot of money of the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Coroners

2 week jury inquest taking place at Bootle Town Hall 12 – 23 February. Alan Wilson, Coroner for Blackpool, will be holding the inquest as Christopher Sumner has been recused for this case by the Chief Coroner.

Introduction of digital (CT scan) autopsies on track to begin in April 2018. I-Gene London Ltd will have their Preston facility open by end March. Where suitable, a digital autopsy will replace a traditional invasive post mortem. This will be less traumatic for families.

Registrars

2 new wedding/civil partnership venues were approved at Licensing Committee on 8th January – The Bold Hotel in Southport and Oaklea Barns in Lydiate. Oaklea Barns are looking to hold festival style weddings which will give couples an alternative to traditional style ceremonies.

Environmental Health & Trading Standards

Together with colleagues in Corporate Legal Services we prosecuted a company for running an unlicensed boarding kennels. A representative of Paw2Paw Ltd, based on Scarisbrick New Road, plead guilty at South Sefton Magistrates Court this week (Wednesday January 31) to three offences under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act relating to keeping an unlicensed dog boarding establishment.

They were fined £990 and ordered to pay a £33 victim surcharge and £1007 in costs, totalling £2030.

Sefton Council's Trading Standards team were alerted to issues at Paw2Paw after receiving three complaints from members of the public regarding alleged treatment of their dogs while boarding at Scarisbrick New Road.

In one complaint it was alleged that a French Bulldog had suffered trauma and bloodshot eyes after boarding with Paw2Paw, while the owner of another noticed a change in the behaviour of their pet after being taken for walks by the company.

Together with colleagues in Corporate Legal Services we successfully prosecuted Daniel Howarth t/a Crosby Property Maintenance pleaded guilty to 4 x offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and 1 x offence under the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

Two of the offences related to the unauthorised use of the Gas Safe and NICEIC logos on his website www.crosbypropertymaintenance.co.uk .

Gas Safe (previously Corgi) maintain the official list of gas businesses who are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires and all other gas appliances. By law all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register and only registered engineers can use the Gas Safe logo.

NICEIC (The National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting regulates the training and work of electricians and electrical contractors in the UK. The NICEIC is one of several providers given Government approval to offer Competent Person Schemes to oversee electrical work within the electrical industry.

Mr Howarth has never been registered with Gas Safe or NICEIC.

Two offences relate to work Howarth carried out at two complainants' homes. On completion of the works Howarth gave the homeowners building certificates, claiming to be from the Local Authority confirming that building work had been assessed by qualified building control officers and deemed it to be safe and within building regulations. These certificates were false and the home owners to carry out further remedial works in order to comply with Building Regulations at further expense to themselves.

The Consumer Rights Act offence relates to false information he provided to Trading Standards Officers during their investigation, when he fabricated an email he claimed to have sent to his website provider asking them to remove the Gas Safe and NICEIC logos. **Page 78** mail existed.

Agenda Item 8

The court gave Howarth maximum credit for guilty pleas. He was fined a total of £1505 and ordered to pay costs of £1031.50.

Environmental Enforcement Following a successful tendering process NSL Limited have been awarded a contract for Parking and Environmental Enforcement which will commence 1st April 2018. This builds on existing enforcement and will ensure that Officers will be undertaking joint parking & environmental enforcement patrols including; littering, dog fouling and offences under the Public Space Protection Order – Dog Control across the Borough.

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